

Sixth Chapter

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of the fifth chapter, Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, which of the two, the Discipline of Knowledge or the Discipline of Disinterested Action, is better. Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, "Both of them lead to supreme bliss, but Yoga of action is superior to the Yoga of knowledge (5/2)."

Lord Kṛṣṇa described, upto the twenty-sixth verse of the fifth chapter, how these lead to supreme bliss. Then, He described in brief the Discipline of Meditation, in two verses, which is helpful in the Discipline of Knowledge as well as Action and it leads to supreme bliss, independently. Then, He concluded the fifth chapter, by explaining the glory of devotion towards Him out of His own will.

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the sixth chapter further explains, the superiority of the Discipline of Disinterested Action.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।

स सन्न्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥ १ ॥

śrībhagavān uvāca

anāśritaḥ karmaphalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ

sa sannyāsī ca yogī ca na niragnirna cākriyaḥ

The Blessed Lord said:

He who undertakes action without desiring its fruit, is both a Sannyāsī (Sāṅkhyayogī) and a Yogī (Karmayogī). He is not a Sannyāsī (renouncer), one who has merely renounced the sacred fire (ritual) and is not a Karmayogī, who has merely stopped all actions. (1)

Comment:—

'Anāśritaḥ karmaphalam'—Lord Kṛṣṇa, appears to say, that a

man should not depend on men, things, incidents, circumstances and actions etc., because they are all perishable and kaleidoscopic, and he himself, being a fragment of God, is imperishable and constant. So, how can the perishable, satisfy the imperishable? Man thus feels a void. Moreover, he gets attached to them and that attachment is the cause of his birth in good and evil bodies (Gītā 13/21). If he renounces this attachment, he may realize emancipation which is axiomatic. In fact, he is naturally emancipated. But, it is because of attachment that he cannot realize this emancipation. Therefore the Lord declares, that a person should discharge his duty for duty's sake, without having any attachment to the fruit of action. Abandoning the fruit of action, a Yogī attains peace in the form of God-realization; whereas, he who works with a selfish motive, being attached to the fruit of action, is bound (Gītā 5/12).

A man, without depending on anyone of the three bodies—physical, subtle and causal, which are the fruits of actions, should use them in the welfare of all beings. He should, render selfless service to others, with the physical body, think of the welfare and salvation of others with the subtle-body, and offer stability (trance) acquired through the causal body, for the welfare of the world. These bodies belong to the world, not to us and so, they are for the service of the world, not for us. They have their identity with the world, while they are distinct from the self. Not to depend on these bodies means, 'not to expect the fruit of action', and to work for the welfare of the world means, 'to discharge one's duty'. One who, discharges one's duty for duty's sake, without expecting its fruit viz., serves the world, with worldly things. Being a Karmayogī, is extolled as a Sannyāsī in this verse, and one who renounces mineness from the worldly things, is a Tyāgī i.e., Yogī.

The result, of discharging duty without expecting its fruit, will be that he will not develop new attachment, as he does not

perform actions for himself; and old attachment will perish, by doing good to others. By performing actions, his impulse for actions will also disappear. Thus renunciation of attachment, will spontaneously lead to salvation. The desire, to get hold of the perishable is bondage, and to renounce this desire is, emancipation. The method to attain emancipation, is that one should not depend on the perishable viz., should not have any affinity for it.

'Kāryam karma karoti yaḥ'—'Kāryam' and 'duty' are synonyms. What can be easily performed, is a must, and what can never and be forsaken, is called a duty. Discharge of duty is not impossible, not even hard. What ought not to be done, is not duty, it is 'Akartavya' (that should not be done). Activities, which ought not to be done are of two types. (1) Those that are beyond our capacity. (2) Those which are forbidden by scriptures and traditions. Such activities, are never to be done. The gist is, that we should resort to prescribed duties without expecting any return, with a detached spirit, for the welfare of others. One should, discharge one's duty, in accordance with the ordinance of scriptures, for the welfare of others and without expecting its fruit, in order to do away with attachment for action, as well as its fruit.

Actions, are performed, with two attitudes of mind—for obtaining worldly things and for wiping out attachment for actions and their fruits. The inspiration to perform actions, with the latter attitude, is given here.

'Sa sannyāsī ca yogī ca'—He who, discharges his duty in the above mentioned way, is a Sannyāsī and a Yogī. He is a Sannyāsī, because he discharges his duty without attachment for action and its fruit and is a Yogī, because he remains equanimous in pleasure and pain, while discharging his duty.

His sense, of doership and enjoyership, is destroyed by doing actions without expecting any reward. Thus all his links with

actions, and the fruits are, totally cut asunder. Therefore, that Karmayogī has been called a 'Sannyāsī.'

Arjuna thought it better to renounce the physical performance of actions and thus be a Sannyāsī. So, in 2/5, Arjuna said, that it was better to live on alms, than to wage war. So Lord Kṛṣṇa, says to Arjuna, "O Arjuna, the conception you have about a Sannyāsī is not right. He, who discharges his duty for duty's sake, without being attached to the fruit of action, is a real Sannyāsī."

'Na niragñiḥ'—By forgoing household fire viz., 'Havana' and sense-objects etc., a person, is not a Sannyāsī in the real sense. Till he has importance and attraction for material objects, he cannot be a real Sannyāsī.

'Na akriyāḥ'—Generally, people think that a Yogī, is he who abandons all things and actions, and leads a secluded life in a state of trance. But, Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to say, that a Yogī, is he who discharges his duty, by ceasing to depend on the perishable viz., without expecting any fruit from action. A secluded life, with senses under control, may inspire man to attain some accomplishments (Siddhi), but it cannot lead him to God-realization. By merely discarding actions physically, he cannot be called, a Karmayogī. A Yogī, in the real sense, is he who performs his duty and having no dependence at all, on perishable objects.

A man, has an instinct for action. So sometimes, it is observed that good strivers who attempted to devote themselves to adoration and meditation in solitude, had to engage themselves in performing actions, for the welfare of others, by giving up their secluded life. The momentum of the impulse for action, is pacified, only when actions are performed selflessly solely for the welfare of others. In that case, equanimity is attained and that equanimity leads to God-realization.

An Exceptional Fact

The feelings, of egoism (I'ness) and attachment or Mineness,

are man-made. First, a man accepts that he is a householder, but when he becomes a Sādhū, he says that he is a Sādhū. Thus his egoism changes. Similarly, he has attachment for a thing which he possesses. But, when he gives it to someone, permanently, he has no attachment left for it. It proves, that feelings of egoism and attachment, are not real but are only assumed. Had they been real, these might not have ceased to be, because 'The real, never ceases to be' and if it ceases to be, it means that it is not real, but is unreal, as 'The unreal has no existence' (Gītā 2/16).

The Self (soul), which is the base of egoism and attachment, is a fragment of God and is ever-existent and has identity with God, Who pervades everywhere. In the self, there is neither egoism nor attachment, but man by identifying himself with the body and the worldly things, accepts these as in him. Actually, he is free and capable of identifying himself with them. But, it is upto him, whether he accepts this identification or does not. It is not so, that he is not free or capable to breaking off, this identification. It is, he himself who has accepted this affinity with the body and the world, and not otherwise. Therefore, he who can assume this connection, can also snap it. Every human being, is free to accept that he is a householder or a Sādhū. Similarly he can accept things as his own or not his. He accepts, that he is a baby, a boy, a youth and an old man at different stages of life. Similarly, he accepts toys as his own in babyhood or boyhood while in youth and old age he accepts money and property etc., as his own. Thus, he can accept an affinity or renounce it. This affinity, can be renounced easily, because it is based on mere assumption.

The Self is eternal while the body and the world, are transient. Therefore, affinity between the eternal and the transient cannot be everlasting. When the self accepts this affinity, it seems that egoism and attachment are part and parcel of the self and it is difficult to renounce them. But it is wrong. This affinity is not

real, it is only an assumed one. Because the self is the illuminator and the onlooker, while the body is an object to be illumined and looked on; the Self is beyond space, while a body is confined to space. The self is sentient, while the body is insentient; the self is the knower, while the body is to be known. The Self is the knower, till relation with the body is there. In the absence of this relation, the Self is Knowledge-incarnate. In that knowledge, there is neither 'I', nor 'mine'. There is total negation of egoism and mineness. Thus, they are poles apart. The self, actually is none else, but the Absolute, Who neither has, nor had, nor will have egoism and attachment, or mineness in the least.

Appendix—The entire universe from an ant upto the abode of Brahmā, is the fruit of action. The world is formed of objects, persons and actions. Everything is acquired and is lost, there is union and disunion of every person, and every action begins and ends. The man, who having renounced dependence on the three—things, persons and actions, discharges his duty, is a true Sannyāsī and a Yogī. He who, without renouncing the desire for the fruit of action, renounces mere sacred fire, is not a true sannyāsī and he, who renounces performance of actions, is not a true Yogī. The reason is that a man gets bound by desire for the fruit of actions, not by fire or actions.

In the third verse of the third chapter the Lord mentioned the two fold path—the path of knowledge and the path of action. Then in the fourth and the fifth verses of the fifth chapter the Lord mentioned that both Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga bear the same fruit. Now the Lord with the same notion declares that he who has renounced the desire for the fruit of action, is a real Sāṅkhyayogī and a real Karmayogī. It means that by mere cessation of the functions of the mind a man does not become a Yogī. He becomes a Yogī only when he renounces the desire for the fruit of actions. The reason is that so long as the the desire for the fruit of actions persists, by cessation of the functions

of mind 'Siddhis' (occult powers or accomplishments) can be achieved, but salvation can not be attained.



Link:—In the preceding verse, it is mentioned that he, who is a Sannyāsī is a Yogī. So, in the next verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the relationship between Karma Sannyāsa (Discipline of Knowledge) and Karmayoga (Discipline of Action).

यं सन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।

न ह्यसन्यस्तसङ्कल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ २ ॥

yaṁ sannyāsamiti prāhuryogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava
na hyasannyastasaṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana

O Pāṇḍava, what they speak of as Sannyāsa, know that to be the same as Karma Yoga; for none becomes a Yogī without renouncing thought of the world. 2

Comment:—

'Yaṁ sannyāsamiti prāhuryogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava'—In the beginning of the fifth chapter, Lord Kṛṣṇa explained, that the Yoga of Knowledge and the Yoga of Action, both lead to Supreme Bliss (5/2), and the supreme state, is attained equally by both the means (5/5) viz., both of them are the same. Similarly, here He points out, that as a Sannyāsī is a renouncer, a Karmayogī, is also a renouncer.

In the ninth verse of the eighteenth chapter also, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "An action which is performed as a duty, giving up attachment and fruit, is regarded as 'Sāttvika' form of renunciation." By this renunciation, a man becomes a renouncer, or a Yogī, as he totally gets detached, from objects and actions. Similarly, a Sannyāsī renounces doership, and is thus a renouncer. It means, that there is no difference between a Yogī and a Sannyāsī viz., both are the same. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the third verse of the fifth chapter, said, "The Karmayogī should ever be considered