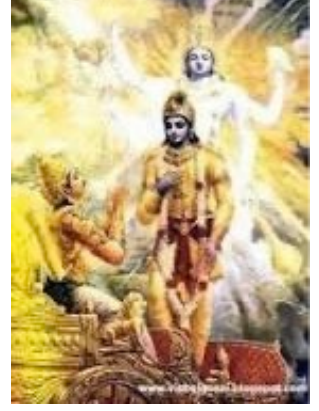


Bhagavad Gita online Class 76 on 28 Mar 2020 by Swami Dayatmanada (Lecture delivered online from Bangalore, India)

ॐ वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम्
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥ १ ॥

Vasudeva sutham devam, Kamsa Chanura mardanam,
Devaki paramanandam, Krishnam vande jagat gurum

I worship Lord Krishna, Who is the spiritual master of the universe, who is the son of Vasudeva, who is the Lord, who killed Kamsa and Chanura, and who is the bliss of Devaki.



सर्वोपनिषदो गावो, दोग्धा गोपाल नन्दनः।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता, दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

Sarvopanishado gaavo, dogdha gopala nandanaha|
parthovatsa: sudheerbhoktaa, dugdham gitamrutam mahat |

All the Upanishads are likened to the cows. The milker is Krishna, the son of Gopala. Partha is likened to the calf, while the drinkers are the wise ones. The nectar of Gita is the milk.

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिं ।
यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्द माधवम् ॥

Mookam karoti vachalam pangum langhayate girim |
Yat-krupa tamaham vande paramananda madhavam ||

I remember with devotion the divine grace of Krishna who can make the dumb speak and the lame cross high mountains. I extol that grace which flows from the Supreme Bliss manifestation of Madhava.

In our last class, we had completed the fourth chapter of the Bhagawad Gita, and it is one of the most wonderful chapters, advising us, on how to convert every one of our actions into a divine sacrifice, as a means of obtaining self-knowledge, or God-realization.

Before starting the fifth chapter in detail, called Karma Sannyasa Yoga, let us summarize the teachings contained in this chapter. Since this chapter mainly deals

with the distinction between internal sannyasa (internal renunciation) or karma sannyasa (also called karma yoga) and external sannyasa. In this chapter, Lord Krishna is emphatically pointing out to us that internal renunciation is far better (or karma yoga) than mere external sannyasa (i.e., without really renouncing our identification with the body-mind complex). In other words, it is far better to have internal renunciation and give up our identity gradually, so that we can become purer and purer, and in the end – if there is an opportunity – also take to external sannyasa. The fifth chapter, called karma sannyasa yoga, contains 29 verses, whose essence is as follows:

The verses (1-6) discuss the difference between external and internal sannyasa. External sannyasa is renouncing all types of external duties and activities and directing one's life completely to God-realisation, whereas internal sannyasa is to discharge – while remaining inside the society – every duty appropriate to one's station, age, circumstances etc., without expecting any worldly, or unspiritual, results, and expecting only the grace of the Lord, atma-gnana (आत्मज्ञान, *self-knowledge*), or bhagawad-saakshatkarā (भगवद् साक्षात्कार, *perception or apprehension of God in a vision*).

What Do We Gain By Karma Yoga?

The question arises, what do we gain by following karma yoga. The results of following karma yoga are discussed in verses 7-12. In verses 13-21, the Lord beautifully describes what is called jnana-karma-sannyasa, that is, karma-sannyasa, or internal renunciation, with a spiritual outlook.

A necessary ingredient here is detachment, called vairagya (वैराग्य, *dispassion*), which the Lord discusses in verses 22 & 23. The Lord also discusses what is known in Sanskrit as Videha mukti (विदेहमुक्ति, liberation after the death of this body). This topic is thoroughly discussed in 3 verses: 24 – 26.

Then the Lord also says, without developing the power of deep meditation, one can never progress, not in spiritual life, but also in secular life. When we really study the lives of great people, in any field of life, we observe that they exhibit 3 essential characteristics:

1. They have a definite goal.
2. Complete concentration.
3. Self-discipline.

These 3 can be achieved only by proper meditation, and therefore the Lord discusses beautifully, from verses 27 – 29. Naturally, this is only a hint on how one should develop the art of meditation, and which is elaborately discussed in the 6th

chapter, aptly called Dhyana yoga, the yoga of meditation. Our concern here is only about adopting the inner renunciation, which is called karma yoga, which is suitable for everyone.

Now let me discuss, as an introduction, to the first 7 verses, the essence of what the Lord wants to convey.

In the 4th chapter, which we completed in our last class, Lord Krishna talked about knowledge and renunciation. He referred to the wise man, a man of knowledge, also known as a jnani, as one whose karmas, or all actions, are burnt by the fire of knowledge. This particular expression comes in the 19th verse of Chapter 4.

At the same time, Lord Krishna also glorifies the wise man in the 21st verse, as one who is free from possessions, whose only activity is the maintenance of the body. He is happy with anything that comes unasked due to his prarabdha (प्रारब्ध) karma, the results of past actions. These 2 ideas are beautifully discussed in verses 21 & 22 of the 4th chapter. Evidently, these are the signs of a man popularly known as a sannyasin, a monk. Many of us know the monks of the Ramakrishna order and from other sects. be they Buddhist monks, Hindu monks, Christian monks or Sufis, all of them have a common characteristic – they are men of God.

This means:-

- they have renounced every attachment,
- they are not subject to likes and dislikes, sadanandamaya (सदानन्दमय)
- they love everyone, and
- they do not make any distinction between the lowest and the highest between the living and the non-living, samadarishi.

In their sights, everything is beautifully, lovingly permeated by the Beloved: God, Self, Brahman, Paramatma, whatever you wish to call it. Evidently, these are the signs of a real monk, but at the same time, Krishna concludes the 4th chapter by advising Arjuna to take to action to discharge all his duties as a warrior. Naturally, Arjuna – let us remember Arjuna every sincere spiritual aspirant – is confused and not able to understand and reconcile Krishna's seemingly confusing statements.

So this 5th chapter starts like the 3rd chapter with a question from Arjuna:-

“I am confused. On one side, You say, renounce everything and become a monk. On the other side, You say, that you discharge your duties as a warrior, appropriate to one's life and station and age. These two seem to be irreconcilable.

They seem to be 2 opposing parts – therefore please clarify, please tell me clearly, what path should I follow?”

So the Lord clarifies what he meant by renunciation, or sannyasa. In India, we take sannyasa as a man who renounces his former life, who puts on a special uniform, an ochre dress, so that he could be recognised by everybody. He naturally doesn't have any possessions, so he depends totally on society. So, society must have a way of distinguishing between a beggar and real monk, so he puts on a special type of dress. This should not lead us to misunderstanding that every person who puts on an ochre cloth is a real monk, a real renunciate.

Often, we can see, that many people take to this lifestyle to avoid the terrible responsibilities that entail from one who is supposed to be in the world, popularly known as a householder, and subject to so many worries and anxieties.

So, the Lord is clarifying, defining, what is true renunciation.

True renunciation is becoming detached from the body-mind complex and this is called Jnana Karma Sannyasa. Let us remember, which I have mentioned so many times in the past, we are all children, especially those of us who have taken initiation from the monks of the Ramakrishna Order. As soon as take initiation, we become children, and Sri Ramakrishna automatically becomes our Father, and Holy Mother becomes our mother – spiritual father and mother.

I have also mentioned that Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother are sannyasins as well as Brahmanas.

Lest you may mistake, a Brahmana is not to refer to one who is born in a Brahmin family but one who realises Brahman is a true Brahmana; he looks upon the whole world equally as a manifestation of God, he is a true sannyasi, they who have realised themselves as God. As such, we, the children of them, are also the children of Brahman, or immortal bliss. At least, that should be our understanding of who are our parents are; we are also spiritual beings and we can justify our inheritance by leading a true spiritual life.

Karmayoga, is also called the internal renunciation, sannyasa. This karmayoga has no conflict with one's duties in life and can actively co-exist with an active life in any station of life, including that of a soldier, who is expected to kill, maim as many people as he can. How is this possible – because the renunciation is internal, not external.

However, if someone becomes a monk, which means taking to external renunciation, such a lifestyle cannot coexist with an active life, filled with various duties. Physically, a monk is restrained, forbidden to participate in many of these external activities, including in fact, worshipping Gods & Goddesses.

Krishna is strongly advising Arjuna, to develop only internal renunciation, and remain in society as a responsible citizen of any particular country, by discharging his rightful duties. By maintaining the right spiritual attitude, we should attain the goal of life, which is called Jnana Karma Sannyasa – in other words, to become liberated from the travails of this samsara, this world.

As usual, Arjuna, meaning all of us, we get confused. We mistake the internal renunciation, karmayoga as *ashrama sannyasa*, and see contradiction in Krishna's teachings. Just like the 3rd chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, this 5th chapter starts with a question from Arjuna.

What was Arjuna's doubt?

Arjuna questions Krishna, 'You are praising knowledge, but at the same time You are definitely advising me to take to the life of a karmayogin, discharging all my duties! I am a bit confused, O Lord, please clarify what is the best path for me?'

This doubt has profound meaning that so many people get confused – shall we become a sannyasa, or should we remain in the world and become a karmayogi? When do we know, when is the right time for us to renounce the world, the household and become an external monk? And is it possible for a person with my understanding....am I fit to take up such a life?

At the same time, the life if external renunciation is a very tempting one as it looks as though a person has no duties, no responsibilities, except leading a pure spiritual life. Those of us, especially nowadays by the grace of the coronavirus, we are confined to our homes, and some of us are bound to admit to ourselves, if not to others, we find this a difficult situation! To be confined at home, and spend all of our time in a positive, useful way. If these few days of confinement can create so much of trouble and difficulty, you can imagine how hard it must be to spend a whole life of renunciation, depending totally upon God:-

- ® How much of internal purity is required?
- ® How much of desireless is required?
- ® How many wonderful spiritual habits we need to cultivate, to pass our time?

We should be able to do these habits without difficulty, and so joyfully that we should be able to say, 'This time is not enough, I would like to have more time!'

Most of us are not yet ready for that kind of life, so the Lord is clarifying that these 2 lifestyles, external sannyasa / external renunciation (called a monk's life) and inner renunciation (called karma yoga) are suited to different types of mentalities. Of these, the external and internal renunciations, both of them lead to the same result, which is liberation, मोक्ष [moksha]. But at the same time, what is most necessary, in both lifestyles, is complete freedom, complete detachment from राग

[raga] and द्वेष [dvesa], beautiful Sanskrit words, meaning likes and dislikes.

This is an important condition for self-knowledge – without being free from likes and dislikes, nobody can be a great person in this world, or even in the spiritual world. Of these two types of renunciations, or active lives, Krishna recommends a life of a karmayogi as the best ideal, suited for most men.

As Krishna himself points out, that an external secluded sannyasa life, is difficult to pursue without maturity of growth. So, this is the essence of the verses 1-6 of the 5th chapter.

Now we will enter into the 5th chapter in detail, titled karma sannyasa yoga.

Arjuna asks:-

अर्जुन उवाच ।
संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ 5.1॥

arjuna uvācha
sannyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa punar yogaṁ cha śhansasi
yach chhreya etayor ekaṁ tan me brūhi su-niśhchitam

[You praise O Krishna, renunciation of works and You also praise karmayoga. Tell me for certain, which of these two is better suited for me and for most people?]

As I mentioned earlier, there is external renunciation called monkhood and another is inner renunciation, discharging all duties with the aid of karmayoga. So the Lord first of all, is reiterating:-

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ 5.2॥

śhrī bhagavān uvācha
sannyāsaḥ karma-yogaśh cha niḥśhreyasa-karāvubhau
tayos tu karma-sannyāsāt karma-yogo viśhiṣhyate

The Lord, in reply to Arjuna's question, answers:-

[Both renunciation (meaning sannyasa) and yoga (meaning karmayoga), lead to the highest goal equally. But of these two, the performance of action, as a yoga, coupled with knowledge is superior to renunciation of action].

Let us not misunderstand, superior means this path leads quicker to the result.

Whenever we say, and this point I have clarified quite a number of times in previous talks, if there is a motorway with 4 lanes and people are driving on these

lanes, which are labelled fast and slow lanes, it doesn't mean one lane is superior to another. Whichever lane makes a person free from worry, is most suitable to his vehicle, his capacity to drive, can safely take that person to his goal, that is the best lane for that particular person.

So also, there are so many people preaching the path of knowledge is superior and every other path is only a preparation for this particular path. Sri Ramakrishna re-emphasises Sri Krishna's words:-

"Every path takes one exactly to the same goal, but each path is the best path suitable to that particular person. Only by following that suitable path, can that person reach in the shortest possible time, the goal of God-Realisation."

In spiritual practice, time should not be taken into consideration, but that which is most suitable and that's what Sri Ramakrishna re-emphasises "Jato Mat Tato Path [যত মত তত পথ]". As there are many faiths, so there are many paths and each path is valid and superior for a particular person and not to be compared at all with any other person or any other path.

The Lord is telling us that out of these two lifestyles, one is called Karma-yoga (or the path of the action) and the other is Jyana-yoga (or the path of knowledge). Out of these two, I believe in the path of inner renunciation however external activity is often the best suitable path for a large number of people. Why?

The Lord explains, "The performance of action is necessary for those aspirants who are conscious of multiplicity - the doer of action, its accessories and its results."

What is meant by multiplicity?

Shankaracharya clarifies this point beautifully. The whole world consists of "the doer" (or the person who acts), the instruments through which he performs his activities and the particular actions which the person must do in order to achieve a particular result. There are four components of multiplicity: (1) the doer-ship, (2) the instruments, (3) the action and (4) the results. This is called "multiplicity" and until one attains to the अद्वैत विचारधारा Advaitic vision, this multiplicity continues and no-one can renounce it.

Who is a true Karma-yogi?

The Lord is telling us: "*Karma-Yoga is suitable for most mentalities.*" How do we know? Simply apply a test for yourself. To make this point clear, I will bring a statement of Swami Vivekananda, "A true Karma-yogi is one - if there is work then he will do it with one hundred percent concentration of his mind, so that he can

discharge that particular activity with the greatest concentration, with the greatest intelligence and in the shortest period of time.”

That is the characteristic of a karma-yogi. But, if there is no such activity in the next moment, then he also is well prepared to plunge into a very deep meditation.

Illustration of a soldier:

For example, if a soldier is advised to go to the battlefield and kill his enemies, he will move forward with the greatest joy and will discharge his duty with a complete absence of egotism. However, when he returns back from the battlefield, despite being completely exhausted, he is also happy to plunge into deep meditation. Now suppose in the next moment someone asks him to study a scripture and expound it, then he will be able to shift his mental concentration to that activity. No conflict exists between his duties as a soldier and his meditation or study and exposition of scripture. In other words, he is a perfect master of his mind. Whatever he does, he does it with full concentration, full intelligence and with full efficiency. He is not attached to any of these activities or their results. He has full control on his mind and needs only to instruct his mind to either meditate and dive deep or if necessary, instruct his mind to focus on the study of scripture and then teach it to others in the best possible manner. He can do any type of activity in the least amount of time - he is a real Karma-yogi. This is what Swami Vivekananda expects every Karma-yogi to be - a master who is capable of performing any required activity which he is asked to do, in the best possible way and in the shortest period of time.

How does a body conscious person perceive God?

Arjuna doesn't seem to see the difference between the body and the soul. That is also **our** problem. We are intensely bound to our body-mind complex. Whenever we think about God with this idea then we are bound to see God as another being also, perhaps with the following accompanying thoughts:

- God has a bigger body and a greater mind.
- I know little but God knows everything.
- I am of small power but God has infinite power.
- My life is very short but God's life is eternal.
- I am finite but He is infinite.

We cherish these types of ideas and that is why we find it difficult to become a true monk.

What is true renunciation?

So, the Lord is now clarifying for all of us what true renunciation is (through the instrumentality of Arjuna). The Lord is not talking about external renunciation. The Lord is talking about the very essence of renunciation. This is the most useful definition which every spiritual aspirant must keep in his mind.

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥ 3॥

**jñeyaḥ sa nitya-sannyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣhati
nirdvandvo hi mahā-bāho sukhaṁ bandhāt pramuchyate**

Meaning: He who neither hates nor desires, may be known as constantly practising renunciation. Free from the pairs of opposites, good and evil, happiness and suffering, light and darkness, rich and poor, scholarly and illiterate. (These are called the pairs of opposites) O' Mighty Arjuna, he is easily freed from bondage.

In this verse, the Lord is defining who a true sannayasi is. Look at his life and recognise him as a true sannayasi. How? यो न द्वेष्टि **yo na dveṣṭi** means: he who is naturally never hateful. Seeing God means seeing oneself in everything. A person who sees God in everybody, actually sees himself in everybody.

As we know, we love ourselves naturally and we do not need anybody to teach us that we need to love ourselves and that we should not hate ourselves!

A person who sees the same self everywhere, neither develops hatred nor develops undue attachment or desire. निर्द्वन्द्वो हि **nirdvandvo hi** A man who is free from duality (the entire world is duality - good and bad, likes and dislikes, happiness and unhappiness, heat and cold etc.)

Our whole lives can be defined as running after happiness and running away from unhappiness; every single breath which we take is for this purpose only. A person who neither hates or desires does not desire because he already has infinite happiness. He finds enjoyment in other people's joy as if it were his own.

God is defined as the very embodiment of ananda or bliss - Sat-Chit-Ananda - absolute existence- absolute knowledge and absolute bliss.

ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति **brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati** (Mundaka Upanishad)
One who knows God becomes God himself.

This means: he doesn't have knowledge, he doesn't have existence, he doesn't have happiness but he becomes pure existence. He becomes pure absolute knowledge and pure bliss. Therefore, there is nothing for him to desire and nothing

for him to hate. Everything becomes blissful for him because he is the embodiment of bliss itself.

Karma-Yoga and Jyana-Yoga will take a yogi to the same destination.

The Lord is contradicting the view of some people that Jyana-yoga or sannayasa takes a yogi to one different goal and Karma-yoga takes a karma-yogi to another different goal. No! Both yogas are two different paths which are suitable for two different types of people with different mental and spiritual developments. Both Karma-yoga and Jyana-yoga if followed sincerely, will take us to the same destination or goal equally.

Analogy of Motorway:

Suppose there are four lanes in a motorway. Each and every lane is going to take a person to the same destination and not to different destinations. This analogy is very useful for us to understand our current subject.

The Lord is telling us again, that a wise person understands that every and any spiritual path will lead him to the same goal. That goal is God-realisation or Self-knowledge or Brahman-realisation. Whereas an unwise person thinks that different spiritual paths are heading towards different destinations, which is not the case.

In the fourth verse of this fifth chapter the Lord is saying:

साङ्ख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ 4॥

**sāṅkhya-yogau pṛithag bālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ
ekamapyāsthitaḥ samyag ubhayor vindate phalam**

Meaning: Here is a beautiful expression by Lord Krishna. What is he telling us? He is addressing unwise and ignorant people as small children. The real tragedy is that although they are ignorant, they do not consider themselves as ignorant. On the other hand, they consider themselves as the wisest people and consider the truly wise people as ignorant people. It is these ignorant children - who think that the path of knowledge and the path of Karma-yoga are distinct. He who is firmly set on one path reaches the end of both paths. In other words (as has been mentioned earlier) the person who pursues the path of Karma-yoga reaches the same goal as a person who treads the path of Jyana-yoga.

Analogy of Motorway (cont'd):

Let us recollect the analogy of motorways which I mentioned earlier. All these lanes will take the traveller to the same destination. However, it does not mean that a traveller is free to take any lane he or she likes. An old traveller with slow

reflexes and slow reactions with an old vehicle must take a slower lane, so that he can comfortably and safely ride his vehicle and will not obstruct others. Whereas, another person who is younger with quicker reflexes to control his vehicle on the road with a faster vehicle is suitable to take the fast lane.

All four paths - the path of karma, the path of devotion, the path of meditation and the path of knowledge equally take an aspirant to the same goal. But an aspirant should not choose a path based on his own willpower only, just because a particular path seems to be pleasant to him. Rather he should seek proper guidance from his spiritual teacher or guru and thus take a path suitable for him based upon his maturity, development, understanding and capability.

The Lord is reaffirming the fact that all paths lead to the same goal.

A question can be asked: how can the fast lane, the slow lane and the middle two lanes take a person to the same destination? Fortunately, we do not see anyone asking such a silly question! However, there are two types of followers:

1. **Followers of Jyana-Marga** ज्ञान मार्गः: There are many so-called wise people! They think that Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga and Raj-yoga can prepare us for self-realisation only, but cannot give us self-knowledge. They think that it is only Jyana-yoga which can grant us self-knowledge.
2. **Followers of Bhakti-Marga** भक्ति मार्गः: There are other types of people, who think that only complete surrender to God can give us liberation and that without His grace nothing can happen.

Here, the most important point to understand is this - the grace of God is not only confined to devotees. All the four categories of yogis can only become a particular type of yogi by the grace of God. They all are inspired and encouraged by this grace and thus overcome all obstacles, reaching their final destination by the grace of God only.

I would like to further clarify the above point based on Advaita Vedanta:

- It is Brahman who has become the world and the world means all of us.
- Brahman is playing with Himself and Brahman cannot reach anywhere else except Himself because there is nothing else except Brahman.
- Therefore, through all these paths and also by His own grace, He reaches Himself only.
- Interestingly, at the end of the play, He says to Himself, "I am so happy, I played."
- This is what is called Leela लीला or Divine sport.

Important point to remember: All the pathways, all the religions, all the yogas, all types of worship will take a person to the same goal.

The Lord is telling us:

यत्साङ्ख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एकं साङ्ख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ 5॥

**yat sāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṁ tad yogair api gamyate
ekaṁ sāṅkhyam cha yogam cha yaḥ paśhyati sa paśhyati**

The state of liberation reached by a man of renunciation is also reached by a man of action. This means that the goal which a monk will reach is the same goal which a karma-yogi will also reach. A person who sees that the way of renunciation and the way of action are one and the same (with only minor differences between the two) is a true seer.

After liberation (or *mukti* मुक्ति or *moksha* मोक्षा) an aspirant *must* renounce all his actions, but he should not do it all at once.

Why should he not do it all at once?

The Bhagavat Gita teaches us throughout that it is not possible for a person to renounce all actions. Some people may think that they have this freedom to renounce all their actions? No, Shri Ramakrishna made an emphatic statement that to meditate or practice samadhi is also an activity. So, it is not possible for us to renounce all our actions as long as there is a body and a mind, because whatever is done through the instrumentality of body and mind, is called "action." There may be slightly different types of activities but nobody can be without action. We have studied this point in the second and third chapter of the Gita also.

Arjuna's question to Shri Krishna is:

"If this is true that both paths (Karma-yoga and Jyana-yoga) equally lead us to one goal (which is self-knowledge or moksha) then why are You insisting that I should take the path of Karma-yoga rather than the path of renunciation."

We have already explained this - whichever path we take is not our choice. It is completely dictated by our nature, by our mental and physical make-up. This is exactly what we see in the physical world. A weak person will not be able to do pole-jumping! Another person who is not a trained runner, will not be able to take part in long-distance running. There are limitations; each person can only participate in a sport or an activity which is most suitable for his physical and mental condition.

Important point to remember: We need to understand that every path leads to the same goal but every path is not meant for everyone and everyone is not fit for every path.

In the next sixth verse, Lord Krishna is explaining why He has advised Arjuna to take up the path of Karma-yoga:

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ 6॥

**sannyāsas tu mahā-bāho duḥkham āptum ayogataḥ
yoga-yukto munir brahma na chireṇādhigachchhati**

Meaning: But renunciation of action, O' Mighty Arjuna is hard to attain without performance of action. But, a sage purified by 'devotion to action' quickly reaches Brahman. Renouncing activities is none of our business.

In fact, nobody can renounce activities. Shri Ramakrishna very rightly points out to us - man cannot and should not renounce any activity. Then what about sannayasa? When the purpose of an activity is fulfilled then this activity will fall away automatically by itself from such a person. Forcible renunciation is counter-productive. Only a person who has been able to control his mind and who has a minimal amount of desires (those desires not being opposable to his spiritual life, to the dharmic way and to the righteous way) will, at the right time, attain maturity of mind and then sannayasa will automatically come to him. Whether he puts on ochre clothes or not does not really matter. A great Sannayasi is one who has achieved a state where he is not identified with his body and mind. As soon as a person achieves a state of non-attachment with his body and mind, all his desires, ambitions, frustrations etc. which were associated with his body-mind completely fall away from such a person. Such a person is called a real sannayasin even if he does not put on a sannayasin's uniform or ochre clothes.

The best examples are Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Bhagwan Shri Krishna, Shri Rama and also Shri Ramakrishna. Although Shri Ramakrishna took formal sannayasa, he allowed Holy Mother to live with him because he never thought of himself as a man, a married man or a husband because he was not identified with his body and mind. On the contrary his thoughts were – “I am a pure Atman, and this being is also a pure Atman.” There cannot be two pure Atmans. All 'individual Atmans' are only a reflection of one Atman in various forms (or koshas कोशा or limitations or bodies and minds).

“O'Arjuna it is hard to attain true renunciation of actions. Only a person who is completely free from every imaginable desire, is the only one who need not do any action - but 'just be', he doesn't say "I am." He says, " The Divine is there, I am just a witness to that divine.”

Summary:

- In the sixth verse the Lord has given us a beautiful definition of true renunciation.
- True renunciation is the complete detachment of the thought that I am body and mind.
- When a person does not feel that he is body and mind, then only one option is left for him and that is to know that he is pure Atman.
- To attain that state of complete knowledge, one has to perform lot of Karma-yoga for many lives.

Later on, the Lord tells us that:

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ C7 V19॥

**bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ**

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते **bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate** means after many lives, a sincere aspirant reaches Me and reaches the realization that 'वासुदेवः सर्वमिति **vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti** i.e. the entire world is nothing but Vasudeva - it is nothing but Brahman.

There is no other world except Brahman - with closed eyes there is God only and with open eyes there is God only.

The Lord is telling us that we are only beginners in our spiritual lives. Let us take to Karma-yoga and then progress slowly. Our goal is detachment from the body-mind identity.

When we reach this state, we have two choices: 1) we might take up a life of external renunciation or 2) we might take up a life of internal renunciation, give up all attachments internally but discharge all our duties externally, and this state of life is called **Karma-Sannyasa** कर्म संयास.

We will explore these points in detail in our future classes.

**Vasudeva sutham devam kamsa Chanoora mardhanam,
Devaki paramanandam Krishnam vande Jagat Gurum.**

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् । देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

May Shri ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda bless us all with bhakti, jyana, viveka and vairajya.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

With kind regards

Hari Sundaresan & Mamta Misra