



## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 5: Karma-Sannyāsa-Yoga

1/3 (Ślōka 1-10), Saturday, 04 October 2025

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/Cap-ZTCTFAk>

**Only by practising detachment while performing Nitya Karma, can one truly become a Karma Yogi, thereby attaining true liberation.**

The **5th chapter** of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā is **Karma-Sannyāsa-Yoga - The Yoga of Action and Knowledge.**

The session started with prayers to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna followed by the lighting of the auspicious lamp so that we are guided towards the path of Dharma, with the blessings of the Paramātmā, our Guru and the light of knowledge.

**gururbrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ gururdevo maheśvaraḥ.  
guruḥ sākṣāt parabrahma tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ.**

Guru Brahmā, the Creator, Guru Vishnu, the Preserver, Guru Devo Maheshwarah (Śiva), the Destroyer, are the Guru Sakshat ParaBrahmā, the Supreme Being or Almighty Guru is the embodiment of Para Brahmā and to HIM I bow.

**kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmāne.  
praṇataḥ kleśanāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ.**

Obeisance to Krishna, Vaasudeva, Hari the Paramātmā, Govinda, we bow our heads to you for the destruction of all our grief.

**om pārthāya pratibodhitāṁ bhagavatā nārāyaṇena svayaṁ,  
vyāsena grathitāṁ purāṇamuninā madhye mahābhārate.  
advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇiṁ bhagavatīmaṣṭādaśādhyāyinīṁ,  
amba tvāmanusandadhāmi bhagavadgīte bhavadveṣiṇīṁ**

O Bhagavadgītā, you have been told to Arjuna, the son of Prtha by Sriman Narayana Himself and afterwards you were included within the Mahabharata by the ancient sage Vyasa. Your eighteen divine chapters are like a shower of the immortal nectar of wisdom of the Absolute. O mother, destroyer of man's rebirth into the darkness of this mortal world, upon you I meditate.

The discourse began with seeking the blessings of Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, our Guru, Param Pujya Śrī Govind Dev Giriji Maharaj, and a very warm welcome to all the Gītā Sadhaks present at the session.

We are all discussing something very important in our lives, we are fortunate to be born as human beings in this beautiful country and blessed to be learning the teachings of Śrī Krishna. We have celebrated Navaratri recently, worshipping Devi Ma Shakti in her various forms. This one form of Devi Ma has been transforming herself in different forms and helping us wade through difficult stages of life. She is present in all forms, including the revered form of Gītā Maiyya, she is here as a vāṅmaya-svarūpa of Śrī Krishna Himself. Śrī Krishna's incarnation in literary form is manifested in Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā.

### **Why is Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā so relevant to us?**

It is because we are all seeking liberation and freedom from the continuous cycle of birth and death. It does seem a difficult path ahead since we see all the great saints and mahatmas doing Tapasya and practising renunciation that looks inconceivable for us mere mortals. It is here that Śrī Krishna comes to our rescue and has taken a literary form of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā to guide us in the path towards liberation. His teachings help us navigate the difficult path without making external and outward life changes and yet by incorporating internal changes and purifying our characteristics we can attain the same liberation as attained by Sanyasis.

Karma Yoga by itself is distributed into three chapters in Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, As Karma Yoga (Chapter 3), as Jnana Karma Sannyasa Yoga (Chapter 4) and as Karma Sannyasa Yoga (Chapter 5). This demonstrates the relevance and need to understand the Karma Yoga. Out of the 18 chapters in Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, 1/6 or 3 chapters is dedicated to Karma Yoga because it is most relevant to most of the Sadhaks. The fine distribution done by Bhagavān Ved Vyas ji is for us to understand the might of knowledge in Karma Yoga.

### **The Intersection of Karma and Sāṃkhya Yoga in Chapter 5**

In the 5th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā, Śrī Krishna elaborates on the profound intersection between Karma Yoga and Sāṃkhya Yoga. The chapter commences with a thoughtful question from Arjuna, reflecting his inner turmoil and confusion. Like many of us, Arjuna finds himself dazed, struggling to reconcile the different teachings presented by Śrī Krishna—each seemingly more significant than the other. He expresses a deep desire to understand the underlying reasoning and context behind these spiritual teachings.

Śrī Krishna introduces Arjuna to two central paths: **Sāṃkhya Yoga**, also known as Buddhi Yoga, which focuses on attaining supreme knowledge and liberation; and **Karma Yoga**, the path of selfless action. Arjuna, displaying his unwavering devotion and commitment, humbly acknowledges his role as a sincere student and devoted disciple, fully surrendering himself to Śrī Krishna's guidance. Driven by his earnest quest for the ultimate truth, Arjuna fervently requests Śrī Krishna to clearly indicate the one definitive path that would lead him to the Supreme Paramātmān. Responding to this plea, Śrī Krishna commences his teachings by imparting knowledge about the Atma (self) and subsequently, the significance of karma (action).

Śrī Krishna had said,

**दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय।**

**बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः॥2.49॥**

*Śrī Krishna advises Arjuna to move higher in his internal motivation toward work. He declares that those who work with the motivation of self-enjoyment are miserly. Those who are detached from the fruits and dedicate their work to a higher cause are superior. And those who offer the fruits to God are truly in knowledge.*

It is very relevant here to reflect why are we referring to this shloka from 2nd chapter, this sequence of teachings that we are discussing is continuation from the 2nd and 3rd chapters. Amid the battlefield, it is a continuous conversation between Bhagwan and Arjuna. The segmentation and sequencing were done by Bhagavan Ved Vyas ji for us to follow and understand better.

Continuing further, Śrī Krishna initially explains Buddhi yoga and extolls its virtues and then he teaches Karma yoga. At the onset of the 3rd Chapter itself, Arjuna starts by saying

**व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।**

**तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ 3.2 ॥**

*Arjuna said: O Janardan, if You consider knowledge superior to action, then why do You ask me to wage this terrible war? My intellect is bewildered by Your ambiguous advice. Please tell me decisively the one path by which I may attain the highest good.*

Arjuna beseeches Śrī Krishna to tell him the one path to take, the one path that is beneficial (**śhreyah**) for him. Śrī Krishna obliges and teaches Arjuna in detail about Karma Yoga, as we have seen through the 3rd and 4th Chapters. Whether Arjuna's confusion was mitigated and what Śrī Krishna taught him, will be discussed in this session.

## 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.

Arjuna had previously pleaded with Śrī Krishna to clearly guide him towards a single, definitive path. Despite Śrī Krishna's explanations, Arjuna's confusion persists, and in this shloka as well, he implores Bhagavān once more to decisively indicate the one path he should follow (**sunishchitam**).

The root of Arjuna's confusion lies in a particular shloka where Śrī Krishna extols the virtues of Sāṅkhyā Yoga.

To recap, what is Sāṅkhyā Yoga as explained by Śrī Krishna- He has stated that true liberation is achieved only through the attainment of pure knowledge. Furthermore, Bhagavān has emphasized that gaining knowledge is superior to all other paths. While elaborating upon Karma Yoga, He also clarified that adherence to the path of Karma Yoga assists in attaining this knowledge. He quoted, "**śraddhāvān labhate jñānam**", meaning "one who has faith attains knowledge." This verse underlines that faith in Karma Yoga is an essential prerequisite for acquiring true knowledge. It was this teaching that led to Arjuna's confusion, prompting him to once again request a clear and beneficial path from Bhagavan (**yat śhreyah**).

Reflecting further, we see the depth of Bhagavān's compassion for a disciple as perplexed as Arjuna. Throughout his questions, Arjuna consistently seeks to understand "what is Superior" for him to follow, rather than merely "what is Beneficial." His unwavering emphasis on Dharma and his willingness to pursue the superior path, regardless of its difficulty, is what endears him to Śrī Krishna. This quality—choosing the right path and steadfastly making the necessary corrections within oneself, no matter how challenging—is precisely what Bhagavān wishes to see in all of us. While there may be many ways to practice Karma Yoga that are beneficial, it is the "Superior" path which ultimately leads to liberation.

To better comprehend Arjuna’s mindset, consider a real-world analogy: when we go to the market to purchase groceries or vegetables, we often bargain for a reasonable price. The seller quotes a price; we propose our buying price. After a couple of rounds of negotiation, we finally ask the seller for “one workable” price—one acceptable to both parties. Why does this negotiation involve so many steps? It is because the buyer has not yet heard what he wants to hear. This mirrors Arjuna’s state of mind. He was reluctant to fight, and when Bhagavān spoke of renunciation and Buddhi yoga, Arjuna was ready to renounce everything and leave. However, when He explained Karma Yoga, it was not the message Arjuna wished to receive; nevertheless, Bhagavān insisted that he perform his duty and fight. Thus, Arjuna’s question about one decisive path that is superior to others arises. Śrī Krishna recognizes this inner turmoil and proceeds to provide further guidance in the subsequent shlokas.

## 5.2

### śrībhagavān uvāca 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 begins his response to Arjuna by stating that both the paths of Karma Sanyasa (renunciation of actions) and Karma Yoga (the yoga of action) lead to liberation, or the ultimate goal (**niḥśhreyasa-karāvubhau**).

Here, Sannyāsa refers to the path of complete renunciation, often identified as Sāṃkhya Yoga. This path is followed by those who seek to attain perfect knowledge through internal detachment. It is important to clarify that Sannyāsa in this context does not refer to the traditional Sannyasa Ashrama, where individuals renounce household life, don ochre robes, and live a minimalist lifestyle.

Śrī Krishna acknowledges that both paths are liberating and assure the seeker of reaching the final destination. However, when Arjuna presses for a definitive answer, Śrī Krishna asserts that if one must choose, Karma Yoga is superior (**karma-yogaḥ viśiṣyate**) to Sāṃkhya Yoga. This can be compared to the relationship between a shopkeeper and a customer: while the seller may present both options as valuable, upon the customer's insistence, he recommends one as the preferred choice. Similarly, Śrī Krishna, while maintaining the essential equality of both paths, designates Karma Yoga as the recommended path when Arjuna seeks certainty.

To further clarify this point, consider an example: suppose a group of people needs to cross a river that is overflowing and turbulent. Those who are expert swimmers might attempt to swim across, relying on their special skills and strengths. However, the weak, the elderly, or women with children may find it difficult or even impossible to cross without help. Now, imagine a boatman arrives with a sturdy boat, offering to ferry everyone across. Clearly, this is a far more accessible and safer way for all to reach the other side.

Karma Yoga is likened to the boat that transports people across the river of life. No special skills or qualifications are required to board the boat—anyone, regardless of ability, can cross safely. With the anchor of detachment, one can easily sail across. This is why Karma Yoga is described as a special boat: it enables everyone, irrespective of their background or capabilities, to traverse the vast ocean of birth and death (**mrtyu-samsara-sagarat**). Both those dedicated to Karma Yoga and the general populace can benefit from this approach.

On the other hand, those who choose to swim across—the Sāṃkhya Yogis—possess the rare abilities required for such a journey. They have the special capacity to grasp self-knowledge (**atma jnana**) and undertake the rigorous practices demanded by Sāṃkhya Yoga. Just as swimming across a raging river requires unique skill, so does following the path of Sāṃkhya Yoga.

For this reason, Śrī Krishna declares that Karma Yoga is superior (**karma-yogaḥ viśhiṣyate**), as it is an inclusive path accessible to all, providing a safe and reliable means to reach the ultimate goal of liberation.

### 5.3

#### **jñeyaḥ(s) sa nityasannyāsī, yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati, nirdvandvo hi mahābāho, sukhaṃ(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.

When Śrī Krishna asserts that Karma Yoga is the superior path, it naturally prompts Arjuna to question why Karma Yoga is considered superior to Sāṃkhya Yoga. Recognising Arjuna’s curiosity and his special place as Śrī Krishna’s favorite, Bhagavān elaborates on the reasons for this superiority. He explains that a Karma Yogi is someone who maintains a continuous state of detachment “**nitya sanyasi**”. Such a person is not influenced by worldly emotions like hate (“**dveṣṭi**”) or desire (“**kāṅkṣati**”). Hate is a strong emotion, often reserved for extreme situations, but a Karma Yogi harbors no such feelings towards anyone, be it humans, insects, or animals.

To appreciate the concept of “*Sannyas*” in this context, it is helpful to contrast it with “*Samsari*”—a worldly citizen. As mentioned earlier, the intention here is not to refer to those practicing “*Sannyasa Ashrama*”, but rather a blend of two Sanskrit terms:

- “**samyat**”, meaning “restrained” or “controlled”
- “**nyasa**”, meaning “placing” or “depositing”.

Together, these terms suggest placing oneself in a state of complete detachment.

Renunciation, or giving up attachments, requires further explanation.

“Attachments” can be illustrated by considering the example of people working in an office. Employees are assigned specific roles or tasks that they enjoy, wish to perform, or are simply given. They may not take up other tasks, regardless of their complexity or relevance. This is a form of attachment to actions (**Karma**). Another form is attachment to results (**Phala sakta**), where one expects something in return, such as salary, awards, or recognition. There is also the attachment of ego (**Ahankar**), the expectation that credit should be given for work done, and the feeling of “I am the doer”. In environments where credit is highly valued, individuals may proudly claim, “Oh, that person was unable to do it, so I did it”, seeking acknowledgment for their actions. Thus, multiple forms of attachment and expectation are present in daily life. Śrī Krishna teaches that if we can gradually detach ourselves from these attachments, it is the true essence of “*Sannyas*” or renunciation.

Śrī Krishna also speaks of non-duality (**nirdvandvaḥ**). In daily life, we encounter dualities such as happiness and pain, praise and criticism. Our reactions to these opposites are often extreme. However, a Karma Yogi maintains equanimity regardless of external circumstances; their demeanour and outlook remain unchanged. Such a person is liberated (**bandhāt pramuchyate**) from all forms of bondage.

It is important to note that these are intrinsic qualities, not just external appearances or makeovers. Karma Yoga requires internal adjustment and transformation, leading to liberation from attachments. Furthermore, the internal characteristics of a Sāṃkhya Yogi as discussed in greater detail in Chapter 13, and the characteristics of a Jnani are essentially the same, as Śrī Krishna will elaborate in subsequent verses.

### **An Example from the Ramayana**

After the war and Ravana's defeat, Vibhishana refused to perform the final rites, insisting that Ravana was too evil to be considered his brother. Sri Rama responded, "If you cannot consider him your brother, please consider Ravana as my brother and complete the rituals." Vibhishana was left speechless, witnessing Sri Rama's magnanimity and purity of heart. Once the war was over, all feelings of enmity vanished within Sri Rama. This act reinforced Sri Rama's status as "**Param Pujya**" and "**Purushottama**".

### **Contemporary Example of Detached Service**

An illustrative example from current times is the RSS, which is celebrating 100 years of its formation. The organization's discipline is evident in the way its volunteers perform service with no expectation of material benefit or recognition. Their acts of help during disasters are rarely publicized, and their identities remain anonymous. This kind of service, or "seva", reflects true detachment—"Samyat nyasa"—and embodies the principles of Sanyasa.

### **Interesting note**

By addressing Arjuna as "**mahā-bāho**" and outlining the characteristics of a Karma Yogi, Śrī Krishna subtly tells Arjuna that he has those very same qualities in him.

### **Reflections**

We live in a very intent driven world today. As children we used to help grandparents out of love and take care of our elders. We also helped our parents with daily chores and anything that they asked out of us. However, in a modern world or society relationship seems to drift into being very transactional. In many societies, children, these days, expect something in return for any help offered. A monetary gift, a toy or a treat seems to be the demand for any help offered or service rendered. Such transactional relationships tend to mask the emotions such love and attachment or even feelings of obligation and respect and there is always a material expectation. Teaching our next generation to come out of such transactional actions, and correction in material orientations is something we can bring about as a change in upbringing to truly imbibe Śrī Krishna's teachings in Karma Yoga practice.

## **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.

To truly understand the unity between Sāṃkhya Yoga (the path of knowledge) and Karma Yoga (the path of action), one must recognize that both require the same intrinsic qualities. Those who see a distinction between these two paths are, in fact, lacking in understanding—referred to as "**bālāḥ**" or childish in intellect. This term does not literally refer to children, but rather to those who are immature in their comprehension. While such individuals may perceive differences, the truly learned, known as

"**paṇḍitāḥ**," perceive no real division between Sāṃkhya and Karma Yoga.

Sāṃkhya Yoga, also known as Buddhi Yoga or Jnana Yoga, offers profound insight into the creation and workings of the universe, revealing the ultimate knowledge of the Supreme. However, the essential characteristics of a Sāṃkhya Yogi are the same as those of a Karma Yogi. Both are ultimately liberated, and therefore, it is indeed immature to distinguish between them. As Śrī Krishna points out, the roots of Sāṃkhya and Karma Yoga are the same, firmly established in the same foundation, and destined to yield the same results.

### **Illustrative Examples**

This unity can be better understood through the lives of exemplary figures:

- **Jagadguru Sri Adi Shankaracharya:** Renowned as a supremely knowledgeable guru, he chose the path of renunciation and adopted the Sannyasa Ashrama. As a Jnana Yogi and Sāṃkhya Yogi, he pursued the path of knowledge.
- **Śrī Krishna:** Embodying the Karma Yogi, he fulfilled every responsibility and role required of him, practicing the path of selfless action.
- **King Janaka of Mithila:** A true Karma Yogi, Janaka Maharaj served as an example of performing worldly duties while remaining unattached. When Sri Shukdev, the son of Bhagavān Vyas, was sent to Maharaj Janaka for wisdom, Janaka explained, "Though I live in this world performing my duties as a king, husband, and father, I always keep my focus on the higher reality. I have all these responsibilities, but none of it is mine. I am the administrator of this kingdom on behalf of a higher King. I am only a servant in the kingdom of God. That is why they call me liberated while living."

The external differences—such as how Maharaj Janaka dressed, the daily tasks of Śrī Krishna, or the life led by Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya—are immaterial. Intrinsicly, their characteristics remain the same, whether one is a Karma Yogi or a Sāṃkhya Yogi.

In conclusion, both the path of Karma Yoga and Sāṃkhya Yoga lead to the same goal: true liberation.

## **5.5**

**yatsāṅkhyaiḥ(ph) prāpyate sthānaṃ(n), tadyogairapi gamyate,  
ekaṃ(m) sāṅkhyam(ñ) ca yogam(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.

Śrī Krishna emphasises that both the paths of renunciation (Sāṃkhya Yoga) and the path of action with devotion (Karma Yoga) ultimately lead to the same spiritual goal. The essence is that the results achieved through both approaches are identical (**ekaṃ Sāṃkhya ca yogam ca**).

To illustrate this, let us look at examples from spiritual history: the supreme state reached by Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya through renunciation was also attained by Maharaj Janak, who followed the path of action. This demonstrates that the destination, regardless of the chosen path, remains the same.

This concept is also reflected in our everyday lives. Many times, when faced with challenging circumstances, we might feel inclined to abandon worldly responsibilities and seek refuge in meditation and solitude, much like the yogis residing in the Himalayas. There is a common perception

that those pursuing spiritual practice in isolation are fundamentally different from householders engaged in daily duties. However, recognizing this distinction is a misunderstanding. The true understanding lies in seeing knowledge as an integral part of Karma Yoga, acknowledging that the path of knowledge and the path of action are not inherently separate.

The transformation of routine, prescribed duties (Nithya karma) into Karma Yoga occurs through the cultivation of detachment. While practicing Karma may seem straightforward, genuine detachment is challenging to achieve. This difficulty is precisely why the outcomes of both Sāṃkhya (the path of knowledge and renunciation) and Karma Yoga (the path of action) are ultimately the same. The key is not in the external form of the practice, but in the internal attitude of detachment and devotion.

**Note:**

Wherever the word “Yogi” or “Yogam” is used, it is used to represent “Karma Yogi”.

**5.6**

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

Without Karmayoga, however, Sāṃkhyayoga 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.

As ordinary human beings immersed in the endless cycles of Samsara Sagara, we constantly grapple with wishes, desires, and emotions that bind us. Bringing detachment into our daily existence is an uphill battle, one that challenges us at every step. In contrast, a Sāṃkhya Yogi stands above such challenges, exhibiting a level of detachment that seems almost unattainable for most of us. The reason lies in the concept of “**ayogataḥ**”, as explained by Śrī Krishna. **Without Karma Yoga, true renunciation is not possible.** Here, “Yoga” refers to the practice of detachment. While we often hear that knowledge is important, it is crucial to understand that knowledge on the path of Karma Yoga is gained through action infused with detachment. Simply performing actions (karma) does not lead to this state of detachment. In fact, action alone can sometimes lead to more desires—such as the desire for more work or greater rewards—thus perpetuating the cycle of attachment. If karma is not transformed into Karma Yoga by practising detachment (**sanyāsaḥ**), it only leads to distress (**duḥkham**).

**Who, then, is a Yogi? How does a Yogi practice renunciation?**

A Yogi is a Muni, someone constantly engaged in contemplation (**manana**). The Muni continually evaluates his own mental state, assesses whether he is on the right path, and makes intrinsic corrections as needed. In this way, he remains steadfast in his pursuit of liberation. In contrast, most of us perform many actions but seldom reflect on whether our actions are right or wrong. We often settle for superficial outcomes and justify our deeds without deeper introspection. By emulating the Muni—through continuous self-evaluation and contemplation—we too can progress towards attaining the lotus feet of the Supreme Brahman (**Brahma nachirenathi gacchati**).

Even by following Karma Yoga, it is possible to live like a Muni. Through contemplation and ongoing improvements to our state of mind and inner qualities, we can advance on the path. The story of the Hare and the Tortoise illustrate this concept well. A Sāṃkhya Yogi, through Tapasya, may be like the hare—possessing knowledge but lacking the depth of experience. Experience is reflected in one’s traits, character, and attributes (further explained in Chapter 13). If the Sāṃkhya Yogi becomes complacent and decides to rest, like the hare, he may not achieve victory. On the other hand, the

tortoise—representing the Karma Yogi—wins the race by persevering, practicing constant introspection, and remaining steadfast on the path. In this way, the Karma Yogi can attain Brahma Jnana.

Śrī Krishna has provided this wisdom as a proven formula for success. There is no need to worry about living like a Sāṃkhya Yogi; by diligently following the path of Karma Yog and practicing contemplation, anyone can attain Brahma Jnana, just as the sages have. The intrinsic changes required to walk this path are detailed by Śrī Krishna in the following shlokas.

## 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.

Paramātmā says, the Karma Yogis, who are of purified intellect, and who control the mind and senses, see the Soul of all souls in every living being. Though performing all kinds of actions, they are never entangled.

Śrī Krishna emphasises that a person who chooses to follow the path of Karma Yoga (**yoga-yuktaḥ**) and aspires to realise Brahma Jnana must possess certain essential qualities. Such a seeker is described as having a purified intellect (**viśuddha-ātmā**), having conquered the mind (**vijita-ātmā**), and having subdued the senses (**jita-indriyaḥ**). A person with a purified intellect treats everyone with equality, transcending personal biases and attachments.

For example, consider the behaviour of proud parents who, when their own child commits mischief, respond with indulgence and happiness, dismissing it as a harmless act. However, if the neighbour's child behaves similarly, their reaction may lack the same leniency. This tendency to make distinctions between “ours”, “mine”, and “theirs” creates an imbalance in our perception and influences our social interactions. The one who is equanimous in all external dealings and circumstances is said to have a purified intellect—such a person truly embodies the vision of “**sarva bhuta bhutatma**”, realising that the same atma (soul) present within oneself is present in all beings, and that the Supreme Paramātmā dwells in everyone.

The qualities of *vijita-ātmā* and *jita-indriyaḥ* point to mastery over the mind and senses, and the consequent control over desires. In daily life, achieving this level of self-mastery is a significant challenge. Take, for instance, the scenario of someone watching spiritual discourses or pravachans on YouTube. When an advertisement interrupts, it is easy to become distracted or attracted to the product being promoted, losing sight of the original purpose. This distraction happens because such individuals have not fully become *Jitendriyas*—that is, they have not subdued their desires or gained complete control over their sense organs. When a person no longer gets tempted or distracted by such minor things, they can rightly claim to have achieved the state of *jita-indriyaḥ*. Furthermore, if one can also detach themselves from the outcome of actions or the “Doer” mindset, they remain free from entanglement.

Reflecting on the lives of great individuals, Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj stands out. He authored the **Dnyaneshwari**, a revered commentary on the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, which attained the status of a divine scripture. Yet, after completing this monumental work, he humbly refused to take credit,

instead offering salutations to his guru and attributing the authorship to Bhagavān, stating that the Divine had written it through him. Similarly, Shivaji Maharaj, after achieving Swarajya and numerous victories, humbly acknowledged that his successes were not solely his own but were due to the grace of God, blessings, and the power of Shakti. In contrast, there are individuals in public service, including political leaders, who seek credit even for accomplishments not their own, thriving on accolades and false bravado. This stark difference reveals the contrasting mindsets, thought processes, and intrinsic characteristics of individuals.

In our own lives, it is important to consistently emulate the great yogis, understand the path they have followed, internalize the teachings of Śrī Krishna, reflect on our current state, and apply necessary corrections to progress towards true liberation.

## 5.8

### **naiva kiñcitkaromīti, yukto manyeta tattvavit, paśyañśṛṅvanspṛśañjighran, naśnangacchansvapañśvasan. 5.8**

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,

## 5.9

### **pralapanvisṛjangṛhṇan, nunmiṣannimiṣannapi indriyāṇindriyārtheṣu, vartanta iti dhārayan. 5.9**

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.

Through complete mastery over their senses—referred to as "**Indriyarti Indriartheshu**"—Yogis reach the state known as **Vijitathma Jitendriyah**, wherein the mind and senses are fully conquered. Practitioners of Sāṅkhya Yoga do not identify themselves as the doer of actions, regardless of whether the task at hand is significant or trivial. Instead, they perceive themselves as mere witnesses to all activities carried out by the senses, body, and mind.

Throughout the day, the body is engaged in countless voluntary and involuntary actions: eyelids open and close, and breath flows in and out innumerable times. In all these natural processes, the Sāṅkhya Yogi steadfastly maintains the understanding that he is not the performer of these acts. He attributes all such activities to the power of the Supreme Paramātmān, the ultimate divine reality.

The devotion of such a Yogi is so profound that even the simple act of living is viewed as being sustained by the Supreme Paramātmān. The truly learned, known as **tattva-vit**, is a Sāṅkhya Yogi who is a knower of the highest truth and possesses supreme knowledge. This individual remains in continuous connection with the *Brahma Tattva*, the ultimate spiritual essence.

One can also allude to this teaching in the Ramayan too, where the great Sage Vasishth advised Sri Ram:

**kartā bahirkartāntar-loke vihara rāghava** (Yoga Vāsiṣṭh)

“O Rama, externally engage in actions diligently, but internally practice seeing yourself as the non-doer and God as the prime mover of all your activities.”

## 5.10

### **brahmaṇyādhāya karmāṇi, saṅgam(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.

One who is wholly dedicated to the principle of Brahman (*brahma tattva*) embodies the spirit of complete renunciation, placing unwavering faith in Brahman. Such a person does not possess the ego of the doer, nor does he expect results or returns for his actions. This state of selfless dedication leads to the dissolution of attachment and the absence of desire for personal gain.

Śrī Krishna stands as a supreme exemplar of karma yoga. Throughout his life, He fulfilled his duties and undertook the roles required of him with remarkable skill and grace. Whether He was caring for the cattle of Nandha Maharaj, assisting His Aunt Kunti and the pāṇḍavas, acting as a charioteer during the great war, cleaning utensils after a Yajna bhog, washing the feet of Brahmins who attended the yajna, or offering guidance to rulers to establish societal order, Śrī Krishna performed every task without expectations or reservations. In all these actions, He displayed the qualities of a true karma yogi—acting without attachment to the results (**saṅgam tyaktvā karoti yah**).

Śrī Krishna was free from attachment to the outcomes of his actions. One who lives in this manner remains untouched by sin (**lipyate na sah pāpena**). To illustrate this, Śrī Krishna uses the example of a lotus leaf. Even when the lotus grows in a muddy pool or stained pond, it does not allow the water around it to permeate and stain its leaves. In the same way, a yogi who is unaffected by the daily occurrences of the world remains unsullied by sin and ultimately attains the knowledge of Brahman.

## Questions and Answers Session

### **Kruthika ji**

Q: How can someone attain **bhagavat Sākṣātkāra**?

A: That is what we are trying to learn and to attain. Bhagavat Sākṣātkāra comes in when our mind is very pure. Bhagavat Sākṣātkāra is something that is within us. In the 18th Chapter, Śrī Krishna says - “The devotee enters into Me and gets united into Me”. It essentially means that self and Bhagavān are not different. Our Atma is an Ansh or part of the Paramātmā, however we still do not attain the coveted union with Paramātmā. For attaining such a state what are the barriers? Our doshas (tainted actions), ego and proximity with worldly pursuits form this opaque envelope over our intellect. Gradually when we pull down the curtain of intrinsic impurities and when we clear our conscience, by following Karma Yoga, we begin to realize the Bhagavat Sākṣātkāra.

In Marathi the concept of Bhagavat Sākṣātkāra is illustrated by a drop of water getting united with water in ocean. We realize “I am a part of Parama Pita Paramātmā, I am but just a part of this vast ocean”. Similarly, we get united with Bhagavān, when we gradually remove impurities, cleanse our conscience and focus our abilities and energy towards karma Yog. We are then on the path towards achieving inner purity (“**Antharanga Shuddhatha**”). Only when conscience becomes pure, we attain Bhagavat Sākṣātkāra.

## Chetna Sarda ji

Q: How does one really practice detachment?

A: Practising detachment is an extensive and ongoing journey, much like pursuing a doctorate. Just as academic learning requires years of dedicated study and discipline, the path to true renunciation also demands a prolonged and conscious effort throughout life. This process does not happen overnight; it unfolds gradually as we progress through various phases of self-awareness and refinement.

Renunciation and detachment must begin with our daily activities. Even in something as simple as cooking, we may find ourselves seeking appreciation or instant gratification, either from ourselves or from family members. In today's world, it is common for people to share these moments on social media, aiming for validation and praise from others. It is crucial to reflect on such tendencies and examine our intentions behind each action. This process of honest introspection helps us identify and gradually remove our attachments.

The sages, or Munis, provide a valuable example in this regard. They engage in continuous contemplation, constantly examining their actions and states of mind. Through this ongoing process of intrinsic purification, they strive to eliminate personal desires and attachments. Similarly, we can begin by introspecting on our own actions—asking ourselves where we have sought personal gratification and what acts of selfless service we have recently performed.

Each act of selfless service, however small, becomes a form of yajna, a sacred offering. Practising karma yajna in this way should be a regular habit, with the understanding that the size of the activity is less important than the intention behind it. Over time, consistent practice leads to gradual but significant progress, much like the steady tortoise that wins the race. These acts of service need not be confined to a single domain; for instance, participating as a “Gita Sevi” is another meaningful example of contributing to society and spiritual growth in small but significant ways.

Finally, it is important to dedicate the results of all our actions to the lotus feet of Śrī Krishna at the end of each day. The journey towards detachment should not be viewed as achieving a destination all at once. Instead, it is a process best approached with patience and consistency—beginning slowly, remaining steadfast, and allowing gradual transformation over time.

Q: Caring for elderly family members or unwell children makes detachment challenging, as we naturally form expectations and desires for their well-being. How can we practice detachment in these situations?

A: Practically speaking, to practice detachment is very difficult. In level 4 we will learn an important shloka,

***mātrā-sparśhās tu kaunteya śhītoṣhṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ  
āgamāpāyino 'nityās tāns-titikṣhasva bhārata || 2.14||***

Shloka translates to "*which cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain, have a beginning and an end; they are impermanent; endure them bravely*" and is a key concept in the Bhagavad Gītā, describing the state of a yogi who remains balanced amidst life's dualities. We must surrender to Śrī Krishna and have faith that all difficulties will come and go. Life is a cycle and one has to endure the cycle as the body traverses stagewise from youth to old age ("***dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā***"). It is painful to witness the ageing process; however, one has to realize that it is the natural process. It is also pertinent to note that detachment does not mean breaking bonds. As human beings with senses and intellect, we should be able to feel pain, and we should retain sensitivity. Though we are soft or sensitive, it should not affect stability or the internal characteristics. Compassion should exist, but it should not make one a weak person and veer away from the chosen path. That is true detachment.

## Malathy Ji

Q: I am trying to adhere to karma yoga in various aspects of my life. I want to understand difference between expectation to achieve something and some end goal versus attachment to end results. For example, cooking good food for the family. Whatever job we do, we try to do best of abilities and get

best outcome. Is it really Nishkaam karma?

A: At the most fundamental level, it is natural for everyone to possess certain desires. When the teachings advise us to "give up on expectation," the intent is to relinquish selfish outcomes rather than all aspirations. For instance, performing good actions for one's family without anticipating any specific benefit exemplifies selflessness. Striving to do our best can be likened to conducting a Yajna—a sacred offering—where any benevolent deed that benefits those around us is considered a Yajna. Such actions embody the principles of Karma Yoga.

The phrase "give up on desires" specifically refers to abandoning selfish desires, or those that ensnare and bind us. There is a subtle but significant distinction here: one should always pursue righteous and positive desires. Desire, or "Kama," is regarded as an aspect of Śrī Krishna Himself. For example, the yearning to learn the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, when it arises in a devotee's mind, signifies that Śrī Krishna has illuminated a part of their inner self. However, if after studying the Gītā, one develops a sense of doership or ego, this does not align with the tenets of Karma Yoga. It is essential to maintain a clear and humble perspective in daily life. Ultimately, the true intent behind our actions determines whether our karma is virtuous or otherwise.

### **Ashok Kumar Dua ji**

Q: Our divinity is guiding us, I am taught that every question we that pose within, answers come from within. how does one know what our answers are for all our questions?

A: You are the Ideal Sadhak to study chapter 13. To begin, it is important to understand our connection with the **antaratma** (inner self). As one deepens their sadhana (spiritual practice), the atma (**Shretajna**) within us assumes different roles. For individuals not engaged in sadhana, the atma functions merely as an observer, similar to a CCTV camera. However, with increased spiritual practice, the connection with antaratma strengthens, and the atma serves as a guide. With focused dedication, this journey may culminate in Bhagavat Sakshatkar, where union with the Paramātmān is experienced. These transformative stages are clearly outlined in Chapter 13, illustrating how the roles of antaratma evolve alongside one's sadhana. The process of this transition will be discussed in more detail as we advance through subsequent levels.

Additionally, Chapter 12 describes several commendable qualities of a knowledgeable person—traits also associated with devotees or those who have attained *gunatita* status. These attributes serve as benchmarks, acting as indicators of progress for all practitioners. Regular comparison and analysis against these standards can help identify gaps and areas for personal development (akin to conducting Litmus tests). This approach becomes even more pertinent upon completing all 18 chapters and fully assimilating the teachings of Śrī Krishna.

### **Garima ji**

Q:How do we maintain balance when others question our actions and make comments that disturbs us?

A: Among the key qualities of a true Yogi is "**nirdvandva**"—being free from dualities and maintaining composure whether experiencing happiness, sadness, or insult. This quality is referenced in the 12th chapter as "**Shitoshna sukha dukheshu**", which signifies remaining unaffected by pleasure or pain, heat or cold. The internal state of a renunciant (Sanyasi) remains steady and undisturbed by external circumstances. Achieving such equanimity is one of the essential stages on the path to renunciation.

The journey towards renunciation involves two major practices:

1. Realisation and Self-Coaching: It is important to first recognise one's reactions, such as anger, and then consciously train oneself to respond differently in future situations. For example, upon noticing that one has become angry, one should resolve to remain calm and undistracted if a similar situation arises again. This process of self-awareness and deliberate practice is crucial for developing inner balance.

2. Learning from Great Individuals: Another valuable approach is to study the lives of exemplary personalities who embodied the quality of *nirdvandvatha*. For instance, Bal Gangadhar Tilak ji, despite

being unjustly imprisoned by the British, did not lose his morale. Instead, he utilised his time in prison to write "**Gita Rahasya**", a detailed treatise on Karma Yoga Shastra. While most people would become anxious in such adverse situations, he remained composed and productive. Reflecting on such examples helps to cultivate a calm mind.

The scriptures also offer profound lessons in equanimity. An anecdote from the Ramayana illustrates this: When Bharata returned to Ayodhya from Gandhar and learned of the events that occurred during his absence, he asked Sage Vasishtha about Ram's reaction upon hearing that he must go into exile. The sage replied that he was present when Ram was told that he would be the crown prince and when he was to go on exile, and Sri Ram's expression remained unchanged in both situations. Such stories from the lives of great individuals, as well as teachings from our scriptures, gradually register in our conscience. Over time, the mind begins to adapt and naturally apply these lessons in life.

Thus, regular reading and contemplation of texts like the Mahabharat, Bhagavad Gītā, and Ramayana enable us to distil their essence and integrate these teachings, fostering greater equanimity and progress towards true renunciation.

Q: When I worship God and as others talk about God, sometimes tears does roll out, I feel that being a devotee of Vishnu ji, why does he not accept me. Why am I not able to feel his blessings or his grace upon me? I get embarrassed sometimes in public worship

A: Don't feel sad or embarrassed about it. Your devotion is between you and Śrī Krishna. It is a type of bliss. Enjoy it. Many people have not attained such a state of intense devotion, you have it. You should cherish it. Take a simple case of two children, both want an object, however as a mother you attention will go to the child that wants it the most and expresses so. Śrī Krishna is like our mother or a father, your devotion to him will reach him. Do not worry about this.

### **Jagannath ji**

Q: How do we employ principles of Sāṃkhya Yoga and Karma Yoga to reach our ultimate goal?

A: Śrī Krishna said that both paths are not essentially different, they are rooted the same and same fruits results from the paths. Hence, those who see karm sanyās and karm Yog to be identical, truly see things as they are. Those who are truly learned say that by applying ourselves to any one of these paths, we can achieve the results of both. Basically, for our understanding we distinguish between these two paths. If you are already trying to practice Karma Yoga, ultimately when you achieve knowledge, your intrinsic state will be same of a Sāṃkhya Yogi and there will exist no distinction between the two yogis. You will eventually become a Yogi. That is what Śrī Krishna wants us to become. Śrī Krishna says, "**tasmad yogi bhavarjuna**" translating to "Therefore, O Arjuna, be a yogi"

Q: Is the essence of Sāṃkhya Yoga, detachment?

A: It is same in Karma Yoga; without renunciation we cannot perform Karma Yoga. It is not possible to attain sansyas without Karma Yoga. By renunciation from actions, it means not having doer ego, not expecting returns and not being choosy. Our actions should be selfless acts. If we are an Engineer or a doctor, we should consider it as a blessing and dedicate our acts in the service of the supreme Paramātmān. A teacher who practices Karma Yoga, does not teach only for salary but with a greater motive of imparting learnings to next generation leaders. In any action or karma, the intention should be there to perform with utmost dedication, like a yajna, then Karma automatically becomes Karma Yoga with that change in Intention. Without this, achieving the end goal is not possible. The 4th, 5th, and 6th shlokas are very clear in these concepts.

The evening concluded with a rendition of prayer and Hanuman Chalisa.

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

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