

## **Fifth Chapter**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the fourth chapter, from the thirty-third to the thirty-seventh verse, praised the tradition of going to teachers, who have realized the Truth, having renounced actions and sense-objects and directed Arjuna to gain knowledge from them (Gītā 4/34). In this process of Self-realization, it is indispensable to meditate upon God in solitude by renouncing action. Arjuna did not want to fight, because he thought that he would incur sin, by fighting. He wanted to attain salvation. So Arjuna thought, that the Lord was asking him to gain knowledge, by renouncing actions.

Then the Lord, in the thirty-eighth verse of the fourth chapter, declared, "He who is perfect in Yoga, gains it (knowledge) in the Self." It means that a striver following the Discipline of a action, need not go to the great persons, who have realized truth nor has he to practise any other spiritual discipline, in order to gain knowledge. Thus Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action) as the means of Self-realization has been commended here.

Arjuna, in the thirty-third verse of the fourth chapter, heard the glory of the customary method of gaining knowledge and in the thirty-fourth verse by the term 'viddhi', he held it as the Lord's order for him to gain knowledge by that method. He heard the praise of Karmayoga (the discipline of action), in the thirty-eighth verse and the forty-first verse. In the forty-second verse, He ordered him to perform his duty of fighting. Thus, having heard the glory of 'Jñānayoga' and 'Karmayoga' both, and also His order to gain knowledge and to perform one's duty, Arjuna, could not decide which one of the two disciplines, was better. Therefore, in order to get his doubt cleared by Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna puts a question.

अर्जुन उवाच

सन्न्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।  
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ १ ॥

*arjuna uvāca*

**sannyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa punaryogaṁ ca śaṁsasi  
yacchreya etayorekaṁ tanme brūhi suniścitaṁ**

**Arjuna said:**

O Kṛṣṇa thou praisest, the renunciation of actions externally (Sāṅkhyayoga) as well as their unselfish performance (Karmayoga), tell me, for certain, which one of the two is decidedly conducive to my good. 1

*Comment:—*

'Sannyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa'—Arjuna, did not want to fight, because he did not want to kill his kinsmen. In order to support his stand, Arjuna put forward several arguments, as in the first chapter. He said, that fighting would incur sin (Gītā 1/45). According to him, it was better to live in the world even by begging than to fight (2/5) and he bluntly said to Kṛṣṇa, that he would not fight (2/9).

Generally, a listener interprets a preacher's word, according to his own views. Having seen his kith and kin, Arjuna, out of delusion, thought it proper, to abandon his duty of fighting. So, he interpreted the Lord's word, according to his view, that He was praising the attainment of Self-realization, by renouncing actions.

'Punaryogaṁ ca śaṁsasi'—The Lord, in the thirty-eighth verse of the fourth chapter, declared, "He who is perfected in Yoga, finds this knowledge (wisdom) of the Self, certainly without the aid of any other spiritual discipline." Keeping this fact in mind, Arjuna says to the Lord, that sometimes He praises the Discipline of Knowledge (4/33), while at other time He commands the Discipline of Action (4/41).

'Yacchreya etayorekaṁ tanme brūhi suniścitam'—This question, was put by Arjuna, in the seventh verse of the second chapter also. In response, the Lord, having explained Karmayoga, ordered Arjuna to perform action, being established in Yoga, (even-mindedness), in the forty-seventh and forty-eighth verses of the second chapter. Again, in the second verse of the third chapter, Arjuna asked the Lord, "Tell me decisively, the one way by which I may attain to the highest good, (bliss or salvation)." In response, the Lord, in the thirtieth verse of the third chapter, ordered him to fight, being free from desire, feeling of mineness and mental woe (grief) while, in the thirty-fifth verse He declared, "Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit than the duty of another well discharged."

In this chapter also, the Lord clearly declares, "The unselfish performance of action, is better than the renunciation of action" (5/2); "a Karmayogī is easily set free, from bondage" (5/3); "renunciation is difficult to attain, without Yoga (Karmayoga) but a Karmayogī attains, quickly, the Absolute" (5/6). Thus, the Lord explains to Arjuna, that he should follow the Discipline of Action, by which he can attain to the Absolute, very quickly and easily.

Arjuna was, especially interested in attaining salvation. So, time and again, he asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, the way to attain salvation (2/7; 3/2; 5/1). A keen desire, plays an important role, in attaining salvation. Even without dispassion, a striver having a keen desire for salvation, can follow the Discipline of Action, in order to attain his aim of salvation. Arjuna was not totally dispassionate, but he had a keen desire to attain salvation, and so he was a deserving candidate.

The thirty-second verse of the first chapter and the eighth verse of the second chapter, reveal that, not to speak of the kingdom on earth, Arjuna does not even desire to attain, an unrivalled sovereignty, over the gods. But it does not mean that Arjuna had no desire to gain a kingdom and pleasures, because he said

that he longed neither for victory nor kingdom nor pleasures, by slaying his kinsmen. It means, that he was prepared to gain victory or kingdom, without slaying his kinsmen. Again, in the sixth verse of the second chapter, he said, "We don't know whether we shall conquer them, or they will conquer us, and we do not want to live by slaying them." It means, that if it was certain, that they would conquer the enemy and if they could get the kingdom without slaying them, they were prepared to gain it. Further, in the thirty-seventh verse of the second chapter, the Lord said to Arjuna, that he would be benefited in either case. If he was killed, he would go to heaven, and if he became victorious, he would enjoy the earth. Had Arjuna, no desire, in the least, to go to heaven and to enjoy the worldly pleasures, the Lord, perhaps, would not utter such words. It means, that Arjuna could not cultivate real dispassion, but he had a desire to attain salvation, which is also clear in this verse.



*Link:—Now, the Lord answers Arjuna's question.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

सन्न्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।  
तयोस्तु कर्मसन्न्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

*śrībhagavānurvāca*

sannyāsaḥ karmayogaśca niḥśreyasakarāvubhau  
tayostu karmasannyāsātkarmayogo viśiṣyate

The Blessed Lord said:

'Sannyāsa' (discipline of knowledge) and 'Karmayoga' (discipline of action) both lead to salvation. But of the two 'Karmayoga' is superior to 'Sāṅkhyayoga'. 2

*Comment:—*

[According to the principle of the Lord every person can