

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

# BHAGAVAD GEETA – 5

*The Yoga of True  
Renunciation*

---

---

***“THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE”***

---

---

**TEXT  
28.05**

*Edited, Compiled, Styled, Presented  
& Offered with Love by  
Swami Gurubhaktananda on  
May 8<sup>th</sup> 2016, Birth Centenary of  
GURUDEV SWAMI CHINMAYANANDAJI*



## **Sandeepany's Vedanta Course**

**List of All the Course Texts in Chronological Sequence:**

<b>Text No.</b>	<b>TITLE OF TEXT</b>	<b>Text No.</b>	<b>TITLE OF TEXT</b>
1	<i>Sadhana Panchakam</i>	24	<i>Hanuman Chalisa</i>
2	<i>Tattwa Bodha</i>	25	<i>Vakya Vritti</i>
3	<i>Atma Bodha</i>	26	<i>Advaita Makaranda</i>
4	<i>Bhaja Govindam</i>	27	<i>Kaivalya Upanishad</i>
5	<i>Manisha Panchakam</i>	<b>28.05</b>	<b><i>Bhagavad Geeta (Discourse 5)</i></b>
6	<i>Forgive Me</i>	29	<i>Mundaka Upanishad</i>
7	<i>Upadesha Sara</i>	30	<i>Amritabindu Upanishad</i>
8	<i>Prashna Upanishad</i>	31	<i>Mukunda Mala (Bhakti Text)</i>
9	<i>Dhanyashtakam</i>	32	<i>Tapovan Shatkam</i>
10	<i>Bodha Sara</i>	33	<i>The Mahavakyas, Panchadasi 5</i>
11	<i>Viveka Choodamani</i>	34	<i>Aitareya Upanishad</i>
12	<i>Jnana Sara</i>	35	<i>Narada Bhakti Sutras</i>
13	<i>Drig-Drishya Viveka</i>	36	<i>Taittiriya Upanishad</i>
14	<i>"Tat Twam Asi" – Chand Up 6</i>	37	<i>Jivan Sutrani (Tips for Happy Living)</i>
15	<i>Dhyana Swaroopam</i>	38	<i>Kena Upanishad</i>
16	<i>"Bhoomaiva Sukham" Chand Up 7</i>	39	<i>Aparoksha Anubhuti (Meditation)</i>
17	<i>Manah Shodhanam</i>	40	<i>108 Names of Pujya Gurudev</i>
18	<i>"Nataka Deepa" – Panchadasi 10</i>	41	<i>Mandukya Upanishad</i>
19	<i>Isavasya Upanishad</i>	42	<i>Dakshinamurty Ashtakam</i>
20	<i>Katha Upanishad</i>	43	<i>Shad Darshanaah</i>
21	<i>"Sara Sangrah" – Yoga Vasishtha</i>	44	<i>Brahma Sootras</i>
22	<i>Vedanta Sara</i>	45	<i>Jivanmuktananda Lahari</i>
23	<i>Mahabharata + Geeta Dhyanam</i>	46	<i>Chinmaya Pledge</i>

### **A NOTE ABOUT SANDEEPANY**

**Sandeepany Sadhanalaya** is an institution run by the Chinmaya Mission in Powai, Mumbai, teaching a 2-year Vedanta Course. It has a very balanced daily programme of basic Samskrit, Vedic chanting, Vedanta study, Bhagavatam, Ramacharitmanas, Bhajans, meditation, sports and fitness exercises, team-building outings, games and drama, celebration of all Hindu festivals, weekly Gayatri Havan and Guru Paduka Pooja, and Karma Yoga activities.

This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace the Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal lives. Sandeepany is an all-round spiritual course that gives proper direction to the youth and to those approaching retirement. Hinduism is in dire need of a band of systematically trained teachers or Acharyas who can serve this Eternal Religion.

**– The Author, February 2019, Shivaratri Day**

Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text  
**28.05**



संन्यासयोगः

## THE BHAGAVAD GEETA - 5

*“The Yoga of True RENUNCIATION”*

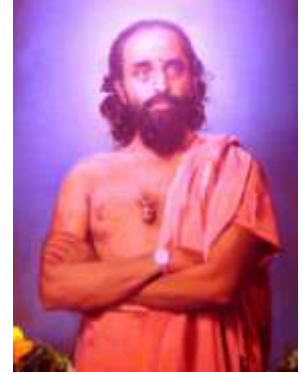
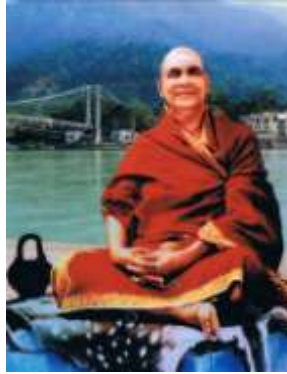
*Sri Veda Vyasaji*

### Reflections

*by Swami Gurubhaktananda*

*on the 8 Lectures delivered by Swami Advayanandaji  
Acharyaji, 15th Batch Vedanta Course  
at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Powai, Mumbai*

*23rd March – 30th March, 2012*



*Adi Shankaracharya Swami Sivananda Swami Tapovanji Swami Chinmayananda*

**SERVE • LOVE • GIVE • PURIFY • MEDITATE • REALISE**

## **Copyright & Author's Details**

### **Author:**

*Swami Gurubhaktananda (ex Krishna Chaitanya, born Bipin R. Kapitan in Durban, South Africa)*

Email: [gurubhakta.dls@gmail.com](mailto:gurubhakta.dls@gmail.com)

© 2018 All Rights Reserved. Copyright held by Swami Gurubhaktananda.

### **About This Edition:**

Web Edition: 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2019, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Jayanti  
Website: Chinmaya International Foundation: [www.chinfo.org](http://www.chinfo.org)  
Series Title : **The Sandeepany Experience**  
Series Subject: Vedanta & Supportive Subsidiary Texts

**Declaration by the Author:** *The material in this series is under inspiration of the Sandeepany Vedanta Course, but largely consists of the Author's reflections on the Course. He is deeply indebted to the Chinmaya Mission for its excellent presentation of the Course by their renowned and dedicated Acharyas.*

---

---

## **Personal Dedication**

### **1. To my Parents, Smt Sharadaben & Sri Ratilalbhaji Kapitan**

*who inspired me to study in life, to stick to the path of Dharma and pursue the highest ideals; and swamped me with their abundant Love;*

### **2. To Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj**

*the President of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India, who constantly encouraged and supported this effort;*

### **3. To Pujya Sri Swami Tejomayanandaji (Guruji)**

*for his boundless vision and inspiration to create a vibrant organisation;*

### **4. To Sri Swami Advayanandaji and Sri Swami Sharadanandaji**

*my Acharyaji and Upa-Acharyaji at Sandeepany, who imparted their bountiful knowledge and wisdom with rare selfless Divine Love, just as the Rishis of yore would wish to see them do.*

---

---

\*\*\*\*\*

# ***BHAGAVAD GEETA - 5***

***“The Yoga of True Renunciation”***

---



# ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

अथ पञ्चमोऽध्यायः

संन्यासयोगः

## THE BHAGAVAD GEETA

Discourse – 5 (29 Verses)

“The Yoga of True RENUNCIATION”

### INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER TWO LAID THE foundation of the spiritual quest with the twin prongs of Saankhya Yoga (knowledge) and Karma Yoga (action). The doubt arose in a “just-awakening” Arjuna as to which of the two was *superior*. That question led the Lord to spend Chapters 3 and 4 to deal exhaustively with the Path of Action, identifying its most essential aspect as being the knowledge from which action has to flow.

However, in the process of that discussion, the Lord unavoidably brought in the scenario of the perfect act which was the “**actionless act**”, where the act left no stain on the performer. At certain points (3.17 and 3.18; 3.30; 4.20 and 4.23; 4.33 and 4.37), the Lord pointed to a higher stage wherein “no duties are necessary.” There comes a time when actions become redundant and pure meditation becomes the primary Sadhana. This is what now raises another doubt in Arjuna’s mind.

Whilst in the earlier question, Arjuna wished to know whether he was expected “to know or to act”, now he wants only to confirm whether the right choice for him is “to act or not to act”. His present doubt is only to know what his personal prescription is. He sees two options, both legitimate – one is Karma Yoga, the other Karma Sannyasa; which is for him?

This leads Sri Krishna to focus in this chapter on the practical aspects of when renunciation of action is viable. This chapter acts as a *bridge* between the Path of Action of Chapters 3 and 4, and the Yoga of Meditation which is to come in Chapter 6. Renunciation is the link between these two stages, and we learn of its intricacies in this absorbing chapter.

At the time of the Mahabharata, **Karma** was a word associated with elaborate ritualistic worship; and **Sannyasa** meant retirement into a forest as an anchorite to lead a life i) without any duties to society, and ii) of intense self-denial and penance. Much has been done in Chapter 4 to remove the veil of mystery covering these erroneous notions.

In this chapter, the original Vedic sense of these two terms is revived by Sri Krishna, much to the benefit of Arjuna and all mankind thereafter. More is said about how renunciation may be practised and the conditions to be fulfilled before renunciation can be of benefit to a spiritual seeker.

\*\*\*\*\*

**BHAGAVAD GEETA – 5**  
**“The Yoga of True Renunciation”**

**CONTENTS**

---

<b>Introduction to Chapter 5</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>5.1 KARMA SANNYASA vs. KARMA YOGA</b>	<b>(Verses 1 – 5)</b>	<b>04</b>
Verse 1:	<i>Arjuna’s Question: Karma Sannyasa or Karma Yoga?</i>	4
Verse 2:	<i>The Lord’s Answer</i>	5
Verse 3:	<i>The Milestone for Sannyasa</i>	6
Verse 4:	<i>The Truth About the Comparison</i>	7
Verse 5:	<i>“Saankhya and Yoga are One”</i>	8
<b>Chart: The Individual’s Progress in Sadhana</b>		<b>10</b>
<b>5.2 PROGRESSION IN KARMA YOGA</b>	<b>(Verses 6 – 12)</b>	<b>11</b>
Verse 6:	<i>Karma Yoga is Pre-Sannyasa</i>	11
Verse 7:	<i>Akartritva – Starts with “Yoga Yukta”</i>	12
Verse 8 & 9:	<i>Akartritva – I Do Nothing at All”</i>	14
Verse 10:	<i>Steps Towards Akartritva</i>	16
Verse 11:	<i>Akartritva – No “Mine-ness”</i>	17
Verse 12:	<i>The Karma Yogi Reaches the Goal</i>	18
<b>5.3 PROGRESSION IN KARMA SANNYASA</b>	<b>(Verses 13 – 17)</b>	<b>20</b>
Verse 13:	<i>Readiness for Karma Sannyasa</i>	20
Verse 14:	<i>How a Sannyasin Acts</i>	22
Verse 15:	<i>Breaking the Chains of Bondage</i>	24
Verse 16:	<i>Ignorance Destroyed by Knowledge</i>	25
Verse 17:	<i>Established in Knowledge</i>	26
<b>5.4 SIGNPOSTS TO FREEDOM</b>	<b>(Verses 18 – 23)</b>	<b>28</b>
Verse 18:	<i>SAMADARSHINAH – Equal Vision</i>	28
Verse 19:	<i>SAAMYAH – the Virtue of Equality</i>	29
Verse 20:	<i>STHIRA-BUDDHIH – the Equipoised Sage</i>	30

Verse 21:	<i>ASAKTA – Independent of External Contacts</i>	31
Verse 22:	<i>BHOGAAH – Facing Sensual Enjoyments</i>	32
Verse 23:	<i>KAAMA-KRODHAH – the Storms of Lust &amp; Anger</i>	33

**5.5 ABSOLUTE FREEDOM** (Verses 24 – 26) **36**

Verse 24:	<i>Absolute Freedom Lies Within</i>	36
Verse 25:	<i>Four Wheels of Absolute Freedom</i>	37
Verse 26:	<i>Freedom Here, Freedom There!</i>	38

**5.6 A GLIMPSE INTO SELF-ABIDANCE** (Verses 27 – 29) **40**

27 & 28:	<i>Preparation for Meditation</i>	40
Verse 29:	<i>By the Lord's Grace Alone</i>	42

\*\*\*\*\*



## 5.1 KARMA SANNYASA vs. KARMA YOGA

(Verses 1-5, 5 No.)

**A**T FIRST GLANCE THIS QUESTION strongly resembles the question Arjuna asked at the beginning of the third chapter. In Chapter 3 the question arose because in Arjuna's mind Saankhya Yoga and Karma Yoga appeared to him to be two *distinct* paths to the goal. Sri Krishna clarified that they were not; that Karma Yoga is the forerunner of Saankhya Yoga, which is the ultimate stage of the spiritual journey. So Arjuna accepted that Karma Yoga is a preparation for Saankhya Yoga.

Now another pair is being questioned: It is Karma Sannyasa as against Karma Yoga. The former proclaims renunciation of action, while the latter promotes the course of action. Arjuna seeks a final clarification on this point.

**Verse 1:** *Arjuna's Question: Karma Sannyasa or Karma Yoga?*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।

यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम्

॥ ५-१॥

arjuna uvāca |

saṁnyāsaṁ karmanāṁ kṛṣṇa punaryōgaṁ ca śaṁsasi |

yacchrēya ētayōrēkaṁ tanmē brūhi suniścitam

॥ 5-1॥

	<i>Arjuna uvaacha:</i>	<i>Arjuna said:</i>
1	<i>Sannyaasam karmanaam Krishna,</i>	<i>Renunciation of actions, O Krishna,</i>
2	<i>punah yogam cha shamsasi;</i>	<i>you praise, and again (Karma)Yoga.</i>
3	<i>yat shreyah etayoh ekam,</i>	<i>Which is better of these two</i>
4	<i>tat me broohi sunishchitam.</i>	<i>that tell me conclusively.</i>

**1-2** In the progress towards knowledge, there appears in Arjuna's mind two separate paths, opposed to each other. One is the path of action (Karma Yoga) and the other of renunciation of action (Sannyasa Yoga or Karma Sannyasa). Praise has been heaped on both, even though they appear contradictory.

**3-4** Arjuna's question is to get clarification once and for all on these two paths. Which path is he to follow? It is very different from the situation of ignorance he was in at the beginning of Chapter 3. Arjuna accepts the value of knowledge in action, but why has Sri Krishna split action into two opposing camps?

Arjuna was quite happy to accept Karma Yoga in Chapter 3. However, in Chapter 4 Sri Krishna definitely brought forward another path which appeared to Arjuna to be greater than Karma Yoga. Let us trace the emergence of this path:

## Karma Sannyasa Yoga

This is the path when the formal vows of Sannyasa or renunciation are taken. The Sannyasi is freed from the responsibility of taking up activities if he so chooses, strictly in order that he may devote the major portion of his time on deep enquiry into himself in his practice of meditation. This requires a mind prepared beforehand with sufficient purity and dispassion. It is a path in which the seeker may not go back on his vows of renouncing the pleasures of the world. Thus it requires a very high degree of commitment.

It is this path that is being compared with Karma Yoga in Arjuna's question.

The unfolding of this path in Chapter 4 is seen especially in the following verses:

Verse 4.21: "Without desire . . . having abandoned all sense of possessions, doing *merely* bodily action, he incurs no sin."

Verse 4.22: "Content with whatever comes to him without effort . . . though acting he is not bound."

Verse 4.23 gives the gist of this apparently new path to Perfection: "For one who is devoid of attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, who acts for the sake of sacrifice, all his actions are dissolved."

Verses 25 to 33 described the various forms of sacrifices offered by seekers. At the conclusion of the section, Sri Krishna says, "*Sacrifice through knowledge is superior to sacrifice performed with material things.*"

And finally, in the verses 34-39, Knowledge is once again praised. Arjuna could have been swayed towards renunciation rather than action, since it is quite clear that renunciation is more linked to knowledge than to action.

---

### Verse 2:      *The Lord's Answer*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।

तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते

॥ ५-२॥

śrībhagavānuvāca |

saṁnyāsaḥ karmayōgaśca niḥśrēyasakarāvubhau |

tayōstu karmasaṁnyāsātkarmayōgō viśiṣyatē

|| 5-2||

	<i>Shree Bhagavaan uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Blessed Lord said:</i>
1	<i>Sannyaasah karma-yogah cha</i>	<b><i>Renunciation and Yoga of action</i></b>
2	<i>nihshreyas-karau ubhau;</i>	<i>both lead to the highest bliss;</i>
3	<i>tayoh tu karma-sannyaasaat</i>	<i>but of the two, than renunciation</i>
4	<i>karma-yogah vishishyate.</i>	<b><i>Karma Yoga is superior.</i></b>

**1-2** At the outset, the Lord states the fact about the two paths. Both of them lead to the highest goal. Lord Krishna agrees that they are certainly two different paths, unlike the case in the earlier question in Chapter 3.

**3-4** However, answering this for the case of Arjuna personally (and for the majority of humanity) the Lord adds, “For you, Arjuna, Karma Yoga is the better path.” That is, taking Arjuna’s temperament and level of Vairagya into account, the Lord prescribes Karma Yoga.

There is no doubt that both paths are going to take us to the same goal. The difference is that for the path of Renunciation, one has to have a higher level of dispassion, otherwise it is not possible to withstand the rigours of that path. Bubbling enthusiasm will not take one far on that path. Swami Sivananda, who gave Sannyasa to Pujya Swami Chinmayananda, often used to say, “Sannyasa is sterner stuff!” when addressing young aspirants who desired to take Sannyasa due to the fascination for that life.

The selection of Karma Yoga is made for an **Arjuna** personally. It may be different for a **Nachiketas**, who would probably have been given the green light for Sannyasa without any hesitation. The prescription for each aspirant is gauged by the Guru individually.

For most people, the answer given in this verse would apply. Even though the desire for God may be equal in the two cases, the one who is short on Vairagya, short in his ability to withstand the rigours of the life of complete renunciation – for him the preferred route would be to stick to Karma Yoga.

Having given the prescription for Arjuna, the Lord has somewhat eased him away from his anxiety. But that is all that He has done; He has only temporarily satisfied Arjuna with a little sweet, as a mother satisfies her crying child! There is yet a lot more to be taught to Arjuna about the path of Renunciation. This task He takes up in earnest from the next verse onwards.

**Verse 3:      *The Milestone for Sannyasa***

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते

॥ ५-३॥

*jñēyaḥ sa nityasaṁnyāsī yō na dvēṣṭi na kāṅkṣati |*

*nirdvandvō hi mahābāhō sukhaṁ bandhātpramucyātē      || 5-3||*

1	<i>Jneyah sah nitya-sannyaasee</i>	<i>He should be known as a perpetual <b>Sannyasi</b></i>
2	<i>yah na dveshti na kaangkshati;</i>	<i>who neither <u>hates</u> nor <u>desires</u>;</i>
3	<i>nirdvandvah hi mahaabaahoh</i>	<i>free from the <u>pairs of opposites</u>, O Mighty-armed,</i>
4	<i>sukham bandhaat pramuchyate.</i>	<i>he is easily set free from <b>bondage</b>.</i>

Up to now it appears that the difference between the two paths lies in Action – the difference being “to act” or “not to act”. This is a kid’s viewpoint; there is much more to it than that. The Lord shifts Arjuna’s judgmental mind to a completely different point. He goes to the heart of the matter, havng a totally new angle of vision:

**1 Nitya Sannyaasee:** “a perpetual Sannyasin”. What defines who is a Sannyasin and who is not? We find that the answer has nothing to do with action at all!

**Equanimity of Mind**

**2-3** Out of the blue comes a criterion that is a much more crucial factor in determining who is qualified to be called a Sannyasin. It is the true basis for determining

whether one is ready for the path of Sannyasa or not. The criterion needed is a certain degree of **Balance** or poise in one's mind. One has to achieve a fair amount of freedom from the clutches of likes and dislikes, and from the pairs of opposites.

Let us trace the development of the seeker up to the stage of Equipoise:

i) Renunciation of the Fruits of Actions: This is the **first milestone** in Karma Yoga. It is the basic qualifying milestone to be called a Karma Yogi. In the Geeta, one who reaches this milestone is called a **Sadhaka**. This point differentiates one from those who pursue the goal of attaining the heavenly worlds. It is the point at which the seeker decides to pursue the goal of Liberation from worldly life.

ii) Freedom from Sensuality: From renunciation of the fruits of one's actions, comes freedom from sensuality. This is the **second milestone** a Karma yogi reaches. It calls for some progress along the path of Karma Yoga. Some control over the restless mind has been achieved. The seeker who reaches this stage is called a **Aarurukhah** in the Geeta, meaning "one who is ready to climb the steed of a horse", which is the figurative way of saying that he becomes qualified to climb the horse of knowledge which the Guru is about to impart.

iii) Freedom from Likes and Dislikes: This is the **third milestone** reached by the Karma Yogi, which requires more progress than the previous two stages. It is the milestone that qualifies one to become a Sannyasin. Not only is sensuality overcome by such a mind, but it has also developed a steadiness and poise under trying conditions. The seeker who arrives at this milestone is called a **Yoga Yuktah** in the Geeta. The horse of his mind is now "well-yoked". Thus we see that a Karma Yogi has to be quite well developed before he can consider taking up Karma Sannyasa, or giving up the active path to pursue the path of renunciation of action.

**4** Only when the Karma Yogi reaches this milestone of being a Yoga Yuktah, can he think of renouncing action. However, regardless of whether he actually chooses to take up Sannyasa or not, he is given the deserved title of being a "perpetual Sannyasin" when he reaches this third milestone.

Thus the defining characteristic for Sannyasa is described in a manner that has nothing to do with action at all. Sri Krishna achieves a massive shift in Arjuna's thinking in this single verse. The criterion lies in developing the mind to a certain level of equipoise, nothing else. To be free from likes and dislikes is the qualification required for Sannyasa.

There are two more milestones even after the state of equanimity is reached, and these will be described in due course. The ultimate milestone, of course, is freedom from bondage, which is mentioned in this Pada. This, in fact, is the ultimate Goal.

---

**Verse 4:**      *The Truth About the Comparison*

साङ्ख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।

एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यग्भयोर्विन्दते फलम्

॥ ५-४॥

sāṅkhyayōgau pṛthagbālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ |

ēkamapyāsthitaḥ samyagubhayōrvindatē phalam

॥ 5-4॥

1	<i>Saankhya-yogau prithak baalaah</i>	<i>Children consider Saankhya and Yoga as <u>distinct</u>.</i>
2	<i>pravadanti na panditaah;</i>	<i>They speak in this way, not those who are <u>wise</u>;</i>
3	<i>ekam api aasthitah samyak</i>	<i>He who is established in <u>even one</u> (of these two),</i>
4	<i>ubhayoh vindate phalam.</i>	<i>obtains the fruits of <u>both</u>.</i>

**1-2** Lord Krishna now states the fact about the comparison of the two paths. There is really not a very great distinction in these paths. Children speak of them as being distinct. ‘Children’ are those who view things very superficially and come to immature judgements. Arjuna is a ‘child’ in the spiritual field, and so this question can be expected from him.

Here is one reasonable difference, if one may call it that. A Sannyasin is expected to possess equanimity as we have just seen; the Karma Yogi is only expected to be striving to acquire it through daily practice. A Sannyasin who does not possess equanimity is regarded as not a true Sannyasin; the Karma Yogi may be excused if he has not perfected himself.

**3-4** The truth is that both paths are heading towards the same goal; they reap the same fruit. The person in primary school is on the same path as the one in high school. If he patiently continues applying himself to his studies, he will one day enter high school. Both these students have the final aim of graduating out of school and into a university.

That the Sannyasa path requires one to have a greater mastery over his senses is admitted. In this respect, one can say that Karma Yoga is the ‘primary school’ which merges into the ‘high school’ of Sannyasa when sufficient dispassion has been acquired.

### **Verse 5**      “*Saankhya and Yoga are One*”

यत्साङ्ख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।

एकं साङ्ख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति

॥ ५-५॥

yatsāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyatē sthānaṁ tadyōgairapi gamyatē |

ēkaṁ sāṅkhyam ca yōgam ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati

|| 5-5||

1	<i>Yat saankhyaih praapyate sthaanam</i>	<i>That place which is reached by the <b>Saankhyans</b>,</i>
2	<i>tat yogaih api gamyate;</i>	<i>is also reached by the <b>Karma Yogis</b>;</i>
3	<i>ekam saankhyam cha yogam cha</i>	<i>“Saankhya and Yoga are <u>one</u>” –</i>
4	<i>yah pashyati sah pashyati.</i>	<i>he who sees this, he correctly sees.</i>

**1-2** Even if Sannyasa is considered as a path that is connected more to Saankhya or Knowledge, and Karma Yoga as a path connected more to Yoga or action – even then the two are not different. For knowledge and action go together as the last Chapter has taught us. One cannot become perfect in one without becoming perfect in the other also. Action becomes perfect when one’s knowledge has risen to perfection. Conversely, Knowledge arrives at its peak when one has perfected the art of acting without incurring any reaction.

Both paths have their challenges to be faced. The Karma Yogi may rely more on surrender to God and on dedication to duty; the Sannyasin would resort to self-enquiry to dissolve his problems. Ultimately, both are going to enjoy the same fruit of success.

Acharyaji clarified things when he said, “If lofty qualities are not being earnestly pursued, there is no point in taking up Sannyasa. It will merely be a change of cloth.”

**3-4** We begin to see more clearly now that the two paths are not to be seen in competition to each other, as to which path will take one to God quicker! It is all a matter of one's eligibility and maturity that decide which path is suitable for one.

The recruitment for Sannyasa is done in the camp of Karma Yoga!

### **The Relationship Between Karma Yoga and Karma Sannyasa**

Once again Acharyaji closed on a positive note: "Whatever path is chosen, one must be firm in it. A Karma Yogi should not try to place himself in the Sannyasin's shoes, nor should one who is fit to take Sannyasa remain a Karma Yogi; his progress will stagnate. Either of them, in the wrong place, will be like a fish out of water. A Karma Yogi has to have something to do. Hence he needs a field of action that gives him an activity to do. A Sannyasin may also work intensely, but he is not dependent on it. At any time he can drop it and still be perfectly at ease with himself. He has a tremendous spirit of inner detachment."

An aspirant should always make some time available for quiet reflection, and some time for service of others. The former may be less in the case of a Karma Yogi and the latter less in a Sannyasin, but both practices are needed by both seekers.

In this manner, Sri Krishna teaches Arjuna not to over-emphasise the differences of these paths, but see their common points and view them as having a common goal. The effort to gain purity of mind is common in both paths. Most importantly, in this verse, it is shown that the Goal is common in both these paths.

A seedling needs a more protected environment to grow than a large tree. Once the seedling takes root and becomes a strong plant, it can be transplanted to the open grounds where it has to face all the onslaughts of the weather by itself. The same is the case between a seedling Karma Yogi and a sturdy Sannyasin tree.

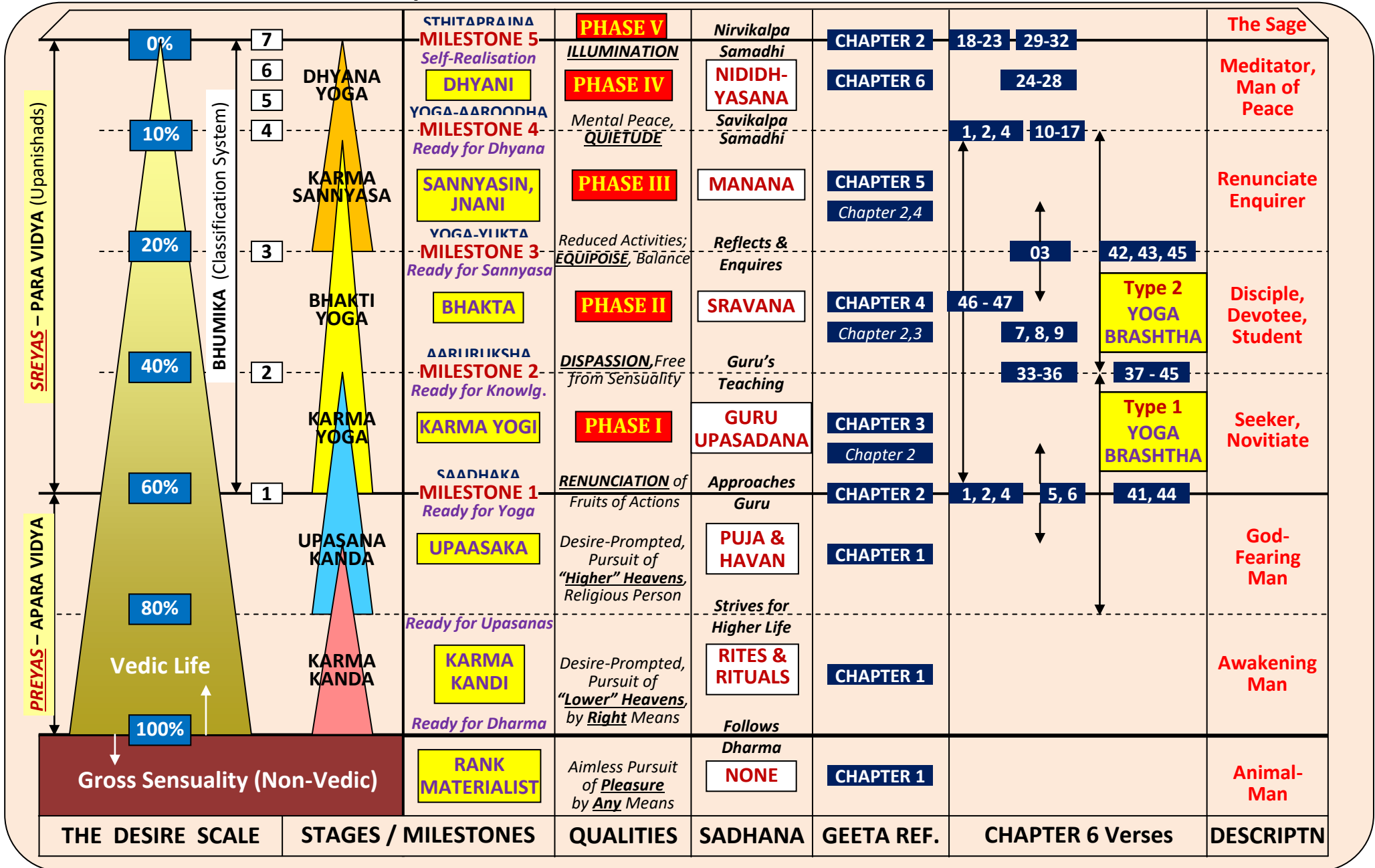
As we progress further through this chapter and the next, the relationship as just described here between these two paths will become more and more clear.

---

\*\*\*\*\*



**BHAGAVAD GEETA: Chapters 1 – 6 SUMMARY – The Individual's Progress in Sadhana Verses 1-47**



## 5.2 PROGRESSION IN KARMA YOGA

(Verses 6-12, 7 No.)

**SRI KRISHNA NOW BEGINS TO** expand on the theme of inter-relating the two paths. He begins first by expanding on Karma Yoga, showing how a Karma Yogi progresses.

We have ended the last chapter with two similes that show the relationship between the two paths: The first is the simile of “the primary school and the high school”; the second is the simile of “the seedling and the tree”. The progression from one stage to the next is the focus of the next seven verses. Acharyaji began this chapter with a third simile to convey the very same idea: the simile of “a student scientist and a professional scientist.”

This idea is given great importance as it is vital in avoiding a pre-mature entry into Sannyasa, or remaining stagnant for too long in Karma Yoga without making the effort to acquire further knowledge.

### **Verse 6: Karma Yoga is Pre-Sannyasa**

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।

योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति

॥ ५-६॥

saṁnyāsastu mahābāhō duḥkhamāptumayōgataḥ |

yōgayuktō munirbrahma nacirēṇādhigacchati

|| 5-6||

1	<i>Sannyaasah tu mahaabaaho</i>	<i>But Renunciation alone, O Mighty-armed,</i>
2	<i>duhkham aaptum ayogatah;</i>	<i>without Karma Yoga, has unendurable hardships.</i>
3	<i>yoga-yuktah munih brahmah</i>	<i>The Yoga-harmonised contemplator – to Brahman</i>
4	<i>na chirena adhigacchati.</i>	<i>without delay does he smoothly go.</i>

**1-2** For one who has not gone through Karma Yoga, Sannyasa is next to impossible. The higher level of purity required for Sannyasa will simply not be there. Mere fascination for Sannyasa will not make one a Sannyasin.

Here is the third simile in detail: If one wishes to become a scientist, he cannot succeed by just observing the external ways of a scientist, by imitating the way he observes the experiment, and so on. He has to go and study the subject in detail, and acquire all the knowledge pertaining to it. With knowledge, his experiments will mean much more to him. Then, in due course of time, he will surely become a professional scientist.

### **The “Yoga-Yuktah” – the Third Milestone in Karma Yoga**

**3-4** We have now come to the crucial point to which the Karma Yogi has to develop in order to qualify for the Path of Sannyasa. At this point he is considered to be a seasoned Karma Yogi. Even as a kitten grows up to be a cat – that’s the fourth simile! – the Karma Yogi has to grow at least to this point, to the point of being a Yoga-Yuktah, to begin the intensive inner Sadhana of Karma Sannyasa.

This is such an important stage that the Geeta gives it a name – the **Yoga-Yuktah**. It is the same stage we referred to earlier as the *third milestone* in the discussion on Verse 3.

**Yoga-Yuktah:** means “one who has become harmonized in mind through the practice of (Karma) Yoga”. To re-cap, we are to understand that such a Karma Yogi has already acquired sufficient dispassion to become an Aaruruksha. Added to that, he attains a certain degree of mental poise and balance that frees him from likes and dislikes, or from any other pair of opposites, as mentioned in verse 3. This is taken to be the minimum qualification to embark on the path of Sannyasa.

The Karma Yogi who attains this level of purity of mind is considered to be ready for Sannyasa. He is spiritually qualified for the rigours of Sannyasa by which he will progress on to further milestones on the spiritual path. One may say he has become a seasoned Yogi.

### **THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF SANNYASA**

At this point the seeker may or may not take the formal vows of Sannyasa. Formal Sannyasa becomes a pledge and an oath one takes before the entire community in Indian spiritual tradition. Hence, there is a social aspect to the change from Karma Yogi to Karma Sannyasa. As a Karma Yogi, rather than a Sannyasin, Indian society permits one all the space to make mistakes and iron himself out. In this way, the bulk of his weaknesses can be overcome, before he formally enters the Sannyasa Order.

Once the Sannyasa Order is embraced, then Indian society has certain expectations which have to be respected, for, after all, it is a socially accepted Order, and has to be protected and respected within that society. If one is too hasty in taking up Sannyasa, then not only will Indian society consider him to be an embarrassment to the Holy Order, but he will also be doing himself a great disservice owing to the discouragement he will constantly face in his new role as a Sannyasin, which he has prematurely taken upon himself.

Such a situation can be overcome only with great difficulty. The lesson to be learnt is that formal Sannyasa should be taken with due consideration of one’s ability and capacity to uphold the ideal it represents. It is always safer for the Guru to decide when the student is ready to take the formal vows. That way some reliable, external input on the decision can ensure a satisfactory level of eligibility for Sannyasa.

However, even with consent from the Guru, the ultimate responsibility to live as a true Sannyasin rests with the Sannyasin himself. He has to take the full responsibility of the decision upon himself, and conduct himself with credit to the Order he represents.

#### **Verse 7:      *Akartritva – Starts With “Yoga-Yuktah”***

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।  
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते

॥ ५-७॥

yōgayuktō viśuddhātmā vijitātmā jitēndriyaḥ |  
sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā kurvannapi na lipyatē

॥ 5-7॥

1	<i>Yoga-yuktah vishuddha aatmaa,</i>	The ‘ <b>Yoga Yuktah</b> ’ has a <u>pure mind</u> – i.e.
2	<i>vijita aatmaa, jitendriyah;</i>	a mind that is conquered and senses subdued.
3	<i>sarva bhootaatma bhootaatmaa</i>	He soon realizes his Self as <u>the Self in all beings</u> .
4	<i>kurvan api na lipyate.</i>	Though acting, he is <u>not tainted</u> (by actions).

So, if the “**Yoga Yuktah**” stage is so crucial, surely we would be curious to know more about it. Sri Krishna, the Master Teacher, perfect in applying the art of teaching, begins to unravel the stages the Yoga Yuktah has passed and is about to pass.

### **The “Pre-Yoga Yuktah” Stage: Mastery Over Mind**

**1-2** In these two Padas, we are shown how the Yoga Yuktah arrives at that state. We may call it the “pre-Yoga Yuktah” stage or, in the language of the discussion on verse 3, the first and the second milestones which he has passed through before reaching this state.

To re-cap these, the first milestone is the entry point for Karma Yoga, namely the seeker has to give up all anxiety over the fruits of his action. Once this is done, then the progress to the second milestone begins, and is described here as follows:

i) **Jitendriyah**: “one who has subdued his senses.” The arduous journey of controlling the senses is the first task of the Karma Yogi. This is all uphill work; it is the foot-slogging stage. There is no escape from this Sadhana. When he is reasonably free from sensuality, the hurdle of the second milestone is overcome. In the language of the 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter, the Karma Yogi is given the identifying title of Aarurukshah.

ii) **Vijitaatmaa**: “one who has conquered his lower mind.” The progress to the third milestone now begins with perfecting control over one’s mind. The higher mind becomes the ruler over the lower mind. The higher mind is the aspiring mind, that in us which seeks the nobler life. When that aspect becomes the ruler, the mind is said to be conquered to a large extent.

iii) **Vishuddha Aatmaa**: “one who has purified his mind to a considerable extent.” From the very beginning of Karma Yoga, the seeker is slowly becoming purer and purer. His mind and intellect are becoming more free from the weight of past impressions and tendencies. A clarity begins to set into his mind.

It is at this point that the third milestone is reached – when the seeker gains the purity and clarity to be poised and harmonious within himself and in relation to the world around him. This is the Yoga Yuktah state. This is the state of a seasoned Yogi, a well-harmonised spiritual aspirant, ready to launch himself into more rigorous Sadhana called Karma Sannyasa, or renunciation of actions.

In Chapter 2 and earlier in this Chapter (verses 4-5), the term **Saankhya Yoga** is used for this higher phase of Sadhana, due to its strong link to knowledge of the Self. This phase of Sadhana requires greater establishment in knowledge of the Self. The Yoga Yuktah state marks the completion of Sravana and the beginning of Manana. It is important that as students of the Geeta, we are fully aware of the various terms used to describe these stages, else we could find ourselves thoroughly confused.

### **The “Post-Yoga Yuktah” Stage: Sarvatma Bhava**

**3** As in Verse 3, here too the Lord holds aloft the fruit that lies ahead by pursuing this path to its very end. The highest vision of this world is upheld before the seeker. The

ultimate fruit in verse 3 was described as freedom from bondage. Now the same fruit is being described in terms of the universal or expanded vision that is gained at the end of the Sadhana. One begins to see all souls as being part of the Universal Soul.

Another way to interpret this state of seeing oneness in all is to see it not as a fruit or goal to be reached, but as the predominant *Sadhana* from the Yoga Yuktah stage onward till the goal is reached. The seeker makes equal vision the central aspect of his Sadhana.

### **The “Post-Yoga Yuktah” Stage: Akartritva Bhava**

**4 Akartritva:** “non-doership”. The state of Akartritva is a major topic in this section. Akartritva is the state of remaining untainted by one’s actions by feeling that one is not doing them. All sense of doership is removed. This state is now related to Yoga Yuktah.

Akartritva is a state above that of the Yoga Yuktah. As with Sarvatma Bhava, Akartritva also can be seen both as the goal to be reached or as the Sadhana to be practised before reaching that goal. The purpose of mentioning it in this verse is to lead us to the main theme of the section – the progression in Karma Yoga.

### **Yoga Yuktah Marks a Fork in the Sadhana Ahead**

We are being prepared by Sri Krishna for a two-pronged Sadhana from the Yoga Yuktah state onwards.

The first aspect is *Karma Sannyasa*, or the renunciation of action, which will be discussed in the next section; the second aspect is to continue with *Karma Yoga* activity but feel that one is not acting at all. This is dealt with in the rest of this section.

Clearly, Sadhana takes on a very serious turn at the juncture of being a Yoga Yuktah. One can opt to become a Sannyasi and follow the path of renouncing action, or one could take the practice of Karma Yoga to its “actionless” level. Both options will take him to the goal. Thus we see that the Yoga Yuktah stage marks a key *fork* in spiritual life.

In terms of this verse, this point may be repeated as follows:

i) **Karma Sannyasa:** The seeker largely renounces his activity by taking formal Sannyasa and devotes his time to personal spiritual practices. In this method, his focus is on developing *Sarvatma Bhava* or seeing all beings as himself. He expands his consciousness to infinite horizons.

ii) **Karma Yoga:** He continues as a Karma Yogi but greatly reduces his sense of doership, his sense of ego. The ego is reduced to such an extent He feels he is in a state of Inaction. In this method, his focus is on developing *Akartritva* or the feeling that he is not doing anything at all. He contracts his ego-consciousness to a zero horizon.

The rest of this section is devoted to expanding on **Akartritva Bhava**.

---

### **Verses 8 & 9: Akartritva – “I Do Nothing at All”**

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।

पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वसन्

॥ ५-८॥

naiva kiñcitkarōmīti yuktō manyēta tattvavit |

paśyañśṛṇvanspṛśañjighrannaśnangacchansvapañśvasan || 5-8||

प्रलपन्विस्जन्मृह्णन्निषन्निमिषन्नपि ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन्

॥ ५-९॥

pralapanvisrjangrḥṇannunmiṣannimiṣannapi |

indriyāṇīndriyārthēṣu vartanta iti dhārayan

॥ 5-9॥

1	<i>Na eva kinchit karomi iti</i>	<i>"I do nothing at all" – thus would</i>
2	<i>yuktah manyeta tattvavit;</i>	<i>the <u>harmonized knower</u> of Truth think –</i>
3	<i>pashyam shrunvan sprishan jighran</i>	<i>seeing, hearing, touching, smelling,</i>
4	<i>ashnan gacchan svapan shvasan.</i>	<i>eating, going, sleeping, breathing...</i>
5	<i>Pralapan visrijan grihnan</i>	<i>Speaking, letting go, seizing,</i>
6	<i>unmishan nimishan api;</i>	<i>opening the eyes, and also closing them;</i>
7	<i>indriyaani indriya artheshu</i>	<i>"The senses amidst the sense objects</i>
8	<i>vartante iti dhaarayan.</i>	<i>do they move," thus is he convinced.</i>

The person being spoken about is still the "Yoga-Yuktah", the one who is well-accomplished or well-harmonised in Karma Yoga. We continue from where we left off in the last verse, discussing the new focus on **Akartritva** as the predominant Sadhana from the Yoga Yuktah stage till the final goal is reached.

**1-2 Akartritva:** "sense of Non-doership." The sense of doership is consciously lessened bit by bit, until it is eliminated altogether when perfection is reached. Let us be very clear about whom we are speaking: He is the so-called "perpetual Sannyasin" of verse 3; who is also the "Yoga-Yuktah" of verses 4-5; who can now be justified in taking the vows of Sannyasa; but who instead continues with Karma Yoga activities.

In the language of the four earlier similes, we can say, i) the primary school student enters high school; or ii) the seedling has grown up and now resembles a little tree; or iii) the budding science student is graduating into a young scientist; or iv) the kitten has grown up to become a cat. All four have advanced from earlier states, but all of them have yet a lot more to do to attain perfection.

**3-6** All actions of the body are covered in these lines. Every single act comes under the magnifying glass of the seeker's scrutiny. From every act, the ego constituent is renounced. This is the key Sadhana that the seeker begins to practice.

The entire Sookshma Sharira has been listed. The functions of all 17 components of the subtle body are covered. The first five actions cover the *Jnanendriyas*; another four cover all five *Karmendriyas*; one covers the *Antahkarana* (sleeping); and two cover the five Pranic functions (breathing and the eye movements).

The 13 actions listed in this verse are all present participles, emphasizing that even as the action is happening it is being surrendered moment by moment.

**7-8** In aiming to rise to the pinnacle of perfection, the Karma Yogi who is a Yoga Yuktah aims to become the perfect instrument of the Lord, without any selfishness on his part that would spoil the Lord's work through his body. Nothing is retained for the ego to



Attach is from the perspective of God; Detach is from the perspective of the world. Together the two complement each other to bring Akartritva to perfection in one's actions.

Detachment has another facet to it: It is unconditional acceptance that, whatever the result, it is received with humility as the Lord's Prasad. This we called **Samatva Buddhi** earlier in Chapter 2. It is the same as the **Chitta Ekagrata** of the Jnanis, the **Sharanagati** of the Bhaktas, and the **Santosh** of the Raja Yogis. We see that Akartritva, like surrender, is also common to all the four Yogas.

**3** Acting without being tainted by one's actions calls for great purity of heart. Where does this purity or taintlessness come from? It comes from long practice of the above two steps of Sadhana – detaching from the fruit and attaching to the Lord. The Karma Yogi is continually exchanging all the Punya into precious pearls of *Purity*.

**4 Padma-Patram:** The simile of a “lotus leaf” remaining aloof and clean from the muddy water it arises from is very common in our scriptures. It signifies perfectly the “detachment” of the near-perfect Karma Yogi (Yoga Yuktah) from the actions he performs.

**Verse 11: Akartritva – No “Mine-ness”**

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।  
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥ ५-११॥

kāyēna manasā buddhyā kēvalairindriyairapi |  
yōginah karma kurvanti saṅgam tyaktvātmaśuddhayē ॥ 5-11॥

1	<i>Kaayena manasaa buddhyaa</i>	<i>By the body, the mind, the intellect,</i>
2	<i>kevalaih indriyaih api;</i>	<i>and even the senses – <u>merely</u> by these alone</i>
3	<i>yoginah karma kurvanti</i>	<i>do the Yogis perform <b>action</b>,</i>
4	<i>sangam tyaktvaa aatma shuddhaye.</i>	<i>abandoning <u>attachment</u>, to <b>purify</b> their mind.</i>

We continue here the analysis of the “*Yoga-Yuktah*”, keeping our focus on Karma Yoga and its progress into its higher stages of Akartritva. This time the aspect highlighted is the absence of ego or “mine-ness” in one who acts with Akartritva. The Sannyasi has to take the “Mine-ness” out of his actions in order to free himself from their binding force.

**1-2** But where is Ego or “mine-ness” mentioned in this verse? It is an indirect reference. The fort of the Ego lies in the body-mind-intellect-senses complex. To perform an action, the body is needed; so also are the senses needed, and the mind and intellect. However, the Ego is not needed, and it has to be kept out of the “*passenger-list*” of those who are to board the ‘Action Train’. The word **Kevalaih** specifically excludes the EGO from entering the train!

The Yogi detaches himself from these Upadhis and performs his actions. In effect, he is keeping his Ego out of the way from all his actions.

**The Exclusion of Ego**

**3** Why is the Ego refused entry? It is because we do not want any *attachment* to develop when this train gets into action. If Ego jumps on board, the train is sure to get

delayed at every station due to the attachment caused by its presence. The Ego’s presence will virtually bar all progress of the train! How is one to stop the Ego getting on board together with the rest of the passengers? The next verse answers this question.

**4** In this very interesting way, Sri Krishna teaches us an important lesson about keeping Mr Ego out of our dealings with God. He has no business there. He will only bring in more impurity into our actions, so we keep him out altogether. We show him no respect. The best way is to not even allow him to get onto the platform – keep him completely out of the picture! Thus a safe journey with only the good passengers is ensured.

Pujya Gurudev sees in this verse the **Sakshi Bhava** in action. Sakshi Bhava is the practice of being an observer of the process of acting. As Sri Gurudev puts it, “The observer is not the Truth but Truth standing on the open balcony of the intellect. While observing our actions, we are aware that we are that very *Observer* or *Witness* in ourselves.”

**Verse 12:**     *The Karma Yogi Reaches the Goal*

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।

अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते

॥ ५-१२॥

yuktaḥ karmaphalam̐ tyaktvā śāntimāpnōti naiṣṭhikīm |

ayuktaḥ kāmakārēṇa phalē saktō nibadhyatē

|| 5-12||

1	<i>Yuktaḥ karma-phalam tyaktvaa</i>	The <b>harmonized</b> one <u>abandons the fruits of action</u>
2	<i>shaantim aapnoti naishtikeem;</i>	<u>and attains the final (eternal) Peace.</u>
3	<i>ayuktaḥ kaama-kaarena</i>	The <b>unharmonised</b> , impelled by desire,
4	<i>phale saktah nibadhyate.</i>	<u>gets attached to the fruit, and is bound.</u>

This is a stunning way to conclude the theme of Akartritva which we began in verse 6. What a clear-cut presentation to sum up the whole subject! Let us see it in detail.

**1** Ego is prevented from entering by renouncing the fruits of our action. Ego is only interested in the fruits; if we give that up, we deny the Ego its very life-blood. Then we can have a trouble-free journey all the way to the Yoga Yukah or **harmonised** stage.

**2** It is such a harmonized seeker who undertakes the Sadhana of Akartritva just outlined in this section, and arrives at the final spiritual destination of supreme PEACE.

**3** What would happen if the seeker did not make the first step of renouncing the fruit of his action? Ego, by its desires, will then pull him in a hundred different directions.

**4** All the seeker’s energies will be depleted in chasing the fruits he desires. He will be working day and night trying to gather more wealth to enjoy more pleasures, and so on. He will never have any peace of mind. Instead he becomes thoroughly bound from head to foot by his mad involvement in desire-prompted actions.

**The Destination at Last**

Sri Krishna has been all along keeping our mind focussed on the Goal as He describes the Sadhana to reach it. Now the Karma Yogi has finally arrived at it. What a thrill must be going through the Teacher’s mind when He brings his disciple to the ultimate

Destination. For this reason, this verse has something of a celebratory flavour in it. The Karma Yogi-cum-Yoga Yuktah has come to the culmination of his path – Eternal Peace.

It is interesting to see that no mention is made of Liberation or Mukti. The attainment of Eternal Peace is how the goal is described, although earlier (in verse 3) it was spoken of as “liberation from bondage.”

Could it be that in his new-found spirit of Akartritva, the Karma Yogi has decided to renounce all thought of individual gain? Peace to him is reward in itself; where is the need any longer for liberation from bondage! The true devotee does not seek liberation for liberation’s sake, but only for God’s sake; liberation comes to him unasked and unsought.

For all who work with this selfless attitude and plunge themselves in service, the Lord is bound to arrange for their liberation Himself. He sees to it that somehow they obtain the knowledge they need to make the final spiritual ascent.

Thus we conclude the journey taken by the Karma Yogi. Now let us take a glimpse at the other path which we described as *Karma Sannyasa*. Is there anything different about that path? Is it any easier than Akartritva?

The next section of six verses will explain it to us.

---

\*\*\*\*\*



## 5.3 PROGRESSION IN KARMA SANNYASA

(Verses 13-17, 5 No.)

**Q**UANTIFYING THE SPIRITUAL journey and putting a time-table to it is not possible. It is unlike a train journey where we can keep a count of the kilometers travelled, where there are fixed timings for arrival and departure. The spiritual journey cannot be planned out like that; it is a journey undertaken with many unknown parameters governing it.

Nevertheless in this section we attempt to do just that to the Karma Yogi's path. The human intellect wants to quantify and classify, so we yield to its nature.

The Karma Yogi has an alternative to Akartritva that he may follow if he so wishes. This section describes the alternative. For the one who gains sufficient control over his senses and sufficient purity of mind, there is the path of **Karma Sannyasa**. Formal vows may be taken to make the changeover, and the ochre cloth is worn henceforth as a symbol of the inner renunciation of desire.

The focus now shifts to Karma Sannyasa, and we take a look at the progress through this path towards the goal. As already noted in the first section, the goal of this path is the same as the goal of Karma Yoga. However, from the description of this path as actionlessness in contrast to the path of action, one may rightly expect there to be some differences between the Sadhana of a Karma Sannyasi and the Sadhana of the Karma Yogi.

### **Verse 13:** *A Sannyasin's Mental Renunciation*

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।

नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन्

॥ ५-१३॥

sarvakarmāṇi manasā saṁnyasyāstē sukhaṁ vaśī |

navadvārē purē dēhī naiva kurvanna kārayan

|| 5-13||

1	<i>Sarva-karmaani manasaa sannyasya</i>	Having <b>mentally renounced</b> all actions
2	<i>aaste sukham vashee;</i>	the <b>self-controlled</b> man remains in bliss.
3	<i>navadvaare pure dehee</i>	The being embodied in the " <b>nine-gated city</b> "
4	<i>na eva kurvan na kaarayan.</i>	neither <b>acts</b> nor causes <b>others to act</b> .

### **Mental Renunciation**

**1-2 Manasaa:** "mentally". True renunciation is at the **mental** level. However, we have to guard against two possible perversions here: i) The formal renunciation vow (Sannyasa) is not being under-valued. By emphasising mental renunciation, the verse is not discouraging external renunciation or the vow of Sannyasa. It is ensuring that one does not carry any internal residue of desire for pleasure. Sannyasa is not to become a state of outer suppression of inner desire!

ii) Conversely, Sannyasa is also not to become a state of outer expression of desire under the pretext that its renunciation is internal! Mental renunciation does not make the external renunciation any less important.

These two perversions aside, the point conveyed is that, more than the outer renunciation, the inner component is of greater importance, and is the real renunciation.

Mental renunciation is only possible if it is backed by *knowledge* and *practice*. In Sannyasa, physical activities are reduced to the bare minimum. In its place there is deep study of scriptures and a more intense practice of meditation. More time is devoted directly to the practice of abiding in the Self. That is the purpose of Sannyasa. Worldly activities are given up or reduced only so that more time becomes available for serious meditation.

**Vashee:** “*the self-controlled Sannyasin*”. Self-discipline characterizes the Sannyasin’s life. He has developed sufficient purity to gain control over his lower appetites. The Sannyasin equips himself well with both renunciation and sense control.

The proof of this inner conquest is the inner **Bliss** that he enjoys.

### **The Internal Life – “The Nine-Gated City”**

**3** How best to describe a Sannyasin who has withdrawn from outer activity? “The Nine-Gated City” is a good simile to describe the Sannyasin’s attitude towards his body. As a city dweller knows he is not running the city, so also the Sannyasin knows he is not the body, but only dwelling in it. Its functions go on of their own accord.

It is to be understood that the transition from a life of action to a life of relative inaction is made naturally during the period of Karma Yoga, and not during the Sannyasa life. Karma Yoga provides the best training ground for making this transition possible. It is the period when all the trials and tribulations are undergone, and all the mistakes are made and excused. Once the mastery is gained and his confidence-level is high enough, the seeker becomes ready to take the plunge and embrace Sannyasa. Once Sannyasa is taken, he has to adhere to the highest standards of dispassion and morality that this Order is noted for. The path of Sannyasa is rugged and requires great fortitude.

**Dehee:** The “*embodied being*” who lives in the ‘nine-gated city’, his body. The nine openings are: the seven in the head (two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and a mouth); and two at the base (the anus and genitals). The context implied is that the Sannyasin dwells in his body with the attitude that it is only an embodiment; he does not identify himself with it. He is quite happy to go through whatever experiences the body brings to him without losing his essential identity as the indwelling spirit.

**4** The other is his sense of “non-doership” or Akartritva. He considers himself to be only witness to all his actions, feeling that he is not acting, and that activity is just going on through him. This is pure Akartritva Bhava – which is the defining characteristic of the advanced Karma Yogi who is ready for Karma Sannyasa.

**Kaarayan:** This is the causal form of the verb. The Sannyasi’s renunciation of action is so complete that he does not even *cause* others to act. He may advise others to act, but not in the sense that he is telling them to act on his behalf. He does not get others to do his work for him. His advice to them to work is for their own development, not his.

We notice that both, the advanced Karma Yogi and the Karma Sannyasi, are moving towards lesser emphasis on the outer aspect of action, and more emphasis on the inner aspect of action. The Sadhana of both is converging!

**Verse 14: A Sannyasin's Mastery Over Actions**

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।  
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते

॥ ५-१४॥

na kartṛtvam na karmāṇi lōkasya sṛjati prabhuḥ |  
na karmaphalasaṁyogaṁ svabhāvastu pravartatē

|| 5-14||

1	<i>Na kartritvam na karmaani,</i>	<i>Neither <b>agency</b> nor <b>actions</b></i>
2	<i>lokasya srijati <b>prabhuḥ</b>;</i>	<i>does the Sannyasin (Lord) <u>cause</u> for the world;</i>
3	<i>na karma-phala-samyogam</i>	<i>nor is he concerned with the <b>fruits of actions</b>.</i>
4	<i>swabhaavah tu pravartate.</i>	<i>But it is his <u>very nature</u> that determines them.</i>

The Sannyasin's mental state, characterised by Akartritva, resembles that of the Lord.

**The Lord & the Sannyasin Compared**

**1-2 Prabhuḥ:** 'Lord'. Here it means the Swami or Lord of the nine-gated city. It usually refers to the Lord, but here it is the Sannyasin himself. The Sannyasin identifies himself completely with his higher Self, not with his individuality. He does not retain any consciousness of himself as an individual. This inner attitude alone can explain the following deduction:

The Sannyasin who has attained mastery over his actions is literally to be thought of as the Prabhu or Supreme Lord Himself. This is not an absurd deduction. It is common to take such a view in Vedanta. All Vedantins aim to establish themselves in this attitude. It is not self-arrogatory. Indeed, it requires rigid adherence to and firm conviction in the Truth of our being. It is part of the awesome experience that Vedanta holds before us.

Are we able to see that the Sannyasin is no different from the Lord Himself? Sri Krishna seems to want to convey this idea alone by the use of the term 'Prabhu'. He wants us to know that He runs this universe along the same lines as a Sannyasin conducts his own life. A true Sannyasin is a miniature version of the Lord Himself with respect to action.

The Lord is the substratum of all Creation. Whatever happens in the world, has the Lord's Hand behind it. Nothing can actually happen in this world without His consent. Yet, it is also true that He is neither the agent of action nor affected by any action taking place in the universe. As the Substratum, He remains unchanged in every respect by His own action.

This is a massive Truth that we need to ponder over. It can so easily just pass us by unless we pause to ponder over it.

**3-4** In addition to this fact is another that is equally enormously significant. The Lord of the Universe faces no reactions from the world for what He does, nor is He responsible for the reactions that people receive for what they do. It is the very same for the Sannyasin. He is not affected by any reactions arising from his acts.

The teaching behind this is that reactions only arise when the feeling of *individuality* (ego) is present in actions. If one is identified with the Lord while acting, there can be no reaction, no matter what he does to others or what is done to him by others.

This may be explained with the following example given by Swami Krishnananda:

If we kill or destroy, a reaction is bound to come to us. However, if a river comes down in flood and kills or destroys, the river faces no reaction, because there is no *individuality* in the action. It is an act arising purely as a result of cosmic forces. A tornado cannot be blamed for the devastation it causes. The Sannyasin's actions can be compared to that of a river or tornado or the sun – whatever he does, he faces no reactions. Because his actions are free from the taint of ego, they cannot be considered as good or bad, beneficial or harmful. Others may see them in the colours of their own mental make-up.

There is a very deep meaning conveyed in this apparently simple verse.

### **A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF A SANNYASIN'S ACTION**

For the serious student, here follows an analysis which the casual reader may skip. Acharyaji gave us this analysis for greater understanding of the Truth just explained.

There are six aspects to any Action, as follows:

- i) **Karma:** - the action itself; the Lord does not create it.
- ii) **Kartritwa:** - "Doership"; the Lord is not the doer of action.
- iii) **Bhoga:** - the fruit of action; the Lord does not produce it.
- iv) **Bhoktritwa:** - "Enjoyership"; the Lord is not the enjoyer.
- v) **Kaarayita:** - the cause of an act; the Lord is not the cause of any act.
- vi) **Bhojayita:** - cause of enjoyment; the Lord does not cause enjoyment.

Thus, none of these six constituents of actions come from the Lord. The point about this is that the same applies to a Sannyasin. He, too, has nothing to do with actions.

How is this so? The Sannyasin does not take himself to be his body, mind and intellect, but only the Self within. The Sannyasin is dead to his body and sees himself as the Self alone. He lives solely in that knowledge. The slightest departure from that vision would make him subject to action and the inevitable string of consequences that follow all such actions.

If he is not any of the above six participants of an action, then to whom do the actions belong? Surely every action has to have these six participants, and someone has to claim the responsibility. The answer is **Nature** or **Maya**; it is Nature that participates in the guise of Prarabdha; that acts or causes to act; that enjoys or causes to enjoy. The Sannyasin is a detached viewer of the whole drama that takes place before his very eyes. He remains as the Witness of all actions.

The Sannyasin is free from all individual participation in actions, his own or those of others done to him. He identifies himself with all his acts only from a cosmic standpoint; we are thus compelled to ascribe all the six aspects of his actions to Nature.

Acharyaji paid a glowing tribute to the genius of Bhagavan Vyasaji for using all his poetic skill as well as his powers of the intellect to present to us the spirit of Sri Krishna's message to Arjuna in such a logical format. Only a genius of the order of Bhagavan Vyasaji is capable of conveying so much depth in so few words.

**Verse 15: A Sannyasin Beyond Merit & Demerit**

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।

अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः

॥ ५-१५॥

nādattē kasyacitpāpaṃ na caiva sukṛtaṃ vibhuḥ |

ajñānēnāvṛtaṃ jñānaṃ tēna muhyanti jantavaḥ

॥ 5-15॥

1	<i>Na aadatte kasyachit paapam,</i>	<i>Neither the <b>demerits</b> of anyone are taken</i>
2	<i>na cha eva sukritam vibhuh;</i>	<i>nor their <b>merits</b> by the Sannyasin (Lord);</i>
3	<i>ajnaanena aavritam jnaanam,</i>	<i>By <u>ignorance</u> is enveloped <u>knowledge</u>,</i>
4	<i>tena muhyanti jantavah.</i>	<i>and thereby beings are deluded.</i>

The trend of thought launched in the previous verse, continues into this one. Besides the factors concerning Action which have been covered above, we now consider two additional factors that enter the equation of Actions – namely, merit-demerit and knowledge-ignorance.

**Vibhuh:** “the all-pervasive Lord”. Incidentally, for the third verse in a row the subject is at the end of Pada 2, and is figurative in its application. We had *Vashee*, then we had *Prabhuh*, and now we have *Vibhuh* – all of these terms are usually used to describe the Lord, but are here referring to the Sannyasin. This is to show that the Sannyasin is fully identified with the universal Lord. The Sannyasin has no individual consciousness.

How is it that the Sannyasin, like the Lord, is unaffected by these?

**Merit & Demerit**

**1-2 Paapam-Sukritam:** “merit and demerit”. These apply to the relative plane of existence, i.e. to this world when seen from the individual’s standpoint. To the Lord, there is no such thing. To the Sannyasin, whatever relates to the body and mind is transcended, i.e. desires, the ego-consciousness, merits and demerits of all actions, etc. None of these affect the Karma Sannyasin who has risen beyond them.

In the Semitic religions, the words ‘sin’ and ‘sinner’ are heavily loaded. This is not so in Vedanta. Sin certainly has to be avoided as it applies to the relative world. But the concept of sin as something that will bring about “eternal damnation” is not there, since relative existence is not eternal – there can be an end to it when knowledge dawns.

In the Vedic tradition, a sinful act is seen as going through a pot-hole on the road. The “blow” has to be faced, but the driver need not feel it is the end of all hope of driving in future! Similarly, the seeker learns to avoid the “pot-holes” of life and move on with his journey through life. He is not unduly worried over it, and certainly not for eternity!

**Sukritam** is the opposite of sin or Dushkritam, and the class struggled to find an equivalent for it in English. “Sinless” may well be the closest to it. The context here is that both sin and merits are part of bondage; both are chains which tie one to Samsara. Merit is a golden chain; it also binds us to the world. This way of thinking is unfamiliar in the West.

**Ignorance & Knowledge**

**3 Ajnaanena Jnaanam:** “by Ignorance knowledge (is veiled)”. The ignorance referred to here is an inexplicable something which veils our intellect. The problem is traced back to its very root. Man is somehow bound to this phenomenal existence, seemingly forever.



hazy, doubtful belief system; it is the certainty that knowledge of the Self will destroy ignorance at its very root.

**3-4** Ignorance is what hides the Truth from the seeker. Hence his sole concern is to negate everything that stands in the way of the Self. By negating all effects of Ignorance, the Sannyasin gets a glimpse of the Self without having to do anything else; the Self is self-luminous and stands self-revealed when Ignorance is destroyed.

The Karma Sannyasin's path to liberation was seen at the very outset in verse 13. We see that the Sannyasin's approach is to boldly assert his true identity as the Self.

**Aadityavat:** "just as the sun". At the right time, when ignorance has been destroyed, knowledge reveals itself, just as the sun illuminates whatever is before it.

### **A Review of Karma Yoga & Karma Sannyasa**

i) The Karma Yogi's approach is to focus on **Actions**. He studies himself carefully in the midst of his actions. By carefully seeing how they affect him, he is able to act with such skill that he learns to remain unscathed by them. He develops the Akartritva attitude as the primary means to free himself from all effects of actions. Through mastery over his actions, which involves complete elimination of all ego-consciousness, he automatically is brought face to face with his true Self. This is his Path to the Truth.

ii) The Sannyasin's approach is to focus at the other end, i.e. on the **Self**, and anchor himself to the Truth, negating all that obstructs him from It. Deep Self-enquiry based on the knowledge of the Self is his direct means to overcome Ignorance and all its effects in the various layers of his personality.

Having made the above distinction, we remind ourselves that the Karma Sannyasin has arisen from the cradle of Karma Yoga, and is not in conflict with Karma Yoga.

### **Verse 17: A Sannyasin's State of Liberation**

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।

गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः

॥ ५-१७॥

tadbuddhayastadātmānastanniṣṭhāstatparāyaṇāḥ |

gacchantyapunarāvṛttiṃ jñānanirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ

|| 5-17||

1	<i>Tad buddhayah, tad aatmaanah,</i>	With <u>intellect</u> absorbed in <b>That</b> , with his whole <u>being</u> in <b>That</b> ;
2	<i>tat nishthaa, tat paraayanaah;</i>	fully <u>established</u> in and supported by <b>That</b> ; and having <b>That</b> for their <u>Supreme Goal</u> ;
3	<i>gacchhanti apunah aavrittim,</i>	they go whence there is <u>no return</u> ;
4	<i>jnaana nirdhoota kalmashaah.</i>	their sins dispelled by <u>knowledge</u> .

### **A Note on the Usage of "Tat"**

**Tat:** "That"; the Supreme Reality. "That" is the cryptic style used by the Upanishads when referring to the Supreme Being. In the last few verses we have seen many references to this Supreme Being in relationship to different levels of the human experience. Each one gives us a different perspective of the Reality. The words used are summarised below:

- i) **Dehee**: (verse 13) in association with the body;
- ii) **Vashee**: (verse 13) in association with the senses that are well-controlled;
- iii) **Prabhuh**: (verse 14) as the Witness of the nine-gated city, the body;
- iv) **Vibhuh**: (verse 15) as the all-pervasive Lord in all beings;
- v) **Tatparam**: (verse 16) as the Supreme Brahman;
- vi) **Tat**: (verse 17) in this verse the Supreme is referred to simply as "That".

Within this verse we see that 'Tat' is used four times. Each one of these is with reference to different stages of Sadhana. The stages are as follows, and can be taken as landmarks on the way to realization of *That* Supreme Brahman:

- i) **Tad Buddhayah: 1a** The absorption of the intellect in *That* – this marks Sravana.
- ii) **Tat Aatmanah: 1b** Seeing how it relates to the desire-mind, and clearing any doubts in the mind – this marks the stage of Manana or inner reflection to clear doubts.
- iii) **Tan-Nishthaa: 2a** Getting established in *That* – this marks the stage of Nididhyasana or the effort to abide in one's Self through struggle with one's Vasanas.
- iv) **Tat Paraayanaah: 2b** Having *That* as the supreme goal – this marks the stage of Savikalpa Samadhi, before reaching the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.
- v) **Apunah Avrittim: 3** This is actually reaching Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the final Goal itself, seen from the negative end of one's Upadhis – it marks the stage when all Karmas are burnt and one is Liberated from bondage to his Upadhis.
- vi) **Jnaana (Praapti): 4** Here, Nirvikalpa Samadhi is seen from the positive end of the Self – it marks the stage when Self-knowledge is revealed spontaneously.

Thus the entire route covered by the Sannyasin is traced out in this remarkable verse. This is a clear presentation of the path followed by the Karma Sannyasin. The progression in Karma Sannyasa is seen very clearly. The outstanding characteristic of this path is its firm foundation on the rock of Self-knowledge. This path takes the Sannyasin to his goal. There is no more rebirth for him.

How fathomless is Lord Krishna's Geeta! One is left amazed at the depth of thought of the Divine Teacher.

\*\*\*\*\*



**LORD GANESHA**  
*The Remover of All Obstacles*







allegiance to the Self, not an allegiance that wavers in accordance with the mind and senses. His intellect is a disciplined instrument that can be relied upon.

**Asammoodhah:** “undeluded”. The clouds of delusion are not present in a clear, firm intellect that is free from all doubts about its identity with the Self.

**4** To the sage, Brahman is more real than this fleeting world. The world makes no impact on him. He is unaffected by it. He remains poised and ever established in the Reality.

**Verse 21:**     **ASAKTA – Independent of External Contacts**

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।

स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते

॥ ५-२१॥

bāhyasparśēṣvasaktātmā vindatyātmani yatsukham |

sa brahmayōgayuktātmā sukhamakṣayamaśnutē

॥ 5-21॥

1	<i>Baahya-sparsheshu <b>asakta</b> aatmaa,</i>	<i>The mind <b>Independent</b> of external contacts</i>
2	<i>vindati aatmani yat sukham;</i>	<i>finds <b>happiness</b> in the Self;</i>
3	<i>sah brahma-yoga-yuktaatmaa,</i>	<i>and, engaged in meditation upon <b>Brahman</b>,</i>
4	<i>sukham akshayam ashnute.</i>	<i>it attains <b>endless Bliss</b>.</i>

Another characteristic seen in a sage is total **INDEPENDENCE** from all sense objects.

**1 Baahya Sparsheshu:** “external contacts”; the three main external contacts are Kirti, Kamini and Kanchana, i.e. popularity or fame, physical passion or lust, and greed for wealth. These are considered very desirable by a Rajasic and Tamasic mind, but the Sattwic mind has no leaning towards them.

Rajasic joys are the ordinary joys experienced in sense pleasures, eating good food, enjoying exciting events, moving about as a tourist, and so on. Tamasic ‘joys’ are very dubious. The Tamasic person takes delight in the pain of others by hurting them or insulting them, or by holding them under his sway with worldly power. He goes about stoning helpless animals and killing innocent creatures. He may even resort to torturing people who do not do as he says.

**The Joy of Independence from Objects**

**2** The state of Divine Bliss of the Sattwic sage is in total contrast to these two. He finds his happiness from an intangible source deep within himself.

Acharyaji explained that the sage experiences a rare joy in Vairagya or dispassion that is unknown to the average person. There may be joy in “I want”, but there is a greater joy in “I don’t want”. That joy is beyond even the Sattwic joys of this world such as classical music or reading an elevating masterpiece of literature. The sage is contented with the supreme happiness that he gets from the Self within.

Acharyaji said, “The Sukham of Vairagya may be termed super-Sattwic! In fact, if Samadhi does not come, we must know that Vairagya is short. In terms of the seven Bhumikas (see *Yoga Vasishtha*), from the 4<sup>th</sup> when the Sadhaka first glimpses the Nirvikalpa State, to the 7<sup>th</sup> the progress is not in Knowledge but in *Vairagya*. We must take note of this.” This was how strongly Acharyaji felt about this single item of Sadhana – Vairagya.

A fine difference was shown to us in degree of Vairagya. A Sadhaka has Vairagya for the world because he can see that it is full of sorrow. How does one explain a Jnani's Vairagya, since to a Jnani the world is not even there! The only explanation is that he is so established in the Reality that this whole world holds no interest to him.

**3** The joy obtained during meditation is the same “endless happiness or bliss”. Even a Sadhaka gets this joy, what to speak of a Jivanmukta!

**4** Acharyaji pointed out that to utter the words **Sukham Akshayam Ashnute** one has to *slow down* the speed. They are like speed-breakers to the tongue. The appropriateness of this is that they express the slow, calm and steady Bliss that oozes up from the Soul within.

In this way Acharyaji taught us how to appreciate the poetry of Sri Veda Vyasaji – something we would never have picked on our own. These are secret treasures hidden in disguise in the Geeta, which require great sensitivity to be recognized and appreciated.

Endless Sukha is not something mental. It has to be experienced to know it. Infinite Bliss is another term used in scriptures like the Chandogya Upanishad's *Bhumaiva Sukham* (Chapter 7) or the Taittiriya Upanishad's *Brahmananda Valli*. These accounts of the Jnani's bliss are very inspiring for a Sadhaka striving to obtain the same experience.

**Verse 22: BHOGAAH – Facing Sensual Enjoyments**

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।

आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः

॥ ५-२२॥

yē hi saṁsparśajā bhōgā duḥkhaḥyōnaya ēva tē |

ādyantavantah kauntēya na tēṣu ramatē budhah

|| 5-22||

1	<i>Ye hi samsparsha-jaa bhogaah,</i>	<i>Indeed, the <b>Enjoyments</b> that are born of <u>contacts</u></i>
2	<i>dukhha-yonayah eva te;</i>	<i>are only generators of <u>pain</u>;</i>
3	<i>aadi-antavantah Kaunteya,</i>	<i>they have a beginning and an end, O Kaunteya;</i>
4	<i>na teshu ramate budhah.</i>	<i>the <b>wise</b> rejoice not in them.</i>

The theme of **DISPASSION** is now taken up in this verse. The independence from objects enjoyed in the previous verse is a result of Vairagya or dispassion. From the ordinary viewpoint, perhaps the most inspiring quality seen in a sage is his degree of dispassion. He has not the least interest in “sense contacts”, something which the ordinary man revels in.

Sri Krishna's teaching style comes through in this verse. He contrasts the sage's indifference to sense contacts with the worldly person's attachment to them. This verse and the next indicate states which are the antithesis of perfection. Indeed, they are perfect examples of Imperfection!

**1 Sam-Sparsha:** Sense enjoyments require two things to be “well in contact” – the sense object and the sense organs. Neither of these is our real Self. How then can they produce happiness? The prefix *sam* is usually attached to indicate a superlative form of a word. Here it means “well in contact”. It seems to have an additional duty in this verse – it wants to *tease* the sensualist!

**2** The senses are “generators of pain”, yet man generally considers them to be generators of pleasure. How can unreal, inert things generate pain or pleasure? Actually

they do nothing of the kind. The pain or pleasure is due to our mental attachment to them based on the belief that they will produce some happiness in us. That is the delusion.

**3** The pleasure generated is only momentary. Both pleasure and pain have a beginning and an end. They are temporary. The pain referred to is that which is experienced at a deeper level, not just at the level of the senses. This is the painful misery of being bound endlessly to the wheel of birth and death. Our attachment to objects is addictive. It hooks us to them. This addiction is the cause of endless painful births and deaths in Samsara.

They are like a balloon that we know is going to burst at any moment, without any reason. Each contact is like a pin-prick on the balloon. While the pleasure is being experienced, the generation of pain has already started.

Even while enjoying pleasure, one feels the fear that it is going to come to an end. Then follow pride, jealousy, envy, anger, hatred – all these pile up on each other and we end up with a huge heap of sorrow. Thus are we warned by Sri Krishna: “Do not fall into this trap. Beware of enjoyments. They are worse than poison from a cobra. A cobra’s poison only kills if it enters the body. But the poison of sense enjoyments kill us birth after birth just by having *seen* them, and that, too, just once is enough!”

**4** To the wise, therefore, every such contact is like being lowered into a volcano!

Acharyaji reflected thus: “Parents should teach their children that balloons *will* burst. Then only, in later years, they will understand that sense contacts are the same. They will not depend on them for happiness. Instead, most parents are creating ‘balloon-generating machines’ in their homes.” Acharyaji, with the pure intention of planting in us the seeds of Vairagya, compared the life of sense pleasures to the “wallowing of pigs in ditches”.

**Na Ramate:** For this reason, the wise “do not revel” in sense pleasures. They do not hanker after them, do not indulge in them, not even in imagination. The wise man – a Viveki, Vairagi or Atma Jnani – will not fall for such ephemeral pleasures.

In this regard, Acharyaji wisely said: “Vairagya is first a cause for Knowledge; then that Knowledge becomes the cause of Para-Vairagya, or Super-dispassion.”

**Verse 23: KAAMA-KRODHAH – the Storms of Lust & Anger**

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।

कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः

॥ ५-२३॥

śaknōtīhaiva yaḥ sōḍhum̐ prākśarīravimōkṣaṇāt |

kāmakrōdhōdbhavaṁ vēgaṁ sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ || 5-23||

1	<i>Shaknoti iha eva yah sodhum,</i>	<i>He who is able, while still here, to <u>withstand</u>,</i>
2	<i>praak shareera-vimokshanaat;</i>	<i>before the liberation from the body (death),</i>
3	<i>kaama-krodha-udbhavam vegam,</i>	<i>the <u>impulse</u> born out of <u>Desire &amp; Anger</u>,</i>
4	<i>sah yuktaḥ, sah sukhee narah.</i>	<i>he is a Yogi, he is a <u>happy man</u>.</i>

Expanding on Dispassion, the Lord now pinpoints the area in which it is most needed – that of **LUST & ANGER**, the enemies of Peace of mind. Rare is the man who can withstand the storms of lust and anger when they arise in him. Generally, people succumb to these storms. How does a sage succeed in conquering them?

**1 Iha Eva:** “while still living here”. This hints at the difficulty in controlling anger and lust, which can trouble us throughout our life, as long as we are “still living”. Human minds are very vulnerable to these forces, and we cannot help living in the midst of them.

The odds seemed to be stacked against the seeker of Truth. Yet, owing to the sheer heroism in his blood, he succeeds!

**2** There is a feeling of hopelessness in the common man when faced by these forces. The suggestion in this line is that while life courses through us, we seem to be helplessly tossed about by these two impulses. Relief from them can be obtained only when life itself leaves the body! Why is it so difficult to overcome these forces?

**3 Vegam:** “impulse”. This word answers the question. It is “a force, a propensity, a gush, a rush, an impetus, a great storm” (all Acharyaji’s words that arose spontaneously from him). This Vegam is created by lust and anger. They are internal typhoons or tornadoes within the mind. “Lust is an Asura; Anger is a Rakshasa” – this is how Acharyaji described these two demonic qualities that arise in man due to the presence of Rajas and Tamas.

The ordinary man simply yields to them meekly no sooner they arise in him, without staging any resistance. “Such a one is closer to an animal than a human being.” Those words from Acharyaji may sound harsh to another audience, but to a batch of Brahmacharis they are very inspirational and instructive. It was the right time and place for using them.

Like a flash flood that suddenly comes and runs riot, Kama and Krodha attack us without a yellow light warning signal. They just come out of the blue, as it were – all of a sudden. The aspirant has to be vigilantly on guard at all times to stave off their attack, otherwise he is bound to succumb to it.

**4** One who is capable of mastering these two forces, he alone rises to become a saint. He is a hero, a Yogi, indeed. The saint alone emerges victorious over them, while still living! He faces them bravely, through patient, unflinching resistance to every such impulse, and eventually gains mastery over his senses.

This heroism is impossible to imagine by a sensualist. The latter knows nothing of the joy of facing these monsters and staging a fight with them.

### **An Analogy With Cricket**

The question may be asked: Does the sage also encounter lust and anger? Here is an answer from the world of cricket: “Yes, Nature is the bowler. It is a bowler’s job to bowl any type of ball to the batsman at the crease. A talented batsman can defend any ball, even hit it for a six, but a weak batsman is bowled out even with an innocent-looking delivery. Lust and anger are like the *googleys* and *bouncers* – they are the most difficult to face.

“A saint is like a Tendulkar among batsmen. He is not afraid of any kind of ball hurled at him. It’s the bowler who gets terrified to bowl at him!

“Of course, victory over lust does not come easily, even as a Tendulkar does not arise overnight. It must have taken Tendulkar many years of hard practice to perfect himself. Even so, a saint spent many years in Sadhana, passing many a tormenting night of tussle with his rebellious mind in his struggle to gain mastery. His heroism lies in staging a fight again and again, of failing, getting up, and fighting again – exactly as happens in the life of a brave cricketer or soldier. Ultimately, the one who never gives up, wins the battle.”

Truly, the inspiration Acharyaji gave us to pursue the spiritual path is astonishing!



**KEDARNATH SHRINE**  
*In the Himalayas Uttarakhand*

\*\*\*\*\*

## 5.5 ABSOLUTE FREEDOM

(Verses 24-26, 3 No.)

**WE** NOW GO DEEP into the heart of the sage and make an ‘*illuminating*’ discovery. In the next three verses we see the realized state from the perspective of the sage himself, i.e. from the Absolute perspective. There is nothing we can compare this with – unless we have met someone who is realised. Therefore, to receive this we should take care to first *disengage* our intellects; we are about to enter a realm that is unfamiliar territory to us yet!

The sage lives in his Self. There is Light all around – not a drop of darkness! Where he *walks* is hallowed ground. When he *breathes*, the whole atmosphere is purified. When he *eats*, all are satisfied. When he *laughs*, everyone feels the thrill and the happiness. When he *speaks*, all ears stand up to listen. When he *thinks*, the world remains silent and attentive. And when he meditates, all life goes into a trance of ecstasy.

Such is the person we are about to meet . . . *please fasten your seatbelts!*

### **Verse 24:**     *Absolute Freedom Lies Within*

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।

स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति

॥ ५-२४॥

yō:'ntaḥsukhō:'ntarārāmastathāntarjyōtirēva yaḥ |

sa yōgī brahmanirvāṇam brahmabhūto:'dhigacchati

|| 5-24||

1	<i>Yah antah sukhah antaraa-raamah,</i>	<i>Who is <u>happy</u> within, who <u>rejoices</u> within;</i>
2	<i>tathaa antah jyotih eva yah;</i>	<i>and who is also <u>illuminated</u> within;</i>
3	<i>sah yogee <u>BRAHMA NIRVAANAM</u>,</i>	<i>that Yogi attains <b>Absolute freedom</b>,</i>
4	<i>brahma-bhootah adhi-gachhati.</i>	<i>himself becoming Brahman.</i>

**1** There is rejoicing in the heart of a sage, joy permeating it, even as the aroma of incense permeates a temple. It is indeed a *temple*, the temple of the Jnani’s heart. Chanting of the Lord’s Name can be heard in it continuously; everything is clean and tidy; no dusty feelings; no rubbish heaps of jealousy or envy; no leaking drains of lust; and so, no bonfires of anger are seen in this temple.

**2** The luminous Self alone is there; no dark clouds of Ignorance veil It. It is always day in this temple. The brilliance of the Sun illuminates the sky of the intellect around this temple. There is no thought-pollution in the atmosphere, and so there is no smog or fog to smear the air – only the single thought of the Lord illuminates the clear sky. With brilliance and brightness beaming in through every window, the sage is a perfect panacea, specially created for a world torn in violence and hate.

It is the sage, whose every heart-beat pumps light into a dark world; whose every breath cleans out the pollution of murky thoughts in our world; whose clear-blue intellect

brings the fresh Light of knowledge to all he meets. The sage is truly a precious, divine soul. Ardent seekers yearn for the mere sight of such a soul. He is like a dew drop in the sweltering desert.

**3** Such a sage is free – and plays his “Atma Kreedā” like a child of the Universe. He enjoys his own company, the Self, from which no being is excluded. In his Self there is room for all beings of every variety, breaking all barriers between man and man.

**4** Indeed, he has become one with Brahman. He is a free citizen of the Universe; he is free, forever free! Benign souls like these are as rare as pearls in the ocean. They bless all mankind with their luminous Presence.

Blessed are those who get even one glimpse of such an enlightened being!

**Verse 25: Four Wheels of Absolute Freedom**

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।

छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः

॥ ५-२५॥

labhantē brahmanirvāṇamṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ |

chinnadvaidhā yatātmānaḥ sarvabhūtahitē ratāḥ

|| 5-25||

1	<i>Labhante <b>brahma nirvaanam</b> rishayah,</i>	<i>Absolute freedom is obtained by the Rishis</i>
2	<i>ksheena-kalmashaah;</i>	<i>i) whose <u>sins</u> have been destroyed;</i>
3	<i>chhinna dvaidhaah yata aatmaanah,</i>	<i>ii) whose <u>dualities</u> are torn asunder; iii) who are <u>self-controlled</u>; and</i>
4	<i>sarva-bhoota hite rataah.</i>	<i>iv) who are intent on the <u>welfare of all beings</u>.</i>

**1** The vehicle of Absolute freedom comes rolling in on “four wheels”. They are:

**2 i) No Sins:** Sins in this sense is taken to mean merits and demerits. In Vedanta these straight away refer to the phenomenal plane of existence in which men pursue a course to attain heavenly worlds through merit, and avoid going to hellish worlds by avoiding sins. Neither of these are of interest to a sage who strives to attain the plane beyond the phenomenal one – the plane of Absolute Freedom!

**3a ii) No Duality:** Our ordinary experience is dualistic in nature. We live in a world of Duality, characterised by “I”, “me”, “you” and “they”. The sage in Absolute Freedom is in a realm of Non-Duality where only Brahman exists, without a second. More will be said in the Geeta in later chapters about this lofty state that is unimaginable to us who have not yet realised God.

**3b iii) Self-Control:** This is the person whose senses are under the control of his intellect, not the other way round. His higher Self governs him, not his lower, sensual self. Much on this has been said in the verses on Vairagya (verses 21-23), and need not be repeated here.

**4 iv) Cosmic Benevolence:** This, according to Acharyaji, is the most significant line of this verse. It shows that the real purpose of it all is to be of some service and welfare to one’s fellowmen. According to critics of Vedanta, Vedanta is said to be ‘other worldly’, of no relevance to humanity. The Vedantic goal is said to be isolated from life! How can this be?

The Vedantin embraces all within his heart. Can he be anything other than of benevolent service to all mankind?

The sage is truly the best person to serve humanity. From the vantage point of knowledge of the Absolute, he can guide humanity towards it. His advice has the benefit of enlightened knowledge behind it. A sage of broad vision is the right person to lead a blind humanity out of darkness and into Light.

Hence, the words of sages are to be taken very seriously. They are precious pearls of wisdom. If we act upon their advice, we align ourselves to all the benign forces working for the moral good of mankind. In that lies our individual good as well.

**Verse 26: *Freedom Here, Freedom There!***

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।

अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम्

॥ ५-२६॥

kāmakrōdhaviyuktānām yatīnām yatacētasām |

abhitō brahmanirvāṇam vartatē veditātmanām

|| 5-26||

1	<i>Kaama-krodha viyuktaanaam,</i>	<i>i) For those who are free from <u>Desire &amp; Anger</u>;</i>
2	<i>yatinaam yata-chetasaam;</i>	<i>ii) those ascetics who have controlled their <u>thoughts</u>;</i>
3	<i>abhitah <u>brahma nirvaanam</u>,</i>	<i><b>Absolute Freedom</b> exists on <u>both sides</u> (here &amp; there),</i>
4	<i>vartate vidita aatmanaam.</i>	<i>for they have clarified their mind.</i>

This may be regarded as a perfect summary of the Fifth Chapter. It gives the “bottom line” of spiritual life – the line that matters to the enslaved Jeeva, the prisoner of this body and mind. The bottom-line is:

***The ultimate goal, Freedom, is reached  
by the one who is free of LUST and ANGER.***

Four terms are in Shashthi (6<sup>th</sup> or Possessive Case), expressing the virtues that the enlightened one possesses. Absolute freedom exists for all the following people.

**1 i) *Viyuktaanaam*:** “those who are free from lust and anger”. This indicates freedom from that which makes the mind restless, which makes us uncomfortable with our own mind. It means mastery over the senses. This is the main lookout of the *Karma Yogi*.

**2 ii) *Yata Chetasaam*:** “those who have controlled their thoughts”. This is an indicator of one’s state of freedom from lust and anger. It means mastery over the mind. This is the realm of the *Karma Sannyasin*.

**3 iii) *Brahma Nirvaanam*:** those who have “absolute freedom”. The word **Abhitah** in the line means “on both sides”, i.e. on either side of Death; this means Jivanmukti as well as Videhamukti. It means here as well as hereafter; “on earth as it is in Heaven” says the Bible. This is the realm of the *Realised Sage*.

**4 iv) *Vidita Aatmanaam*:** “those who have clarified their mind”. **Aatma** means various things depending on the context. Here it could be taken to mean the Self. However,

since the previous line already covers Self, we can take the word to mean the ‘mind’. It indicates complete clarity in the mind. There is absence of all doubts regarding the statement “I am Brahman”.

Acharyaji called verses 25 and 26 as **Adhyaya Upa-Samharaka**, i.e. that which shows the way to the fruition of Sadhana. Another term for it is Krama-Samuchaya-Pratipaadana, meaning a step by step presentation of Sadhana for realisation. The entire spiritual discipline is given. Together, they form a rare “Super-Summary” pair of verses.

The verses also summarise the entire Discourse 5, bringing it to a perfect conclusion.

**Note:** *The remaining three verses are topically not part of this chapter as far as their content is concerned. They are a preview to the next chapter, whose topic is **Self-abidance**. They are, therefore, given the title “A Glimpse into Self-abidance”.*

\*\*\*\*\*



## 5.6 A GLIMPSE INTO SELF-ABIDANCE

(Verses 27-29, 3 No.)

**T**HIS SECTION DEALS with the subject of Self-abidance or Meditation. Its connection to this chapter is that it fills the missing link in the chain shown below:

Karma Yogi ⇨ Karma Sannyasin ⇨ **SELF-ABIDANCE** ⇨ Absolute Freedom.

The other three items of the chain have already been discussed in detail so far. Meditation or Self-abidance will be dealt with in more detail in Discourse 6. The purpose for including these three verses here is for completeness of this chapter and to link it to the next chapter.

### **Verse 27 & 28:**      *Preparation for Meditation*

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।  
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ      ॥ ५-२७॥  
sparsāṅkṛtvā bahirbāhyāṁścakṣuścaivāntarē bhruvōḥ |  
prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantaracāriṇau      ॥ 5-27॥

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।  
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः      ॥ ५-२८॥  
yatēndriyamanōbuddhirmunirmōkṣaparāyaṇaḥ |  
vigatēcchābhayakrōdhō yaḥ sadā mukta ēva saḥ      ॥ 5-28॥

1	<i>Sparshaan kritvaa bahih baahyaan,</i>	<i>i) Shut out all <u>external contacts</u>;</i>
2	<i>chakshuh cha eva antare bhrahvoh;</i>	<i>ii) Fix the gaze between the <u>eyebrows</u>;</i>
3	<i>praana-apaanau samau kritvaa,</i>	<i>iii) Equalize the outgoing &amp; incoming <u>breath</u></i>
4	<i>naasaabhi-antara-chaarinou.</i>	<i>moving inside the nostrils;</i>
5	<i>Yatendriya-mano-buddhih,</i>	<i>iv) Control the <u>senses, mind and intellect</u>;</i>
6	<i>munih moksha-paraayanah;</i>	<i>v) Have <u>Liberation</u> as the supreme Goal;</i>
7	<i>vigata icchah bhaya krodhah</i>	<i>vi) Be free from <u>desire, fear and anger</u>;</i>
8	<i>yah sadaa muktah eva sah.</i>	<i>– thus is the sage verily <b>liberated forever</b>.</i>

With great patience, the Lord has raised Arjuna from a state of utter despondency to a state where he is now at the threshold of being taught the most coveted science of

Meditation. Knowing this technique, Arjuna will have all the knowledge of Sadhana he requires to take him all the way up to the final realization of the Goal.

### **Steps in Meditation**

The six steps outlined above form the “Contents” or *Vastu-Sangrah Vakya* of the 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter. They closely resemble the eight steps of Ashtanga Yoga of Maharshi Patanjali.

#### **1** *External contacts are shut out.*

This covers steps 1 & 2 of Ashtanga Yoga, namely *Yama & Niyama*. The aspirant fortifies himself to prevent any outside influences from entering his mind. “External” means not only outside the body, but even the thoughts which are raised in the mind – they are ‘external’ to the Self. So we have to keep a watchful eye on our thoughts. Keeping them outside is done through Vairagya. Raga-Dwesa (likes and dislikes) brings them ‘inside’.

#### **2** *The eyes are brought to focus at the middle of the eyebrows.*

This represents step 3 of Ashtanga Yoga, namely *Asana*. The literal meaning, if followed, will make one squint-eyed! Scriptures are not to be taken literally in matters like these. What is meant is the following:

If one keeps the eyes totally closed the tendency would be to fall asleep; if the eyes are totally opened, one gets distracted. A compromise is reached when the eyelids are just slightly opened, just enough to see one’s nosetip, without trying to actually focus on it, because that will give one a headache, and distract us from meditation. The semi-open position is taken in a relaxed way, meaning, “Forget the world, indeed, but do not go off to sleep.”

#### **3-4** *The incoming and outgoing breaths are equalised.*

This is step 4 of Ashtanga Yoga, *Pranayama*. The breath has to be regulated. The intake of air as well as the expulsion of air has to be smooth, steady, very slow and silent; deep, rhythmic, comfortable and enjoyable.

Gradually the breath should become so slow that it moves only within the nostrils! This is effectively what is called Kumbhaka or breath retention in Pranayama. This will calm the mind. After a while the breathing should not even be noticed, as that would become a source of distraction. The primary attention is to be on the meditation, not the breathing. Hence, only for a few minutes should breathing be done consciously as described.

#### **5** *The senses and the mind are withdrawn from the objects and senses respectively.*

In Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, this is step 5, *Pratyahara*, or withdrawal of the senses.

#### **6** *Then concentrate the mind on one thing – Liberation alone.*

Three steps in Ashtanga Yoga are combined here: Step 6 is *Dharana* or concentration. One uses the intellect to focus the mind on one thing. A mental object is chosen upon which all thought is brought to focus. When this is achieved to a reasonable degree, one can go to step 7, *Dhyana* or abstract meditation on the indwelling Self.

The feeling is maintained throughout that one is not the body-mind-intellect complex but the omnipresent Self. By doing this practice, the goal is kept in focus. The goal is Liberation, the primary fruit of attaining Brahman.



comprehended. What would such a great Being want our little worship for? Are we not insignificant to Him? No, however great He may be, the devotees are still dear to Him, especially those who strive sincerely to seek him. In spite of His greatness, He has a place for each Bhakta in His heart!

**3 For the Jnani:** The Lord is the Jnani's Friend. The Jnani knows that He is in the hearts of all. Being the inner Self of all beings, He is our closest friend. He serves us all. He serves even Ravana and all the other demons, and all creatures from the ant up to the elephant. There is no exception. It is because of His Grace alone that we can worship Him in His omnipresent Form. This is how a Jnani builds up a relationship with the Lord.

**4** The quest ends when one attains supreme Peace or Bliss. In peace one finds all the fulfillment of life. Peace brings with it the happiness that is independent of any objects. It is the natural state of one's very being when one is free from desire, fear and anger.

In this way, the Lord retains Arjuna's attention for the next chapter, making him look forward to it with greater interest.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु  
ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे  
**संन्यासयोगो** नाम पञ्चमोऽध्यायः ॥ ५॥

ॐ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu  
brahmavidyāyām yōgaśāstrē śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvādē  
saṁnyāsayōgō nāma pañcamō:'dhyāyaḥ || 5||

\*\*\*\*\*

Om Tat Sat!

END OF DISCOURSE 5

**"THE YOGA OF TRUE RENUNCIATION"**



***Lord Krishna shows Mother Yashoda  
His Cosmic Form in His little mouth.***