



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 5: Karma-Sannyāsa-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-12), Sunday, 07 April 2024

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YouTube Link: https://youtu.be/hXPAe_px1ZI

All paths (Karma, Jñāna, Bhakti) lead to the same goal

The 5th chapter is **Karma SaṁnyāsaYoga - the Yoga of Action and Knowledge.**

The session started with soulful prayer followed by Deepa Prajwalan, which signifies driving away darkness of ignorance by the light of knowledge. It was followed by Guru Vandana for paying obeisance in the feet of Guru, who is kind enough to help us progress in this spiritual path.

सदा शिव समारंभं शंकराचार्य मध्यमम् ॥
अस्मद् परार्च्यन्तां वन्दे गुरु परंपराम् ॥

Through the grace of Bhagavān and good karmas of our previous birth, we have got the chance to learn Gītā, spread the knowledge of Gītā and walk on this golden path provided by Gītā. Gradually we have progressed from Level-1 through level-2 to Level-3, and are studying the 5th chapter, Karma SaṁnyāsaYoga.

Bhagavān has explained about Sāṁkhya Yoga in the 2nd chapter, Karma Yoga in the 3rd, and Jnana Karma SaṁnyāsaYoga in the 4th chapter. 'What is meant by 'Karma Yoga?' The general meaning of Yoga is to get connected to the Supreme SELF or Param Satya. Our work transpires to 'Karma Yoga' when we move from VYESHTI to Samasti. Vyeshti represents individual or self, and Samasti, a large group. When we work on the principle of **sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ** i.e. welfare of all, we are moving towards Karma Yoga.

Arjuna was under the impression that Saṁnyāsa meant begging for alms. In the 2nd chapter, he said that he would rather beg than fight against his own people. So, Bhagavān explained in detail that Saṁnyāsa doesn't mean abandoning of karmas. Rather, it meant not having the DOER feeling.

In the 4th chapter, HE started explaining the importance of Jnana.

sarvam jnana-plavenaiva vrjinam santarisyasi (4-36)

You can cross the ocean of life by the boat of knowledge alone.

jnanagnih sarva-karmani bhasma-sat kurute tatha (4-37)

The fire of knowledge reduces all the actions into ashes.

na hi jnanena sadrsam pavitram iha vidyate (4-38)

There is no purifier in this world as Knowledge.

Arjuna was happy that the lord was telling him the same thing that he wanted, ie. Renunciation from action or fighting. However, the turning point came at the end of the 4th chapter, when Bhagavān said:

***tasmad ajnana-sambhutam hrt-stham jnanasinatmanah
chittvainam samsayam yogam atisthottistha bharata (4-42)***

HE asked Arjuna to cut off the doubts in his mind using the weapon of Knowledge, and rise up and Fight! Arjuna got utterly confused! Up till then, HE was talking about Jnana Yoga and Sanyasa Yoga, but now, HE was advising to go and fight.

Thus, at the end of the 4th chapter, Arjuna comes to the same state of confusion as in 2nd chapter. He again requested Bhagavān to tell what was right for him.

5.1

**arjuna uvācha
sannyāsaṃ(ñ) karmaṇāṃ(ñ) kṛṣṇa, punaryogaṃ(ñ) ca śaṃsasi,
yacchreya etayorekaṃ(n), tanme brūhi suniścitam. 5.1**

Arjuna said :

Kṛṣṇa, you extol Sāṅkhyayoga (the Yoga of Knowledge) and then the Yoga of Action. Pray, tell me which of the two is decidedly conducive to my good.

It is interesting to note that the content of question and the words used by Arjuna in the 2nd and 5th chapter have similarity. There are four words that are common in the 7th shloka of 2nd chapter and 1st shloka of 5th chapter.

- **Yatshreya:** that which is good
- **Bruhi:** please tell
- **Tanme:** unto me
- **Sunishchitam:** definitely

Arjuna tells Sri Krishna that he is confused by HIS words. On one hand, HE was praising renunciation of Karma, and on the other hand, praising Karma Yoga. Hence, he requested Lord to tell him which of these two was indeed good for him.

Let's take an example; we enter a shop and ask for the price of an item. The shop owner gives the price. But the price is not to our liking, and we ask him to quote the best price i.e. the price we want to hear. The shop keeper is repeatedly telling the same price, but we keep insisting, wishing to hear the price that we want it to be. Similarly, Arjuna also wants Bhagavān to speak what he himself wants to hear. From the beginning, Bhagavān is telling the same thing; yet, Arjuna is repeatedly asking HIM to tell him what is best for him. Repetition or Punarupti is generally considered as a dosha or fault. But when it is done as a method to convince or establish the ultimate fact, it is not considered as a dosha.

According to our Śāstras, the meanings and intent of texts or discourses can be understood by applying six methods:

***Upakrama-upasamharau abhyasao purvata phalam
Arthavado pappati lingam tatparya-nirnaye***

- ***Upakrama-upasamhara*** - introduction - conclusion
- ***Abhyasa*** - practice or reiteration
- ***Apurvata*** - unprecedentedness
- ***Phala*** - fruit or result
- ***Arthavada*** - explanatory statement
- ***Upapatti*** - reasoning

Sri Krishna is reiterating HIS ideas to help Arjuna get the point. Arjuna is infact a medium, through whom Bhagavān is communicating to us. HE is stressing that all yogas are the same, but we try to dissect and differentiate it into different categories like Jnana, Karma, Bhakti, etc. One can be an epitome of all the yogas, like Hanuman ji. He is a Jnana yogi from the beginning. When Sri Ram ji and others were discussing the ways to cross the sea to reach Lanka, he was a silent spectator till Jhambavan ji reminded him of his powers. Then he took a great leap and crossed the sea, as a Karma yogi. There, when he met Vibhishana and Sita mata who is a personification of Bhakti, his Bhakti yoga was ignited.

All the paths will lead one to the destination. In Bhagavad Gītā equal importance is given to all paths, therefore one can choose any path suitable to oneself. Bhagavān does not insist on a single path. Whichever path one chooses is immaterial as long as he is proceeding towards the correct destination. You may use any transport system like train, bus, airplane etc. to reach a particular place. Similarly the correct practice of Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga or Jnana yoga will lead to the same goal. In present times we have started giving more importance to the mundane ways like method of worshipping, doing anushtanas etc., rather than focusing on following the tenets as described in Bhagavad Gītā to attain the ultimate goal. For progressing in spiritual path, we need determination and correct knowledge on the practice.

5.2

śrībhagavānuvāca sannyāsaḥ(kh) karmayogaśca, niḥśreyasakarāvubhau, tayostu karmasannyāsāt, karmayogo viśiṣyate. 5.2

Śrī Bhagavān said :

The Yoga of Knowledge and the Yoga of Action both lead to supreme Bliss. Of the two, however, the Yoga of Action, being easier of practice, is superior to the Yoga of Knowledge.

Bhagavān is telling that both, Karma Saṁnyāsa yoga and Karma yoga, lead to the same destination of liberation. However, Karma yoga is superior to Karma Saṁnyāsa yoga, because it is comparatively easier for everyone to practice. Anyone can cross the ocean of life and death through Karma yoga. Suppose a family has to cross a river, and has two options - swimming, and taking a boat. Swimming is not an ideal option for the physically weak, elderly or little children. The best option would be the boat, which will carry everyone safely across the river.

Bhagavān is thinking of the welfare of larger group of people, that is why Karma Yoga is recommended over Karma Saṁnyāsa yoga. The former is easier to follow than the latter. But it should be kept in mind that practicing of Karma yoga is not easy either, because in the path of Karma yoga, we need to renounce following three things:

- Attachment to Karma
- Attachment to result of karma
- Ahamkara buddhi

We have to *forgo the feeling of Doership & Ego*, which is an integral part of common human being. We also need to quit the expectation or fruit of karma. Karma Saṁnyāsa is not the same as Ashrama Saṁnyāsa, where the Saṁnyāsi has to follow certain strict rules like wearing special types of clothes, renouncing everything, cutting off all worldly attachments etc. Karma Saṁnyāsa yoga entails a change in the feelings/ instincts of mind leading to vrittiantara. The practice of Karma Saṁnyāsayoga should lead to changes in the basal vrittis of mind so that feeling of doer-ship transforms to the thought that the Lord is the doer, and we are just a medium (nimittamatram) playing the role assigned by HIM.

nimitta-matram bhava savya-sacin (11-33)

When we are free from feelings of ME & MINE, and surrender to HIM, it is called Vrittayantara Saṁnyāsa

Bhagavān is propagating the path of Karma SaṁnyāsaYoga in the 3rd shloka.

5.3

**jñeyaḥ(s) sa nityasannyāsī, yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati,
nirdvandvo hi mahābāho, sukhaṁ(m) bandhātpramucyate. 5.3**

The Karmayogī who neither hates nor desires should ever be considered as an ever renunciant. For, Arjuna, he who is free from the pairs of opposites is easily liberated from bondage.

He, who neither hates anybody and who is free from pairs of opposites like paap-punya, maan-apmaan, sukha-dukha, laabh-haani, etc., is easily freed from the bondage of action, and becomes a Nitya sannyāsī. He does not desire anything from anyone. There are only two things that bind human to worldly things - ME & MINE. We falsely think that we very much belong to this world but the fact is just the opposite.

मैं नहीं मेरा नहीं यह तन किसी का है दिया
जो भी अपने पास है वह धन किसी का है दिया।।

देने वाले ने दिया,
वह भी दिया किस शान से
मेरा है यह लेने वाला,
कह उठा अभिमान से
मैं, मेरा यह कहने वाला,
मन किसी का है दिया।।

जो मिला है वह हमेशा,
पास रह सकता नहीं ।
कब बिछुड़ जाये यह कोई,
राज कह सकता नहीं,
जिन्दगानी का खिला,

मधुवन किसी का है दिया ।।

जग की सेवा खोज अपनी,
प्रीति उनसे कीजिये,
जिन्दगी का राज है,
यह जानकर जी लीजिये,
साधना की राह पर,
यह साधन किसी का है दिया ।।

When this feeling that nothing belongs to us and everything has been given by HIM, becomes stronger, and we don't have any ownership of these worldly objects, then we proceed towards the reality of our existence.

Bhagavān has created this world and provided everything for everyone. But we have started saying this is mine and that is yours.

As Parama puja Swamiji maharaj always says, there are two types of creations or Śrīṣhti;

- **ISHWAR KRITA** created by **Bhagavān**, and
- **JIVA KRITA** created by **man**.

Ishwara created this earth (Prithvi), but humans started partitioning it by creating borders. HE created water in the form of Sea and rivers but humans started dividing the resources for selfish motives. Though LORD is the creator of everything, we wrongly boast about our contribution for the same. Even on the death bed, we are entangled in worldly and immortal objects like family, property etc. instead of thinking about merging with HIM.

A person who renounces the feeling of 'Doership,' becomes free from pairs of opposites and the narrow mentality of ME & MINE becoming more inclusive, and see the Divine in everyone, is a Nitya Sanyasi. Sri Krishna addresses Arjuna as mahabaho (strong armed) and says that when a person frees himself from the feeling of doer-ship, pairs of opposites, not hating anyone, and does not expect anything from anyone, then he is in path of becoming a karma sannyasi, and will be freed / released from bandhana of this world or bondage of actions.

5.4

**sāṅkhyayogau pṛthagbālāḥ(ph), pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ,
ekamapyāsthitaḥ(s) samyag, ubhayorvindate phalam. 5.4**

It is the ignorant, not the wise, who say that Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga lead to divergent results. For, one who is firmly established in either, gets the fruit of both which is the same, viz., God-realization.

Bhagavān is reiterating that both Sāṅkhyā yoga and karma yoga lead to the same goal. Both, karma and karma sannyasa, are same and lead to liberation. Therefore, every person has freedom to choose any path as far as they lead to the ultimate truth. HE also says that the assumption that Sāṅkhyā (Jnana) and Karma yoga are different, is childish. Wise people know this fact that both the paths, **Karma and Jnana lead to the one and same destination i.e. Liberation.**

5.5

**yatsāṅkhyaiḥ(ph) prāpyate sthānaṃ(n), tadyogairapi gamyate,
ekaṃ(m) sāṅkhyam(ñ) ca yogaṃ(ñ) ca, yaḥ(ph) paśyati sa paśyati. 5.5**

The (supreme) state which is reached by the Sāṅkhyayogī is attained also by the Karmayogī. Therefore, he alone who sees Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga as identical so far as their result goes, sees truly.

The state that is attained by Sāṅkhyā yogis is the same that is attained (gamyate) by Karma Yogis. Bhagavān removes the confusion by saying that a person who visualizes both Sāṅkhyā and Karma as same is the true seer (knower of truth) and is able to see the facts as they are. Through surrendering all fruits of karma at the feet of the Divine, the karma yogi attains the same Paramārtha or Moksha. **The practice of detachment is promoted in both sannyasa and karma yoga, while renunciation of fruit leads to Karma SaṁnyāsaYoga.**

5.6

**sannyāsastu mahābāho, duḥkhamāptumayogataḥ,
yogayukto munirbrahma, nacireṇādhigacchati. 5.6**

Without Karmayoga, however, Sāṅkhyayoga i.e., renunciation of doership in relation to all activities of the mind, senses and body is difficult to accomplish; whereas the Karmayogī, who keeps his mind fixed on God, reaches Brahma in no time, Arjuna.

It is difficult (klesha) to proceed to Karma Saṁnyāsa yoga without practicing the Karma yoga. One can practice karma yoga by dedicating one's work for welfare of everyone (**sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ**), and also practice the art of abandoning the fruit of action. Being steady on Karma yoga is not easy but without practicing this type of renunciation it is very tough to proceed in the path of Saṁnyāsa yoga. The knowledgeable Muni or yogayukta (one who is connected to the yoga) does manana, which is very important in the path of Sādhanā. Without manana, one can't go forward in spiritual path because worshipping or praying as per instructions of someone may not keep us steady in the path on long term unless we understand the logic behind these practices. We can't go forward and remain firm on our path if there are confusion and wavering in our minds. In this regard manana is very important, where one delves into the logics of the practices to know it's efficacy and necessity.

Understanding the logic behind the Sādhanā will make us progress faster in our path to liberation. Attaining the ultimate truth i.e. Brahma is not getting some object but rather becoming a character that is nearer to the creator - 'aham Brahmāsmi.' Slowly we can refine ourselves with HIS by surrendering all the fruits of our actions in HIS lotus feet. Following these steps, we can become karma yogi, and attain the knowledge. First, we need to practice the art of karma, and surrender all karmas at HIS Feet to attain Chitta shuddhi (Purification of mind) so that we are able to see our real self which is "sat chitt ananda" Swarup.

With our wrong doings, we have collected lot of impurities (vikaras) in the whole life time, and have distanced ourselves from our true self. The distance between ourselves and our real peaceful core can be reduced by daily reading of Bhagavad Gītā, and following the path of righteousness. **Gītā is an instrument that takes us closer to our real Ananda swarupa self.** This is the reason why people feel happy, stress free, and at peace after reading Gītā and following its principles.

5.7

yogayukto viśuddhātmā, vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ, sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā, kurvannapi na lipyate. 5.7

The Karmayogī, who has fully conquered his mind and mastered his senses, whose heart is pure, and who has identified himself with the Self of all beings (viz., God), remains untainted, even though performing action.

Everyone is familiar with the story of the race between rabbit and tortoise. **The rabbit can be equated to a Jnana yogi, and the tortoise to a Karma yogi.** Although it had the strength of Jnana, the rabbit failed to perform its karma of walking, and hence failed to reach its destination. The turtle on the other hand, was slow but steadily proceeded to the goal. The path of Jnana yoga is faster but difficult with pitfalls, where sometimes the yogi may deviate from the path of karma, like the rabbit in the story, and may lag behind. Meanwhile, Karma Yogi is slower but proceeds towards the goal in a cautious manner. **A Jnana yogi cannot reach his goal of liberation, without being a karma yogi.** He cannot proceed faster in the path of his Sādhanā if he leaves his legitimate karmas.

- **yogayukta**: one who is devoted in the path of action and is connected with the Lord through devotion
- **viśuddhātmā**: one whose mind is pure
- **vijitātmā**: one who has conquered his self
- **jitendriyaḥ**: who has complete control over his Indriyas or physical senses
- **sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā**: sees the supreme reality reflected in all beings

A person who possesses these above-mentioned qualities, will be able to perform all his actions without getting tainted or bonded (lipyate) by them.

5.8, 5.9

naiva kiñcitkaromīti, yukto manyeta tattvavit, paśyañśṛṅvanspṛśañjighran, naśnangacchansvapañśvasan. 5.8 pralapanvisrjanḡrḡhan, nunmiṣannimiṣannapi indriyāṅindriyārtheṣu, vartanta iti dhārayan. 5.9

However, the Sāṅkhyayogī, who knows the reality of things, must believe that he does nothing, even though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating or drinking, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, answering the calls of nature, grasping, and opening or closing the eyes, holding that it is the senses alone that are moving among their objects.

The yoga yukta remains absorbed in the self, and knows that he is not the doer, and sees the same fragment of Bhagavān in everyone and in everything. Even while performing mundane actions such as

- **Paśyañ**: seeing
- **śṛṅvan**: hearing
- **spṛśañ**: touching
- **jighran**: smelling
- **naśnan**: eating
- **gacchan**: going
- **svapañ**: sleeping
- **śvasan**: breathing
- **pralapan**: speaking
- **visrjan**: letting go/discharging

- **grhṇan:** receiving
- **nunmiṣannimiṣan:** opening and closing the eyes

The yogi is aware of the fact that all the senses (indriyāṇī) are moving towards sense objects (īndriyārtheṣu), but it is not he who is the Doer or affected one. In this way **he remains absorbed in true self, remains detached from the karma, and is untainted.**

5.10

**brahmaṇyādhāya karmāṇi, saṅgaṃ(n) tyaktvā karoti yaḥ,
lipyate na sa pāpena, padmapatramivāmbhasā. 5.10**

He who acts offering all actions to God, and shaking off attachment, remains untouched by sin, as the lotus leaf by water.

In the 6th and 7th shlokas, Bhagavān explained how karma yogi can become untainted; in 8th and 9th shlokas, HE explained how Sāṃkhya yogi can become untainted. Here, HE explains how a bhakti yogi can become untainted.

Citing the example of Lotus leaf which remains unattached to the water, **the bhakti yogi should remain unaffected by the samsara and offer the fruits of the Karma in the feet of Brahma.**

5.11

**kāyena manasā buddhyā, kevalairindriyairapi,
yoginaḥ(kh) karma kurvanti, saṅgaṃ(n) tyaktvātmaśuddhaye. 5.11**

The Karmayogīs perform action only with their senses, mind, intellect and body as well, without the feeling of mine in respect of them and shaking off attachment, simply for the sake of self-purification.

How Karma yogis perform their karma is explained here. Having given up attachment, the Karma yogi performs all the actions with his body (**kāyena**), mind (**manasā**), intellect (**buddhyā**) and sense organs (**indriyai**), just for purification (**kevalai**) of his self.

Whenever we do some work, we have some personal agenda or intention/wish; so, it can't purify or clarify our self. We are always thinking of our own welfare, unlike the Yogi who does it to achieve Atmashuddhi or purification through offering everything at HIS Feet, **Śrī Krishnaarpana Mastu.**

5.12

**yuktaḥ(kh) karmaphalaṃ(n) tyaktvā, śāntimāpnoti naiṣṭhikīm,
ayuktaḥ(kh) kāmakāreṇa, phale sakto nibadhyate. 5.12**

Offering the fruit of actions to God, the Karmayogī attains everlasting peace in the form of God-realization; whereas, he who works with a selfish motive, being attached to the fruit of actions through desire, gets tied down.

A yogi (yuktaḥ) is not bound with the fruits of his action and attains long lasting peace. But an unsteady mind who is not a yogi (ayuktaḥ), is attached to the fruits of his actions, and does karma with some desire/Vāsanā. He is drawn in a spiral of Karma & Vāsanā, where he does a karma for fulfilling a Vāsanā; that leads to a new desire and another karma, so on and so forth. The vicious karma cycle goes on & on. **In order to break this cycle, we should break free from the**

Vāsanās, work for the Divine by renouncing the doership.

In further shlokas, Bhagavān will explain about Jnana yoga and Moksha. It will be dealt in the next session.

The interpretation ended with naam sankirtana:

HARI SHARNAM, HARI SHARANAM.....

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION:

Anita Agarwal ji

Q: Does the use of pesticides to kill insects amount to HIMSA?

A: Yes. Instead of chemical pesticides use organic sprays that drive away these insects without killing them.

Dr Shashi Thakur ji

Q: How do we reach our real and ultimate atmaswarup?

A: When we control our Man, buddhi and Indriyas, we move towards obtaining samyama. After that, we can practice to increase our sattvic nature to slowly move towards our real self. It all depends upon abhyasa (practice). We need to put our efforts, in this birth and the coming ones. We need to continually strive to take our vrittis away from worldly things and move towards HIM.

J Shreevidya ji

Q: What is the difference between Fate & Karma?

A: Fate is different from Karma, but they are interrelated. Getting an opportunity to learn Gītā is fate; not working diligently to learn Gītā and failing to practice the principles is karma. Chances come from fate; utilizing the change or letting it go is karma.

Shubhangi Mokakshi ji

Q: It is told that there should not be attachment with karma, but in corporate world if a quiet person, who does his duty and attains targets but does not tell about it then he suffers.

A: It should be understood that speaking about your achievement also comes under your duty, so you need to project yourself properly. If you are shying away from doing so, then probably you are trying to prove your deficiency by glorifying it as your detachment to karma phala, which actually is not.

Richa ji

Q: How can I know whether my karma is right or wrong?

A: If something gives you the peace, and also makes the other person happy, then it is right.

The interactive session ended with thanksgiving and concluding parthana, followed by recital of Hanuman Chalisa.



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Thank you-For reading the summary

You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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