

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 50: Chapter 6, Verses 01-05

(April 17 –April 23, 2019)

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TRANSLITERATION

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

śhrī bhagavān uvācha

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।

*anāśhritaḥ karma-phalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ
sa sannyāsī cha yogī cha na niragnir na chākriyaḥ*

स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥ ६-१ ॥

*yaṁ sannyāsam iti prāhur yogaṁ taṁ viddhi
pāṇḍava*

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।

na hyasannyasta-saṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaśhchana

न ह्यसंन्यस्तसङ्कल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ ६-२ ॥

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।

*ārurukṣhor muner yogaṁ karma kāraṇam uchyate
yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śhamaḥ kāraṇam uchyate*

योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥ ६-३ ॥

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।

*yadā hi nendriyārtheṣhu na karmasv-anuṣhajjate
sarva-saṅkalpa-sannyāsī yogārūḍhas tadochyate*

सर्वसङ्कल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ ६-४ ॥

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

*uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmānam avasādayet
ātmaiva hyātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ*

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ६-५ ॥

TRANSLATION

- (01)** The Supreme Lord said: Those who perform prescribed duties without desiring the results of their actions are actual *Sanyāsīs* (renunciates) and *Yogis*, not those who have merely ceased performing sacrifices such as *Agni Kaarya* or abandoned bodily activities.
- (02)** What is known as *Sanyās* is non-different from *Yoga*, for none becomes a *Yogi* without renouncing worldly desires.
- (03)** To the soul who is aspiring for perfection in *Yoga*, work without attachment is said to be the means; to the sage who is already elevated in *Yoga*, tranquility in meditation is said to be the means.
- (04)** When one is neither attached to sense objects nor to actions, that person is said to be elevated in the science of *Yoga*, for having renounced all desires for the fruits of actions.
- (05)** Elevate yourself through the power of your mind, and not degrade yourself, for the mind can be the friend and also the enemy of the self.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1iQ489q0G5UPjEz3roEyB6rkqQTnheUc2>

Chapter 6

Verse 01:

Karma Yoga or the performance of prescribed Vedic activities has so far been expounded by Lord Krishna, along with *jnana yoga*, the path of knowledge. At the very end of chapter five, the procedures for meditation were introduced briefly in two verses. In this verse, Lord Krishna elaborates on this subject in order to alleviate any wrong notion that the path of renunciation is any better than the path of actions. By using the word *Anashrita* (without expectation), Lord Krishna reasserts what He has already stated repeatedly in earlier chapters that *Karma Yoga* without hankering for rewards or desired results, and performing all activities as a matter of duty as well as humble service rendered to the Supreme Lord, is indeed a true renunciation. Even though they may be *grihasthas* (living with a family), such persons are true *Yogis* and the real renunciants. Lord Krishna further states that merely giving up the sacrificial fire rituals such as the daily *Agni Kaarya* or *Agnihotra Yajna* prescribed in the Vedas does not make one a *Sanyāsī* (renunciator). This is in reference to the ones entering the renounced order of *Sanyās* who often state that they should not perform the ritualistic *Karm Kāṇḍ* activities; in fact they should not touch fire at all, not even for the purpose of cooking, but instead they should subsist on daily alms alone.

Verse 02:

In this verse, Lord Krishna compares and contrasts *Sanyasa* with *Yoga*. An important question to consider: If *Sanyasa* is merely the renunciation of the rewards of action which is also found in *Karma yoga* by not hankering for rewards or desired results, then why should *Sanyasa* be so glorified over *Karma Yoga*? What is the actual difference between the two? With *Sanyasa* one renounces the desire for rewards for action as well as the action itself, whereas in *Karma Yoga* one renounces only the desire for reward of the action. As no one can be a renunciate or *Yogi* without first relinquishing the desire to enjoy the rewards of action, there is a common element with both and so either can be considered a renunciate or a *Yogi* by the cessation of craving for results and rewards. The Lord states that a real *Sanyāsī* (renunciant) is one who is also a *Yogi*, i.e. one who is uniting the mind with God in loving service. In the second line, Shree Krishna states that one cannot be a *Yogi* without giving up material desires. If there are material desires in the mind, then it will naturally run toward the world. Since it is the mind that has to be united with God, this is only possible if the mind is free from all material desires. Thus, to be a *Yogi* one has to be a *Sanyāsī* from within; and one can only be a *Sanyāsī* if one is a *Yogi*.

Verse 03:

In earlier chapters, Lord Krishna explained two paths for attaining Him (The Paramaatman): One is the path of *Karma Yoga* or the path of action, and the other is the path of *Karma Sanyasa Yoga* or the path of renunciation. He recommended to Arjuna the path of *Karma Yoga*. In the above verse, He said that at the end, there is no real difference between the two since one cannot become a *Yogi* without sacrificing material desires. In this verse, the Lord lays out the criteria for eligibility for the two paths. He says that for those who are aspiring for *Yoga* (the beginners), the path of *Karma Yoga* is more suitable; and for those who are already much advanced in *Yoga*, the path of *Karma Sanyāsa Yoga* is more appropriate. *Yoga* is like a ladder we climb to reach God. At the lowest rung, the soul is caught up in worldliness, with the consciousness absorbed in mundane matter. The ladder of *Yoga* takes the soul from that level to the stage where the consciousness is totally absorbed in the divine. The various rungs of the ladder have different names, but *Yoga* is a term common to them all. *Yoga-ārurukṣhu* are those *Sādhakas* who aspire for union with God and have just begun climbing the ladder. *Yoga-ārūḍha* are those who have become elevated on the ladder. When we perform *Karma Yoga*, it leads to the purification of the mind and the ripening of spiritual knowledge. But once the mind has been purified and we advance in *Yoga*, then we can leave *Karma Yoga* and take to *Karma Sanyāsa Yoga*. Material activities now serve no purpose and meditation now becomes the means.

Verse 04:

In this verse, Lord Krishna describes the criterion to evaluate if a person has reached the level of *Yoga* that unites his *Atman* with the *Paramaatman*. A person will be considered detached from the world when one no longer craves for sense objects nor is inclined to perform any actions for attaining them. Such a person ceases to look for opportunities to enjoy sensual pleasures, and eventually extinguishes all thoughts of enjoying sense objects. As the mind becomes attached to God in *Yoga*, it naturally becomes detached from the world. Therefore, an easy criterion of evaluating the state of one's mind is to check whether

one has become free from all material desires. When one achieves this level of mastery over mind, one will be considered elevated in *Yoga*.

Verse 05:

In this verse, the word *atmana* refers to the mind. Here Lord Krishna confirms that the mind has the potential to become either the greatest friend of the *atma* (or eternal soul) to give the most benefit or as the greatest enemy of the *atma* to cause destruction, depending upon how the mind is influenced. The mind must detach itself from the infatuation of sense objects through association with those wise in Vedic and spiritual knowledge. In this way the mind will be elevated and gravitate toward spiritual objectives. But if the mind is pointed in the reverse direction subject to worldly pursuits and deluded by sense objects then the mind will become agitated and will only cause harm. Our biggest enemy is our own mind. It is the saboteur that thwarts our aspirations for perfection. A controlled mind can accomplish many beneficial endeavors, whereas an uncontrolled mind can degrade the consciousness with most ignoble thoughts. So, when Lord Krishna says that we must use the mind to elevate the self, He means we must use the higher mind to elevate the lower mind. In other words, we must use the intellect to control the mind.