

## CHAPTER 5

### KARMA YOGA — ACTION IN KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

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#### Connection between Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

- ❖ Chapter 2 gives
  - Preliminary knowledge of soul and its entanglement in the material body
  - *Buddhi-yoga* as the process to get out of this entanglement
- ❖ Chapter 3 explains that a person on the platform of knowledge no longer has any duties to perform
- ❖ Chapter 4 presents
  - The Lord telling Arjuna that all kind of sacrificial work culminates in knowledge
  - Also Krishna glorifies *jnana* and speaks of action in inaction and inaction in action (4.16 – 4.18)
  - In Text 4.41 also He glorifies *jnana* and renunciation
  - But in Text 4.42, He orders Arjuna to fight
- ❖ Arjuna 's understanding up until this point
  - He thinks renunciation in knowledge involves cessation of all kinds of work performed as sense activities
  - But if one performs work in devotional service, as Krishna suggests – then how is work stopped?
  - Work and renunciation appears to be incompatible to Arjuna at this point of time.
- ❖ Understanding what Arjuna lacks – Work in full knowledge is non-reactive and is therefore the same as inaction
- ❖ Therefore Chapter 5 opens with Arjuna's question similar to Text 3.1, "**Which is better: 'Work in devotion' or 'Renunciation of work'?**" Krishna will answer Arjuna's question and will explain the process of achieving liberation through *Karma-yoga* in greater depth than Chapter 3

## BREAKDOWN OF CHAPTER 5

### SECTION I (5.1 – 5.6) — *NISKAMA-KARMA-YOGA* – EASIER THAN RENOUNCING WORK

- Arjuna again asks whether renouncing work is superior to working with detachment
- Krishna replies
  - Both are equal in the sense that both are means to the same goal
  - Emphasizes working with detachment as easier and superior

### SECTION II (5.7 – 5.12) — HOW TO PERFORM *NISKAMA-KARMA-YOGA*

- One performing *Niskama-karma-yoga* identifies
  - Neither with his body
  - Nor the activities that his body performs
- By his detached actions, he is freed from the reactions of his activities

### SECTION III (5.13 – 5.16) — PLATFORM OF KNOWLEDGE – KNOWING THE THREE DOERS

- The living being (Doer No. 1) who knows that all bodily activities are automatically carried out by the modes of material nature (Doer No. 2), after those activities are sanctioned by the Supersoul (Doer No. 3), attains enlightenment thorough that knowledge

### SECTION IV (5.17 – 5.26) — LIBERATION BY FOCUSING ON THE SUPERSOUL

- One who, in knowledge, devotionally fixes his consciousness on the Supersoul and remains materially equipoised, attains liberation in the near future

### SECTION V (5.27 – 5.28) — LIBERATION THROUGH ASTANGA YOGA: A PREVIEW

- Practice of *Astanga-yoga* gives the same liberation

### SECTION VI (5.29) — PEACE ON THE PLATFORM OF LIBERATION

- A person in full consciousness of Krishna attains liberation from the pangs of material miseries

## SECTION I (5.1 – 5.6)

### *NISKAMA-KARMA-YOGA* – EASIER THAN RENOUNCING WORK

*Text 1-3: Karma yoga is same as sannyasa, but better*

*Text 4-6: Why Karma Yoga is better?*

#### Text 5.1\*

**THEME:** Arjuna asks question, “What is better and more beneficial?” ‘Work’ and ‘renunciation’ appears incompatible

- ❖ Text 5.1 purport mentions that ‘work in devotion’ is easier than ‘dry mental speculation’. Because
  - It is transcendental in nature and thus,
  - It frees one from all reactions



**PLEASE NOTE:** The remaining points of the purport are mentioned in the Connection between Chapter 4 and 5 above

### Text 5.2

**THEME: Answers the question asked in Text 5.1**

- ❖ Both good for liberation
- ❖ But work in devotion (*karma-yoga*) is better than renunciation of work (*sannyasa*)

#### FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.2

- (a) **Path of action: Krishna conscious action vs Fruitive action** – Devotional Service / Action in Krishna Consciousness is the only way to get rid of material bondage (Ref. SB 5.5.4-6)
- On the other hand fruitive action creates bondage
    - To act for sense gratification – not good because fruitive acts cause material bondage and transmigration; each body is temporary and miserable.
    - Failure of life – if no inquiry about real identity
    - Suggestion to “get out” of bondage – Develop love for Devotional service to Vasudeva
- (b) **Path of renouncing all action: Process of *Jnana* (of spiritual identity) / dry renunciation**
- One may think that action causes bondage, therefore we should renounce action altogether
    - but one should know that *Jnana* (of spiritual identity) or dry renunciation is not sufficient for liberation from bondage,
    - but one must act on the level of status of spirit soul
  - Action in Krishna Consciousness is different from action on fruitive platform
    - Action in full knowledge strengthens one’s advancement in real knowledge
    - Mere renunciation of fruitive action without Krishna Consciousness does not purify the heart
- (c) **Srila Rupa Goswami on ‘renunciation’** (Ref. *Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu*)
- Incomplete Renunciation (*Phalgu-vairagya*) – to renounce things related to Supreme Personality of Godhead thinking them material, with desire for liberation
  - Complete renunciation (*Yukta-vairagya*) – implies to know
    - Everything belongs to the Lord
    - Use everything in His service
    - Do not claim proprietorship

### Text 5.3

**THEME: One who works in devotion is a true *sannyasi* and easily achieves liberation**

- ❖ Definition of true *sannyasi* – neither hates nor desires fruits and is free from all dualities

#### FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.3


- (a) **Krishna Conscious person is a true *sannyasi* – How?**
- He has perfect transcendental knowledge *i.e.* soul and Krishna are one in quality but different in quantity
    - Incorrect transcendental knowledge – oneness in quantity with Krishna, because a part can never be equal to whole
  - **Result of perfect knowledge** – one becomes full in himself
  - **Full in himself** – implies no desire/hatred/lamentation for the results of action
  - **No duality in mind** – because whatever he does is for Krishna
  - Thus **liberated even in material world**

**Texts 5.4\* – 5.5**

**COMMON THEME: *Karma-yoga* and *Sannyasa* are same**, because both lead to spiritual realization and have same conclusion

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 5.4 – 5.5** – (Only a few concepts are enlisted below from the purports. Most of the points are covered in the Summarized Theme 5A table below)

- (a) **How *Sankhya* and *Karma-yoga* / Devotional Service are the same** – Because the common aim is “Vishnu” (5.4 purport)
- (b) **Who sees things as they are** – One who sees *Sankhya* (analytical study) and devotional service on the same level in terms of aim (5.5)
- (c) **Aim of analytical study of material world – find the soul of existence**
  - Soul of material world—Vishnu / Devotional service entails service to the Supersoul
  - *Analogy*: One is to find the **root of tree** (*Sankhya*), other is to water the root (Devotional Service).
- (d) **Real purpose of philosophical research** is to find the ‘Ultimate Goal of Life’, which is ‘self-realization’. This proves there is no difference between the conclusion of the two processes (5.5)


 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 5.5 & 5.6:** It is important to understand that Krishna is not speaking about a variety of paths leading to a variety of inferior or superior destinations. Rather, He is describing two aspects of a path—one easy and one difficult—with the same goal. (These verses are applicable to anyone trying to attain Brahman, Paramatma or Bhagavan realization, but Srila Prabhupada translated *yoga* as “devotional service” to highlight Krishna’s actual desire and purpose.)

If we renounce activities before our hearts are clean, we will be forced by our unclean hearts to engage in improper activities. The senses will demand engagement, but the *jnana-yoga* process forbids sense activity. Unless the senses are engaged in good work, it will be difficult to stop improper work. Krishna therefore recommends keeping the senses always engaged, while simultaneously purifying the heart by working with detachment. This is the more practical and, therefore, superior path. The comparison between the two paths continues in the following verse.

**Text 5.6**

**THEME: Dry Renunciation (*Jnana-marg*) is too difficult and distressful**

- ❖ *Karma-yoga* is better because
  - Process is easier
  - Result quickly gives liberation

 **PLEASE NOTE:** Points from purport of Text 5.6 and some points of purports of Texts 5.2 - 5.5 are mentioned in the table below


**SUMMARISED THEME 5A**

<b>CONCLUSION: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RENUNCIATION AND WORK IN DEVOTION</b>			
<b>S.No</b>	<b>Verse</b>	<b>Renunciation / Mayavadi <i>sannyasis</i></b>	<b>Work in devotion/ Vaisnava <i>sannyasis</i></b>
1	3.3	Needs prior purification by prescribed duties	Process itself purifies
2	5.2	Simply <i>Jnana</i> insufficient for liberation	Action is must – Must act in status of soul
3	5.2	Risk of fall down	Success guaranteed - Entrance into God's Kingdom
4	5.2	Incomplete renunciation	Complete renunciation / To use everything for Krishna
5	5.4	Find the root, Vishnu	Water the root
6	5.5	Process is to detach from matter	Become attached to Krishna
7	5.6	No happiness	Brings happiness
8	5.6	Senses restricted, cannot relish transcendental devotional service	Senses engaged, perform multiple devotional activities
9	5.6	Take many births	Quickly achieves Supreme Personality of Godhead
10	5.6	Study <i>Sankhya</i> philosophy	Study Srimad Bhagavatam
11	5.6	<i>Sariraka bhasya</i> on <i>Vedanta Sutra</i> by <i>Sankaracarya</i>	Study Srimad Bhagavatam, natural commentary on <i>Vedanta Sutra</i>
12	5.6	May fall down to philanthropic and altruistic activities	Have multiple engagements in devotional service, according to <i>Pancharatriki</i> regulations


**SECTION II (5.7 – 5.12)**  
**HOW TO PERFORM *NISKAMA-KARMA-YOGA***

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION II**

One in knowledge understands his incompatibility with material nature and thus acts only for purification, unattached to material results

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION I & SECTION II:** By describing the consciousness of one who works in transcendental knowledge, now Krishna illustrates how *Karma-yoga* and *Sankhya-yoga* are complimentary but *Karma-yoga* is preferable.

Texts 5.7 – 5.12 may depict any of the three levels of God realisation, since Bhagavan is the highest realisation and clearly the goal of Gita, Srila Prabhupada expresses these verses from that angle.

 **PLEASE NOTE:** *Translations and Purports of Texts 5.7 – 5.12 has been covered below under Summarized Theme 5B. The Remaining points of the purports are covered together in the 'Focus of Learning' section thereafter*

**SUMMARISED THEME 5B**  
**PERFORMING NISKAMA-KARMA-YOGA**

**A) IN TERMS OF REALISATION**

- 1. Sees all living entities as spirit souls, part and parcels of the Supreme / Dear to all (5.7)**
  - Krishna conscious viewpoint: Devotees see's all living entities as part and parcel, therefore waters the root (feeding stomach satisfies all the limbs). Thus one acts as servant to all living entities and thus dear to all.
- 2. Knows material activities as interactions of senses with sense objects (5.8 – 5.9)**
  - Krishna conscious viewpoint: Devotee remains aloof and free because of
    - Pure in existence – aloof from actions which depend on 5 immediate and remote causes
    - Always conscious of his actual position as a servitor - Senses kept in Krishna's service
- 3. Knows soul is inactive materially. He is aloof (5.8 – 5.9)**

**B) IN TERMS OF ACTION**

- 1. Mind and senses completely controlled (5.7)**
  - Krishna conscious viewpoint: Because a devotee is servant to all, therefore he is dear to all and satisfies all and thus he is always pure in consciousness
    - Pure consciousness leads to mind and sense control
    - Mind and senses fixed in Krishna's service –thus no chance of deviating from Krishna Consciousness
- 2. Acts without attachment / no desire for results (5.10)**
  - Krishna conscious viewpoint: Devotee surrenders results unto Supreme Lord
    - Person without Krishna Consciousness acts according to material body and senses
    - Person in Krishna Consciousness acts according to knowledge that body is property of Krishna and engage in service of Krishna
- 3. Act with body, mind, intelligence and senses only for purification (5.11\*)**
  - Krishna conscious viewpoint: Action in Krishna Consciousness causes automatic purification, because done for Krishna's senses (*Ref. Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu: "Iha Yasya..."*)
    - Sadachara – It refers to Purified Activities which are easily done by acting in Krishna Consciousness

**C) RESULTS**

- 1. Not incur sin (5.10) – Analogy: Lotus leaf untouched by water**
- 2. Never entangled** because work is not based on desire of mind and senses, but based on Krishna's Desire (5.7 and 5.12)
- 3. Attains unadulterated peace**, because no anxiety for fruits (5.12)
  - Krishna Consciousness – Attachment to Krishna
  - Bodily Consciousness – Attachment to Results

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 5.7 – 5.12**

- (a) **How can Arjuna, a man of controlled senses be offensive to others** (5.7)
- He was not offensive, soul cannot be killed (*Ref. Chapter 2*)
  - Only dress changes
  - Arjuna was not fighting but only carrying out orders of Krishna in Krishna Consciousness
- (b) **'Brahmani' means Krishna Consciousness** (5.10)
- To see everything in relation to Krishna – (*Based on Vedic hymns, Bhagavad-gita, Isopanisad*)
    - To what degree – Even one's own body (a gift of Lord) and oneself belongs to Krishna, The Supreme Proprietor
    - Use all in His service
- (c) **The perfect stage of Krishna Consciousness** (*Last line of Text 5.11*)
- Dovetailed with Krishna: It means to apply everything in service to Krishna – All that is produced of body and in his possessions should be used for Krishna's service
  - To be one with Krishna as part and parcel / Devoid of false ego (Bodily conception)
- (d) **Cause of anxiety** – To function in concept of duality without knowledge of Absolute Truth (5.12)
- In Krishna Consciousness there is no duality. All that exists is on Krishna's Energy and Krishna is all good, Supreme Absolute Truth
- (e) **Secret of Krishna Consciousness** – realization that there is no existence besides Krishna is a platform of peace and fearlessness (5.12)


**SECTION III (5.13 – 5.16)**

**PLATFORM OF KNOWLEDGE – KNOWING THE THREE DOERS**

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION III**

Acting in Knowledge of Texts 5.13 – 5.16 (Knowledge of the Supersoul as the ultimate controller of activities) reaps two substantial fruits:

1. **Detachment from material events**
  - One who understands that he is not the material body or senses is not concerned with their satisfaction
  - He appreciates that he has no direct control over material phenomena, so attachment to them is useless
  - He is too busy serving the Lord in blissful Krishna consciousness to take to mundane sense-gratification
2. **Surrender to Supersoul:** Devotionally fixes his consciousness (mind, intelligence, faith and refuge) on Supersoul
  - And thus one gets fully cleansed of misgivings through complete knowledge attains liberation (5.17)

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION II & SECTION III:** Chapter 5 addresses the '**topic of action**'. While discussing action, one must of course refer to the '**performer of action**'. Krishna explains 3 performers.

**Text 5.13**  
**Establishes the role of *Jivatma***

**THEME: One in knowledge sees the body, not the self as the performer and cause of work.** Activities of body are conducted automatically by its modes.

- ❖ Purpose of discussion is to convince the embodied living entity that 'I am not the only doer'
- ❖ Embodied living entity resides happily in the city of nine gates, neither working nor causing work to be done, when he
  - Controls his nature and
  - Mentally renounces all actions

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.13**

- (a) **Soul placed in body**
  - Lives in the city of nine gates
  - Nine gates – Two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, one mouth, the anus and genitals
  - The soul has a choice – Although subjecting oneself to the conditions of the body, one can be beyond those conditions if he so desires
- (b) **Cause of soul's suffering** – Owing to the forgetfulness of his superior nature and identifying with the material nature
- (c) **Solution to the soul's suffering** – By Krishna consciousness one revives his real position and comes out of the embodiment because by Krishna consciousness
  - One becomes completely aloof from bodily activities
  - In such a controlled life one's deliberations are changed and he lives happily within the city of nine gates
- (d) **Supporting reference – *Svetasvatara Upanisad***
  - When the living entity identifies with the Lord within Himself, he becomes just as free as the Lord, even while in the body
  - Therefore a Krishna conscious person is free from both the outer and inner activities of the material body

**Text 5.14\***  
**Role of modes**

**THEME: One in Knowledge perceives, therefore the material nature as the cause of worldly actions**

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.14**

- (a) **Living entities as one of the energies** – It is a superior energy as compared to matter which is the inferior energy (*Ref. Bg. 7.5*)
- (b) **Ignorance is the cause of suffering**
  - Soul is in contact with the material nature since time immemorial
  - Temporary body is the cause of varieties of activities and resultant reactions
  - In ignorance one identifies with the activities of the body and suffers the result



**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.14 continued...**

- (c) **Living entity is not the 'so-called' master**
- As long as he is in the city of the body, he appears to be master of it (indicated by the word "prabhuh")
  - He is neither the proprietor nor the controller of the actions and reactions of the body
  - *Analogy:* Waves of material ocean are simply tossing him in the struggle for existence
- (d) **Best solution to save living entities from all turmoil:** Get out of the water by transcendental Krishna consciousness

**Text 5.15\***  
**Role of the Lord**

**THEME: One in Knowledge sees material nature as being under Lord's control and thus the Lord as the ultimate performer and the cause of all actions**

- ❖ But this theme raises a question that "Doesn't that make Him responsible for all good and bad things done in this world?"
- ❖ Text 5.15 answers this: "He simply sanctions, the soul initiates by desire and therefore living entity is responsible for all good and bad reactions"

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.15**

- (a) **Supreme Lord is vibhu (omniscient)** – This means He is full of all six opulences
- He is always satisfied in Himself, undisturbed by sinful or pious activities
  - He does not create a particular situation for any living entity
- (b) **Living entity is anu (atomic)** –
- Prone to ignorance – He is prone to ignorance because of limited power, although he is full of knowledge and bliss
  - Free will to desire – As a part of the Supreme Lord he has the capacity to desire by his free will
  - Desire is a subtle form of conditioning for the living entity
  - Misuse of desire – Under ignorance living entity desires to be put into a certain condition of life
    - Therefore his chain of actions and reactions begin
    - Under ignorance the living entity claims that the Lord is responsible for his conditional existence
- (c) **Supreme Lord as the witness and permitter** – The desires of the living entities are fulfilled only by the **omnipotent Lord**
- *Analogy of flower:* Lord is the constant companion as Supersoul and He can understand the desires of the individual soul, as one can smell the fragrance of a flower by being near to it
  - Does Lord fulfill all desires – He fulfills the desires as one deserves; Man proposes, God disposes

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.15 continued...**

- (d) **The Lord is neutral to everyone** – He does not interfere with the desires of the minute, independent living entities
- When the living entity is bewildered the Lord allows him to fulfill those desires, but the Lord is never responsible for the particular situation created
  - When the living entity desires Krishna, the Lord takes special care and encourages one to desire in such a way that one can attain to Him and be eternally happy
  - References for Lord's neutrality (study purport)
    - *Ref. Vedic hymns / Kausitaki Upanisad*
    - *Ref. Vedanta Sutra 2.1.34 "vaisamyā-nairghrṇya..."*

**SUMMARIZED THEME 5C**

<b>COMPARING THE SOUL AND SUPERSOUL (5.13 – 5.16)</b>		
<b>S.NO</b>	<b>SOUL</b>	<b>SUPERSOUL</b>
1	Eternal	Eternal
2	Blissful, but <b>suffers</b> when covered by maya	Blissful, above the <b>modes</b>
3	<b>Cognisant</b> of his body	Cognisant of <b>all bodies</b>
4	<b>Anu</b> , atomic	<b>Vibhu</b> , omniscient
5	Has minute <b>independence</b> to desire but is dependent upon Supersoul to fulfil desires	Complete <b>independence</b>

**SUMMARIZED THEME 5D****CONCLUSION: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOUL, SUPERSOUL AND THE MATERIAL MODES OF NATURE**

1. **Soul desires** – Lord does not interfere
2. **Lord as supersoul sanctions** – Those desires that the soul deserves, Lord is the director of the choreography who causes activities to be done through material nature
3. **Modes of material nature** carry out actions to fulfil those desires, body and actions are choreographed by the modes
4. Establishes living entity is not the only doer
5. **Who is responsible**
  - Supersoul not to be held responsible for all actions, because all initiated by desires of the living entity (5.13)
  - **Living entity is responsible** for his own good and bad actions and is thus responsible for the consequences
  - **Supersoul is the ultimate controller of the activities**, but not the initiator and modes of nature are the agents of the Lord
6. **Benefits of understanding the position of the Supreme (5.16)** – It leads to "A state of perfect knowledge"
  - When one surrenders unto the Lord (7.19)
  - Happiness and Real Peace

**Text 5.16**

**THEME: Knowing the relations between the three** (Supersoul, Soul, material nature as explained above) allows one to be detached from all fruits

- ❖ “A state of perfect knowledge” is achieved when one surrenders unto the Lord (*Ref. Bg. 7.19*)
- ❖ One attains full enlightenment, peace and happiness
- ❖ Finally attains real liberation
- ❖ *Analogy: Sun lights up and reveals everything in daytime (rising of sun: knowledge), similarly knowledge destroys the nescience and reveals everything*

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.16****(a) Transcendental knowledge in Krishna consciousness removes all bewilderment**


- *Ref. Bg. 4.36-4.38 – Glorifies transcendental knowledge*
- What is that knowledge – Perfect knowledge is achieved when one surrenders unto Krishna (*Ref. Bg. 7.19*) and surrender in Krishna consciousness reveals everything as sun lights up everything in daytime
- Two parts of perfect knowledge
  - To know oneself different from the body
  - To know that one can never become God and thus the soul is eternally different from Supersoul – “**identity with individuality in spiritual life is real knowledge**” (*Ref. Bg. 2.12*)

**(b) Two categories of bewilderment**

- To identify oneself with the matter
- To think oneself as God – When the living entity unceremoniously thinks himself God, he actually falls into the last snare of nescience
  - *Our refutation: If a living entity is God then how can he become bewildered by nescience? If so, then nescience, or Satan is greater than God*

**(c) How to get real knowledge** – Seek out a bona-fide spiritual master and learn Krishna consciousness under Him**(d) Who is a perfect representative of God** – One who never claims that he is God, although he is paid all respect ordinarily paid to God because he has knowledge of God**SECTION IV (5.17 – 5.26)****LIBERATION BY FOCUSING ON THE SUPERSOUL****PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION IV**

One who takes shelter of the Supersoul in full knowledge becomes impartial in material transactions and finds quick path to liberation

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 5.16 & 5.17:** We become enlightened by accurately understanding the interrelations between the living entity, the three modes of nature and the Supersoul. This knowledge removes ignorance. When ignorance is removed, the living entity takes shelter of the Supersoul and attains liberation.

**SUMMARIZED THEME 5E**  
**CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ENLIGHTENED LIBERATED KARMA-YOGI (5.17 – 5.26)**

**A) Vision of a self-realized soul (5.18 – 5.22)**

- Equal vision to all living entities – Irrespective of species and caste (5.18)
- No attraction/aversion to matter (5.19), thus he is flawless and impartial like the Lord
- No rejoicing/lamenting for material events (5.20)
- Intelligence fixed in self, and one knows the science of God (5.20)
  - Knows perfectly about three levels of Absolute Truth and constitutional position of living entity
  - This is *Brahman* realization or self-realization
- Never attracted to sense gratification, because
  - He understands that (5.22)
    - Contact of senses with sense objects is the source of misery and continual material existence
    - Sense pleasure is temporary and limited
  - He experiences great happiness within – Higher taste (5.24)

**B) Internal and external behavior/activities of a self realized soul (5.23 – 5.26)**

- **Tolerates** the forces of Desires and Anger; and urges of senses Till Death (5.23)
- **How he tolerates**
- By focussing his happiness, activities and goals inward (higher taste) (5.24)
- Purifying his external activities by working for the benefit of others (5.25)
- **Fixed meditation** on Supersoul (5.26) – Soon attains liberation in **near future**



**PLEASE NOTE:** Texts 5.17 – 5.26 are now individually covered based on the standard Theme followed by the Focus of Learning section


**Text 5.17**

**THEME: Becoming fixed in the Supreme** – As described in this verse, after one achieves knowledge that he is different from his body i.e knowledge born of the mode of goodness (*Ref. Bg. 14.17 “sattvat sanjayate jnanam...”*) – he must become “fixed in the Supreme” to achieve liberation

- ❖ By fixing one’s intelligence, mind, faith and refuge in the Supreme, one becomes fully cleansed of misgivings through complete knowledge
- ❖ Thus one proceeds straight on the path of liberation

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.17**

- (a) **Meaning of the word “Supreme” used in translation** – Krishna is the “Supreme Reality”
- The whole *Bhagavad-gita* centers around the declaration that “Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead”
  - ‘*Para-tattva*’ means the Supreme reality, who is understood by the knowers of the Supreme as Brahman, Paramatma and *Bhagavan*
  - *Bhagavan* is the last word in the Absolute. Two references for this
    - Ref. Bg. 7.7 – “*mattah parataram...*”
    - Ref. Bg. 14.27 – “*brahmano hi...*”
- (b) **How a Krishna conscious person proceeds steadily on the path of liberation**
- By fixing one’s mind, intelligence, faith and refuge in Krishna one is washed of all misgivings
  - One achieves perfect knowledge in everything concerning transcendence – Thus achieves thorough understanding that there is duality in Krishna (Simultaneous identity and individuality)

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 5.17 & 5.18:** And what of the impartiality of those who transcend the material world in this way?

**Text 5.18**

**THEME: Equality of vision** – Liberated self-realized soul can see everything and everyone equally

- ❖ He, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle *Brahmana*, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog eater

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.18**

- (a) **“Species” and “Caste”** – two basis of mundane differentiation
- (b) **What is the basis of “equal vision”**
- Spiritual equality of living entities as spirit soul
  - Lord neutrally present in the heart of all as Paramatma and thus treats everyone as a friend regardless of the circumstances of the living entities
  - Bodies are the material productions of different modes of material nature
- (c) **Similarity in the quality of the soul and Supersoul, however, does not make them equal in quantity**
- Individual soul is only present in that particular body
  - Paramatma is present in each and every body

**Text 5.19**

**THEME:** Such a self-realized soul has no attraction or hatred to matter, thus he is flawless and impartial like the Lord

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF TEXT 5.19**

A devotee of Krishna recognizes everything that happens to him as Krishna's kindness, and everything therefore increases his devotion. Ref SB 10.14.8 "tat te 'nukampa..."

*"My dear Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering You respectful obeisances with his heart, words and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim."*

Such a devotee is *mukti-pade*, already liberated

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.19**

- (a) **"Equanimity of mind"** – Sign of Self realization
- Importance of equanimity – at such a stage one is considered to have conquered material conditions specifically birth and death
  - Thus there is no rebirth but one can enter into the spiritual sky
- (b) **Lord and living entity are "flawless"** – How? Because
- On spiritual platform they are free from all attraction and hatred – this makes living entity eligible for spiritual sky

**LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 5.19 & 5.20:**

Symptoms of such a liberated soul are described further

**Text 5.20**

**THEME:** Symptoms of self-realized soul

- ❖ Being without desire or hatred, one's intelligence does not rejoice or lament
- ❖ One remains sharp in intelligence and
- ❖ 'Unbewildered' – Fixed in the self

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.20**

- (a) Text 5.20 – 5.21 describes the **symptoms of a self realized soul** (5.20 – 5.21)
- (b) **Foremost symptom** – no illusion of false bodily identification
- This symptom is the basis of not rejoicing or lamenting for material dualities
- (c) **"Sthira-Buddhih"** – Steadiness of mind – Not rejoice/lament for bodily relations or achievements:
- Based on knowledge that he is not this body but fragmental portion of Supreme Personality of Godhead
- (d) **Unbewildered** – Not misidentify Body as soul/nor take body as permanent.

**Text 5.21\***

**THEME: Further symptoms of self-realized soul**

- ❖ Being fixed in the self one experiences great happiness within (higher taste) and thus one is never attracted to the temporary sense gratification
- ❖ One concentrates on the Supreme and enjoys unlimited happiness

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.21**

- (a) **Example of higher taste** – Yamunacarya
- (b) **Brahma-yoga stage** – One who is absorbed in Krishna consciousness, loses taste for sense pleasure
- (c) **Test in spiritual realization** – One can work with great vigor without sex pleasure, which he avoids
  - Highest material pleasure – sex pleasure:
  - Spiritual realization and sex pleasure go ill together
- (d) Krishna conscious person is not attracted to any kind of sense pleasure, due to his being liberated soul



**LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 5.21 & 5.22:**

In the next two verses, Krishna tells Arjuna why sensual desires are foolish

**Text 5.22\***

**THEME: An intelligent person does not take part in sensual pleasures because**

- ❖ Contact of senses with the sense objects is a source of misery
- ❖ Such pleasures have a beginning and an end – They are temporary

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.22**

- (a) **Liberated soul is not interested in material pleasures** – enjoys unlimited transcendental bliss
  - *Ref. Padma Purana – “Ramante yogino...”*
    - Meaning of ‘Rama’ – Mystics derive unlimited transcendental pleasure from the Absolute Truth, therefore Supreme Absolute Truth is known as Rama
  - SB. 5.5.1 (Teachings of Lord Rsbhadeva)
    - Human life should not be used to labor very hard for sense pleasure like stool-eaters (hogs)
    - Human Life should be used for performing penances and purifying the existence
    - As a result of proper penances, you will enjoy unlimited transcendental bliss



**LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 5.22 & 5.23:** The result of tolerating sense desires and not succumbing to their pushings is explained below

**Text 5.23**

**THEME: Tolerate the urges till the end of life** – One should patiently tolerate the “urges of material senses” and the “forces of desire and anger” before giving up this present body

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF TEXT 5.23**

- How long will we have to tolerate the pushings of the mind and senses? Does maya give up? One day, do we wake up liberated, freed from the impediments caused by the mind and senses? This verse answers that sense attraction must be tolerated until death.
- We can remain tolerant by fixing our consciousness on Krishna. The pleasure of Krishna consciousness, combined with the conviction that nothing in this world can bring lasting happiness, will help us tolerate the pushings of the body and mind.

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.23**

- (a) **Forces of senses** – Six urges i.e. speech, anger, mind, tongue, stomach, genitals
- (b) **Duty of transcendentalists** – To strenuously try to control desire and anger
- Material desires if un-satiated creates anger : Mind, eyes and chest becomes agitated
  - Why to tolerate – One must practice to control them before one gives up this material body to make steady progress on spiritual path and achieve transcendental bliss



**LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 5.23 & 5.24:**

The pleasure of spiritual realization is the topic of the next verse

**Text 5.24**

**THEME: Higher taste** – One gets the strength to tolerate the sensual urges by focussing his happiness, activities and goals inward

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF TEXT 5.24**

We must get a higher taste. It is urgent. We have to hear, chant and have good association; otherwise, we will be unable to tolerate the urges of the senses over time.

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.24**

- (a) **Brahma-bhuta stage** (Liberated platform)
- To enjoy happiness by factual experience within
  - No longer interested in material external happiness



**LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 5.24 AND 5.25:**

Krishna gives more symptoms of one seeking satisfaction in spirit, not matter

**Text 5.25**


**THEME: He engages in purifying his external activities by working for the benefit of others**

- ❖ He is beyond the dualities that arise from doubts
- ❖ Minds are engaged within
- ❖ Thus one is free from all sins and achieves *Brahma-nirvana* stage or liberation in the Supreme



**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.25**

- (a) **Highest welfare work** – To revive the forgetfulness of Krishna being the Supreme enjoyer, proprietor and well-wisher
- (b) **Who can engage in such welfare**
  - One cannot engage in such first class welfare without being liberated in the Supreme
  - Therefore only one in full Krishna consciousness can perform such welfare
- (c) **What is the imperfect understanding of “welfare activities”**
  - Physical welfare or temporary relief of external body and mind
  - Why it is imperfect – Because the real cause of one’s difficulties is “forgetfulness of one’s relationship with the Supreme Lord”

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 5.24 & 5.25:** After reading Text 5.24 and 5.25, we may think that achieving liberation is too difficult, and we may become discouraged. In Text 5.24, Srila Prabhupada’s translation uses the word “ultimately,” as if to caution us that the result won’t be quickly achieved. Similarly, the qualities mentioned in these two verses are rarely found. In the next verse, however, Krishna speaks reassuringly.

**Text 5.26\***

**THEME:** By fixed meditation on Supersoul one soon attains liberation in near future. One is assured liberation by:


- ❖ Being free from anger and all material desires
- ❖ By being self-realized, self-disciplined and constantly endeavoring for perfection

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.26**

- (a) **“Krishna Conscious person is the best of all salvationists”** – Because effective control of senses is done by focusing on Lotus Feet of Lord which uproots all the deep-grown desires of fruitive acts (Ref. SB. 4.22.39)
- (b) **Analogy of meditation: Tortoise, Fish, Bird** –
  - The tortoise brings up its offspring simply by meditation. The eggs of the tortoise are laid on land, and the tortoise meditates on the eggs while in the water
  - The fish brings up its offspring simply by looking at them
  - Birds maintain their offspring by touching
  - Similarly, the devotee in Krishna consciousness, although far away from the Lord's abode, can elevate himself to that abode simply by thinking of Him constantly—by engagement in Krishna consciousness.
- (c) **Brahma-nirvana:** Stage of absence of material miseries due to being constantly immersed in the Supreme

**SECTION V (5.27 – 5.28)**

**LIBERATION THROUGH ASTANGA YOGA: A PREVIEW**

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION IV & SECTION V:** Krishna has now finished His discussion of how to gain liberation by working in complete knowledge of the Supersoul. In the next two verses He explains how to achieve that same liberated condition through *astanga-yoga*. These two texts introduce Chapter Six, which covers *astanga-yoga* in detail

**Texts 5.27 – 5.28**

**COMMON THEME: Introduction to *astanga-yoga***

- ❖ People generally identify spirituality with inaction. They think sitting somewhere in forest is more spiritual than working in *Karma-yoga*. Lord Krishna makes the point that there is no difference between *karma-yoga* and *astanga-yoga*
- ❖ Krishna tells how one may achieve same Supersoul realization through *astanga-yoga* (A preview to Chapter 6)
- ❖ Also when one is thus purified in vision and activities by *niskama-karma-yoga*, only then one can begin and make advancement in *astanga-yoga*

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 5.27 – 5.28**

- (a) **Krishna consciousness as “Transcendental position of liberation in the supreme” which includes the following realizations:**
- One can immediately understand one’s spiritual position
  - One can understand the Supreme Lord by devotional service
  - One is qualified to feel the presence of the Lord everywhere
- (b) ***Astanga-yoga* helps by eight-fold means in following ways:**
- Becoming free from all fear, desire and anger
  - Control the senses, mind and intelligence
  - Feel the presence of Supersoul in transcendental situation
- (c) **What are the eight steps of *astanga-yoga* – *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and Samadhi***
- (d) **Krishna Consciousness as the easiest form of yoga** – Krishna conscious person, being always engaged in devotional service, does not risk losing his senses to some other engagement. Thus it is a better way of controlling the senses than *astanga-yoga*

**SECTION VI (5.29)**

**PEACE ON THE PLATFORM OF LIBERATION**

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION VI**

- Fear is an uncertainty about the future and how the future may threaten one’s attachments, but one who is in Krishna consciousness is free from fear
  - He understands that Krishna is the Supreme controller and is benevolent. This confidence brings fearlessness
  - He is not attached to any material situation. His only concern is devotional service, which cannot be threatened by any material situation. Thus he is not fearful due to attachment
- Individual attempts at world peace are impossible without first recognizing the real centre of existence by which all people can recognize their brotherhood. That centre is Sri Krishna
  - *Bhoktaram yajna-tapasam* – People fight over things they want to enjoy, but a wise person knows that Krishna is the only real enjoyer
  - *Sarva-loka-mahesvaram* – People fight to control land but Krishna is the only true owner for all properties and the common ruler of all rulers
  - *Suhrdam sarva-bhutanam* – A Krishna conscious person does not divide enemies from friends because he knows that Krishna is the friend of all living beings

**Text 5.29\***

**THEME:** Tells Arjuna how he can remain peaceful on, of all places, a battlefield only by understanding Krishna's supremacy and act accordingly

**GREATEST PEACE FORMULA**

Lord Krishna is:

1. **Bhoktaram yajna-tapasam** – Beneficiary of all sacrifices and penances
  - Offer everything in the Transcendental Service of the Lord
2. **Sarva-loka-mahesvaram** – Supreme Proprietor of all planets and demigods
  - No one is greater than Him; Greater than greatest demigods
  - Ref. *Svetasvatara Upanishad 6.7*: Krishna is the Supreme *Isvara*
  - The living entity is under illusion in trying to lord over material nature – but is dominated by the material energy
3. **Suhrdam sarva-bhutanam** – Benefactor and well wisher of all living entities

**FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 5.29**

- (a) **Fifth Chapter is a practical application of Krishna consciousness**, generally known as *Karma-yoga*. It thoroughly explains how *karma-yoga* can give liberation
- (b) **Karma-yoga as "Action in full knowledge"**
  - To work in Krishna consciousness means to work in full knowledge of Lord as the predominator
  - Such work is non-different from transcendental knowledge
  - Direct Krishna consciousness is *bhakti-yoga* and *jnana-yoga* is a path leading to *bhakti-yoga*
- (c) **Position of living entity as eternal servant**
  - Pure soul is the eternal servant of God as fragmental part and parcel
  - Cause of his suffering – contact with *maya* (illusion due to desire to Lord it over)
- (d) **Krishna consciousness – An arousing of a spiritual experience in the material world**
  - One has to execute work in terms of material necessities as long as one is in contact with matter
  - However Krishna consciousness brings one into spiritual life while one is in the jurisdiction of matter
- (e) **Lord is not partial to anyone but reciprocates according to your approach**
  - The more one is advanced, the more one is free from the clutches of *maya*
  - Everything depends on one's practical performance of duties in Krishna consciousness
  - These duties help one control the senses and conquer the influence of desire and anger
  - To stand fast in Krishna consciousness and controlling the above mentioned passions, one remains in transcendental stage or *Brahma-nirvana*
- (f) **Astanga-yoga is automatically practiced in Krishna consciousness** because the ultimate purpose is served
  - *Astanga-yoga* is a process of gradual elevation by eight steps
  - These eight steps only preface perfection by devotional service
- (g) **The highest perfection of life** – Only devotional service can award peace to the human being

## CHAPTER 5 Appendix

### Selected Texts extracted from "Surrender unto Me"

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#### Text 5.1

It is Kṛṣṇa's plan that Arjuna remain confused, because their dialogue is actually taking place for our benefit, not Arjuna's. Arjuna's perplexity gives Kṛṣṇa the chance to stress further that work and renunciation are not opposed to each other. Rather, one must learn to work in a renounced spirit. Arjuna thinks that jñāna implies the renunciation of work, and that knowledge and work, like light and darkness, are contradictory. Kṛṣṇa emphasizes, however, that one in knowledge should also work.

#### Text 5.4

How are work and renunciation the same? If I am holding a rock in my hand and I want to pick up my ax, I drop the rock to free my hand. Then I can pick up the ax. Similarly, someone with material desires must first drop his material attachment before acquiring a spiritual taste.

However, these two steps can also be performed as one step. By picking up one object I will automatically drop the other. Karma-yoga done with detachment allows us to become materially detached and spiritually attached at the same time. This topic will now be further discussed.

#### Text 5.11

"Kaivalya" comes from the root kevala, which in this verse is defined as "purified." One becomes purified by his detached work. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains: "Although one's mind may sometimes be distracted while making offerings of oblations such as indriya svāhā, still, such a person's senses are kevala, acting for the purification of the ātmā, or for the sake of purifying the mind."

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains this verse as follows: "Citing the behavior of saintly persons as evidence, Kṛṣṇa elaborates on the previous verse with this verse beginning kāyena. Yogīs carry out work that has to be executed with the body, mind, senses and so on, without any false identification of the self with the body and so on. Kevala means 'fully purified' (viśuddha). In the phrase beginning 'abandoning attachment,' the words 'for the purpose of purification of the self' mean 'for the sake of giving up one's false identification with the body as the self, which one has maintained since time immemorial.'"

#### Text 5.14

The living entity within the body does nothing. Kṛṣṇa, in the Sanskrit of this verse, even repeats the word "na" three times (na kartṛtvam na karmāṇi na karma-phala-samyogaṁ). The conditioned soul does not create activities, nor does he induce people to act, nor does he control the fruits of even his own activities. All this happens by the modes of material nature.

#### Text 5.15

Basic transcendental knowledge allows us to understand that we are not our bodies. Now we understand that the modes of material nature control our bodies. Both the modes and the living entities are controlled by the Supersoul. Although the Supersoul is the ultimate controller, He is not responsible for the living entity's activities or the reactions to them.

The fault in arguing that "Because the living entity is not the doer, he must not be responsible for his actions and their reactions" is that the living entity, though not the doer, is also not completely aloof. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: "[The Supreme Lord] does not create a particular situation for any

living entity, but the living entity, bewildered by ignorance, desires to be put into certain conditions of life, and thereby his chain of action and reaction begins. A living entity is, by superior nature, full of knowledge. Nevertheless, he is prone to be influenced by ignorance due to his limited power." The living entity must accept responsibility for his own actions.

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam purport to 10.87.25 states:

Although the soul is in truth both conscious and active, the proponents of Sāṅkhya philosophy wrongly separate these two functions of the living force (ātmani ye ca bhidāṃ), ascribing consciousness to the soul (puruṣa) and activity to material nature (prakṛti). According to the Sāṅkhya-kārikā (19-20),

*tasmāc ca viparyāsāt  
siddhaṃ sākṣitvaṃ puruṣasya  
kaivalyaṃ mādhyā-sthyaṃ  
draṣṭṛtvam akartṛ-bhāvaś ca*

"Thus, since the apparent differences between puruṣas are only superficial (being due to the various modes of nature that cover them), the puruṣa's true status is proven to be that of a witness, characterized by his separateness, his passive indifference, his status of being an observer, and his inactivity."

tasmāt tat-saṃyogād

*acetanaṃ cetanā-vad iva liṅgam  
guṇa-kartṛtve 'pi tathā  
karteva bhavaty udāsinaḥ*

"Thus, by contact with the soul, the unconscious subtle body seems to be conscious, while the soul appears to be the doer although he is aloof from the activity of nature's modes."

Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this idea in the section of Vedānta-sūtra (2.3.31-39) that begins, kartā śāstrārtha-vattvāt: "The jīva soul must be a performer of actions, because the injunctions of scripture must have some purpose." Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, in his Govinda-bhāṣya, explains: "The jīva, not the modes of nature, is the doer. Why? Because the injunctions of scripture must have some purpose (śāstrārtha-vattvāt). For example, such scriptural injunctions as svarga-kāmo ya-jeta ('One who desires to attain to heaven should perform ritual sacrifice') and ātmānam eva lokam upāsita ('One should worship with the aim of attaining the spiritual kingdom'—Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up. 1.4.15) are meaningful only if a conscious doer exists. If the modes of nature were the doer, these statements would serve no purpose. After all, scriptural injunctions engage the living entity in performing prescribed actions by convincing him that he can act to bring about certain enjoyable results. Such a mentality cannot be aroused in the inert modes of nature."

How the living entity in the tight grip of material nature is the doer can be compared to the attempt of a small boy to lift a weight he has just seen his father lift. The boy first desires to lift the weight and then tries. He cannot possibly succeed, but his father sees his small son's desire, stands above him, and out of affection does the actual lifting. Thus the father has actually lifted the weight, but he cannot be considered the only lifter. Unless the desire had been expressed and the attempt made by the child, the father never would have helped, and the weight would not have been lifted.

The living entity should not, like the child, become bewildered by false ego and pride and consider himself the doer of activities that he has no ability to perform. That does not mean, however, that

the living entity can avoid the responsibility of having performed the activity, because it was he who expressed the desire, he who made the attempt, and he who wants to enjoy the fruit.

When the living entity is ignorant of his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, he chooses his position as independent enjoyer, which in turn welds him to material nature and places him under its control. Thus he is responsible for his own reactions.

#### **Text 5.21**

When the devotee becomes connected (yukta) with the Supreme, he experiences unlimited happiness and loses all attraction to matter. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments that just as a person eating sweetmeats has no inclination to eat mud, so a liberated person is not attracted to material sense pleasure.

#### **Text 5.22**

The sādḥaka needs to fix this principle strongly in his intelligence: “Sense gratification equals misery.” A sādḥaka becomes free from the material modes by a combination of intellectual conviction and a higher taste.

#### **Text 5.26**

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa quotes the above analogy to indicate that for those who endeavor seriously (as described in this Gīta verse), perfection is readily available because the Supersoul is concerned about those who act in this fashion. By sincerely fixing their minds on the Lord, they evoke His mercy.

#### **Text 5.29**

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura adds, “Kṛṣṇa is the well-wishing friend of all living beings. He is mercifully bestowing benefit through His devotees, in the form of their instructions on devotional service.”

Knowing Kṛṣṇa’s position in relation to activities of karma-kāṇḍa or karma-yoga, understanding knowledge of Him as the goal of all tapasya and finally recognizing Him as the well-wishing friend in everyone’s heart brings us to the only true platform of peace: liberation from the material world.

Jñāna (knowledge that we are eternal souls), renunciation and sense control cannot actually give us liberation. We must take shelter of our dearest friend Kṛṣṇa.