

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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Renunciation and Surrender: The Essence of Yogic Perfection

The eighteenth chapter of the Srimad Bhagavadgītā, titled "**Mokṣha Sanyās Yog**" or "**Yoga through the Perfection of Renunciation and Surrender**," stands as the pinnacle of Śrī Krishna's teachings to Arjuna.

The session commenced with a deeply symbolic act – the ceremonial lighting of lamps, symbolizing enlightenment and purity, setting the tone for the profound spiritual discourse that ensued. This was accompanied by heartfelt prayers and reverential salutations to Swami Govind Giriji Maharaj, evoking a sense of sanctity and reverence for the wisdom to be imparted.

We find ourselves amidst the discourse of the 18th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna, grappling with profound questions, sought elucidation from Sri Bhagavān regarding the nuanced difference between renunciation and abandonment. Sri Bhagavān, the divine charioteer and supreme teacher, responded to Arjuna's inquiry with initial brevity, laying the groundwork for a deeper exploration of fundamental concepts.

Expanding on his response, Sri Bhagavān delved into the intricate dynamics of action, the nature of the doer, the significance of meditation, and the pursuit of true happiness. Each aspect was unveiled with clarity and depth, offering Arjuna—and all seekers—a profound understanding of the spiritual path.

Moreover, Sri Bhagavān elucidated how these aspects of human existence are not static but dynamically influenced by the interplay of the three gunas—Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance). Through his teachings, Sri Bhagavān revealed how the predominance of each guna shapes individuals' thoughts, actions, and destinies, guiding them along different paths in life.

Sri Bhagavān aims to encapsulate all these teachings in a single sentence, as we will soon see in the next verse.

**na tadasti pṛthivyām(m) vā, divi deveṣu vā punaḥ,
sattvaṃ(m) prakṛtijairmuktaṃ(m), yadebhiḥ(s) syātttribhirguṇaiḥ. 18.40**

There is no being on earth, or in the middle region or even among the gods or anywhere else, who is free from these three Guṇas, born of Prakṛti.

In this verse, Sri Bhagavān emphasizes that no aspect of the material world, whether it be on earth, in the heavenly realms, or among the celestial beings, is exempt from the influence of the three guṇas—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. These three guṇas are inherent qualities of Prakṛti, the material nature, and they govern the behavior, thoughts, and experiences of all living beings and objects within the manifested universe.

To elaborate further, the verse specifies different realms:

- **"Pṛthivyām vā"** refers to the earth, indicating that the influence of the guṇas is pervasive even on the physical plane.
- **"Divi"** refers to the heavenly realms, suggesting that celestial beings and divine abodes are also subject to the influence of the guṇas.
- **"Deveṣu vā"** specifically mentions the gods, indicating that even the celestial deities are not exempt from the influence of the guṇas.

Sri Bhagavān asserts that nothing within the manifested universe can escape the influence of the three guṇas. Whether it is a being residing on earth, in heaven, or among the gods, all are bound by the effects of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas.

The essence of this verse is reiterated by Sri Bhagavān throughout the Bhagavad Gītā. In the 7th chapter, while describing Prakṛti (material nature), Sri Bhagavān also mentioned this fact. We witnessed a detailed explanation of this concept in the 14th chapter. In the 17th chapter, we learned how everything, from our diet to our actions, can be categorized as Sattvic (pure), Rajasic (passionate), or Tamasic (ignorant). Here, Sri Bhagavān asserts that besides this, there is nothing else. Everything created by Prakṛti is imbued with these three guṇas. **Only the self, the Atman, transcends these Guṇas.** But all other aspects of existence are bound by these three qualities.

Sri Bhagavān holds up a mirror for us to see ourselves through the lens of this verse. Our every possession, our food, our books, our words, our beverages—none are exempt from the influence of these three guṇas. Whether it's milk, tea/coffee, or alcohol, they all represent Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas respectively. There's no need for explanation; it becomes evident naturally what is Sattvic, Rajasic, and Tamasic.

Looking at it from a scientific perspective, within every atom, there exist protons, electrons, and neutrons, which represent Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas respectively. The proportions of these three qualities manifest as either Sattvic, Rajasic, or Tamasic tendencies. For instance, when we prepare a dish at home, it includes ingredients like salt, spices, sourness, sweetness, etc., which represent the six tastes (śad rasa). Altering the proportions of these tastes changes the flavor of the dish. Similarly, varying proportions of the three guṇas shape the temperament of individuals differently.

18.41

**brāhmaṇakṣatriyaviśām(m), śūdrāṇām(ñ) ca parantapa,
karmāṇi pravibhaktāni, svabhāvaprabhavairguṇaiḥ. 18.41**

The duties of the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas, as well as of the Śūdras have been

assigned according to their innate modes of Prakṛti (Guṇas), Arjuna.

In the Bhagavadgītā 's fourth chapter, Sri Bhagavān elucidates the concept of varnas, often misunderstood as castes. He explains that he has established four varnas, or social orders, within society. It is crucial to note that Sri Bhagavān clarifies that he is the creator of these varnas, yet not the instigator of individuals' assignments. The allocation of varnas is determined by an individual's inherent qualities and actions rather than their birth. They are Brahmins, representing knowledge and spirituality; Kshatriyas, embodying courage and leadership; Vaishyas, symbolizing productivity and commerce; and Shudras, representing service and support. Pronouncing 'Shudra' correctly is emphasized, as mispronunciation could lead to misunderstandings. 'Shudra' is the name of the varna, not an insignificant term. Misinterpretation has caused issues; varna does not denote color but rather the four types of persons.

The influence of innate interests, past actions, and upbringing on a person's nature or varna is vividly illustrated in the story of the Pāṇḍavas, particularly during the Draupadi Swayamvar. Disguised as Brahmins, the Pāṇḍavas participated in the contest and emerged victorious, sparking curiosity about their true varna. Upon their triumph, King Drupad organized a grand celebration, adorned with various stalls showcasing different aspects of life. Among them were stalls featuring arms and ammunitions, as well as those exhibiting a diverse array of books, clothing, and other items. As the Pāṇḍavas entered, they were immediately drawn to the stall containing weapons, displaying an unmistakable affinity for martial prowess. Observing this, King Drupad discerned that despite their outward appearance as Brahmins, the Pāṇḍavas' inherent inclination towards warfare revealed their true identity as Kṣatriyas. Their natural interests and proclivities superseded their disguise, highlighting the profound influence of innate tendencies on one's nature and subsequent varna classification.

A real-world application can be observed in the Service Selection Board (SSB) process for military recruitment. Here, candidates are openly advised not to feel disheartened if they are not selected, as the selection criteria remain undisclosed. The focus shifts to understanding the candidates' inherent nature (Swabhav) to determine their suitability for a military career. This approach underscores the principle that individuals are naturally inclined towards certain roles or vocations, aligning with their unique abilities and aptitudes. The assurance given—"If you are not selected, don't think that you are not fit anywhere. You are more fit somewhere else"—echoes the Bhagavadgītā's teachings, emphasizing that individuals may excel in different spheres based on their intrinsic disposition and talents. Thus, the SSB process reflects the interplay between one's innate nature and the most suitable occupation (varna), mirroring the timeless wisdom imparted in the scripture.

18.42

**śamo damastapaḥ(ś) śaucaṁ(ñ), kṣāntirārjavameva ca,
jñānaṁ(m) vijñānamāstikyaṁ(m), brahmakarma svabhāvajam. 18.42**

Subjugation of the mind and senses, enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations, external and internal purity, forgiving the faults of others, straightness of mind, senses and behaviour, belief in the Vedas and other scriptures, God and life after death etc., study and teaching of the Vedas and other scriptures and realization of the truth relating to God—all these constitute the natural duties of a Brāhmaṇa.

This verse elucidates the intrinsic qualities that a Brahmin should embody.

1. **Shama (Control of Mind):** Refers to the ability to calm and discipline the mind. It involves restraining our inner restlessness and achieving mental equilibrium.
2. **Dama (Control of Senses):** Signifies mastery over our external senses. It involves managing

our desires, cravings, and impulses.

3. **Tapas (Austerity)**: Refers to self-discipline and ascetic practices. It involves willingly enduring discomfort or hardship for spiritual growth.

- One definition of Tapas is "**Tapo dvamdva sahanam**" which denotes the ability to bear duality and face both favorable and unfavorable situations while faithfully performing one's duty.
- Another interpretation of Tapas is "**Tapasa svadharme vartitvam**" which emphasizes bearing hardships to follow and implement one's swadharma, or inherent duty.

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj describes Tapas as follows:

स्वरूपाच्या प्रसारा, प्राणेंद्रिय शरीरा, अतनी करणार वीरा, हे चि तपा।

- **स्वरूपाच्या प्रसारा** (Expansion of Self): Refers to recognizing and realizing our true nature or essence. It implies expanding our consciousness beyond the limitations of the physical body.
- **प्राणेंद्रिय शरीरा** (Vital Energy and Senses): Signifies the connection between the life force (Prāṇa) and the sensory organs (indriyas). It emphasizes understanding the interplay of energy and perception.
- **अतनी करणार वीरा** (Control of Desires): Encourages us to be courageous in restraining our desires and impulses. It involves channeling our energies toward higher purposes.
- **हे चि तपा** (This Is True Austerity): Declares that true austerity lies in mastering the mind, senses, and desires. It is not merely physical penance but an inner transformation.

4. **Shaucha (Purity)**: Pertains to both physical and mental cleanliness. It involves maintaining a pure heart and maintaining hygiene.

5. **Kshanti (Patience)**: Denotes forbearance and tolerance. It involves remaining calm and patient even in challenging situations. Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj describes Kshama as follows:

ऐसी अनाक्रोष क्षमा, जया पाशी प्रियोत्तमा, जाण तेथे महिमा ज्ञानिया चा।

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj's description of forgiveness, or "Kshama," is profound and illuminating. He portrays forgiveness as an extraordinary virtue that transcends mere tolerance and rises above anger.

The phrase "**ऐसी अनाक्रोष क्षमा**" (Such unfathomable forgiveness) suggests a level of forgiveness that is deep and boundless, going beyond what is easily comprehensible.

Moreover, the verse emphasizes that this forgiveness, which triumphs over anger, is the hallmark of true wisdom

"जाण तेथे महिमा ज्ञानिया चा".

Here, forgiveness is depicted as not merely a passive act of overlooking wrongs but as a proactive, transformative force that emerges from a place of profound wisdom. It suggests that those who possess true wisdom understand the power and significance of forgiveness, choosing to embrace it even in the face of adversity and wrongdoing.

Despite facing severe persecution and hardship from society, Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj exhibited an extraordinary capacity for forgiveness. By requesting "Pasayadan" for the entire world, he demonstrated his unwavering commitment to forgiveness and compassion, transcending personal grievances and extending forgiveness to all, without any reservations.

This portrayal not only emphasizes the exceptional character of Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj but also serves as a timeless reminder of the transformative power of forgiveness. It suggests that forgiveness, when embraced with true wisdom and understanding, has the potential to heal wounds, reconcile differences, and elevate individuals and societies to higher levels of consciousness and compassion.

6. **Arjava (Simplicity):** Signifies straightforwardness and honesty. It involves living a life free from deceit and pretense.

The etymology of the name 'Arjuna' is rooted in the quality of straightforwardness, as indicated by the Sanskrit term 'Rujuta.' This connection underscores the significance of Arjava as a fundamental principle guiding individuals towards integrity and sincerity in all aspects of life.

7. **Jnana (Knowledge):** Refers to theoretical understanding or wisdom. It involves knowing the truth about oneself and the universe.

8. **Vijnana (Practical Knowledge):** Goes beyond theoretical knowledge. It involves applying wisdom in practical life.

9. **Astikya (Faith):** Signifies unwavering faith in spiritual principles, the divine, and the cosmic order.

10. **Brahmakarma (Duty as Per One's Nature):** Refers to performing one's duty according to their inherent nature (svabhava). It involves fulfilling responsibilities without attachment to the results.

Any country or society requires all four varnas to function effectively. A society is complete when it encompasses people from all four varnas. It's akin to a tent; if all four pillars are in place, the structure stands strong, but it risks collapse if any one pillar weakens. Four types of powers are essential for societal progress: knowledge, physical strength, wealth, and effort.

Consider a factory producing goods: it needs management for administration, an R&D team for product development, a finance department for financial management, and labor for production. If any of these components are missing, the factory cannot function properly. Nature has designed these four types of people to fulfill different roles, emphasizing the importance of respecting each type. A person's inherent nature is shaped by a combination of DNA and environmental factors. For example, a doctor's child often shows a natural inclination towards medicine, a CA's child may pursue a career in finance, and a businessperson's child might take on management roles early in life.

In the district of Satara, there's a small town where at least one person from every household serves in the military. The village's environment naturally fosters characteristics of the Kṣatriya varna in its inhabitants. We'll explore these characteristics further in the next verse.

18.43

**śauryaṃ(n) tejo dhṛtirdākṣyaṃ(m), yuddhe cāpyapalāyanam,
dānamīśvarabhāvaśca, kṣātraṃ(ñ) karma svabhāvajam. 18.43**

Heroism, majesty, firmness, diligence and dauntlessness in battle, bestowing gifts, and lordliness-all these constitute the natural duty of a Kṣatriya.

Sri Bhagavan outlines the natural attributes expected of Kṣatriyas (warriors or rulers):

1. शौर्य (Heroism):

Heroism encompasses courage, valor, and fearlessness. It is the readiness to face danger and adversity without hesitation. Kṣatriyas exhibit heroism on the battlefield. They protect their people, uphold justice, and confront challenges head-on. True heroism extends beyond physical bravery—it includes moral courage and standing up for righteousness.

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says:

विश्व हे प्रकाशवयास जसे सहाय्य नको सूर्यास
पराक्रमात सिंहास नको कोणी सहाय्यक

The analogy provided by Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj is profound. He illustrates that just as the sun radiates light independently without requiring any assistance, and a lion exhibits its strength and prowess without elying on external support for hunting, similarly, Kṣatriyas need to have the inherent qualities of self-sufficiency and self-reliance. This highlights the importance of cultivating inner strength and confidence

2. तेजो (Power):

Tejo refers to strength—both physical and mental. It represents the energy that empowers leaders and warriors. Kṣatriyas wield power to maintain order, protect their subjects, and defend dharma (righteousness). Inner strength, resilience, and determination are equally vital.

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says:

आपल्या तेज प्रभावने जगाला विस्मित करावे

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj describes the concept of "Tej" or radiance by illustrating a compelling analogy. Just as the majestic roar of a lion can captivate and awe even a wild elephant, causing it to momentarily forget its own power and lower its raised foot, similarly, individuals endowed with "Tej" possess a charismatic presence that commands attention and respect from others. This radiance emanates from within, influencing and captivating those around them, much like the powerful aura of the lion. Thus, "Tej" represents an innate quality that exudes strength, authority, and influence, leaving a lasting impact on all who encounter it.

3. धृति (Determination):

Dhriti signifies unwavering resolve. It is the ability to stay committed to one's duty despite obstacles, ability to restrain oneself. Kṣatriyas persevere even when faced with adversity. Their determination ensures stability and continuity. Dhriti arises from inner conviction and a sense of responsibility.

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says:

आकाश पडो कोसळून, तरी ज्याच्या बुद्धीचे नयन
मनो विकारे न जाती झाकून धैर्य, तेथे जाणावे

Even if the sky were to fall, those with restraint and determination remain unwavering, their minds unaffected by the tumult, displaying steadfastness.

4. दाक्ष्यं (Alertness):

Dakshya implies alertness, skilfulness, adaptability, and strategic thinking. It involves using intelligence effectively. Kṣatriyas employ resourcefulness in battle, governance, and decision-making. Dakshya combines intellect with practical wisdom.

In the Mahabharata, there is an incident where Yudhishtira responds to a rapid round of questions by Daksha:

- Daksha: "किम् एकं प्रधानं धर्मः?" (What is the foremost virtue?)
- Yudhishtira: "दाक्ष्यं एकं प्रधानं धर्मः।" (Alertness is the foremost virtue.)

5. युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् (Not Fleeing from Battle):

Kṣatriyas do not retreat from the battlefield. They face challenges rather than avoiding them. Courageous warriors stand their ground, protecting their people and ideals. Fearlessness arises from inner conviction and commitment.

6. दान (Generosity):

Danam refers to generosity. Kṣatriyas provide for their subjects, warriors, and priests. They share resources, wealth, and support those in need. Generosity reflects a compassionate heart.

7. ईश्वरभाव (Leadership):

Ishvarabhava signifies leadership. Kṣatriyas naturally possess qualities that inspire and guide. They lead by example, ensuring justice, protection, and welfare. Leadership involves responsibility and empathy.

8. क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् (Duty Born of Their Own Nature):

Kṣatriyas perform their duties according to their inherent nature (svabhava). Their duty is to protect, govern, and maintain order. They act in alignment with their dharma. Fulfilling duty without attachment to results is their path.

Arjuna and Subhadra engage in a discussion about arfare, both being Kṣatriyas. During their conversation, despite Subhadra being pregnant, Arjuna explains the complexities of entering the Chakravyuha to her. However, she falls asleep halfway through, and Abhimanyu, who is inside her womb, only partially grasps the knowledge, missing out on how to exit the hakravyuha. This interaction portrays a typical exchange between Kṣatriya husband and wife.

In summary, Kṣatriyas embody these qualities, ensuring a harmonious society where justice prevails, and righteousness is upheld. Their actions are not just external but spring from their inner character and purpose.

18.44

**kr̥ṣigaurakṣyavāṇijyaṃ(m), vaiśyakarma svabhāvajam,
paricaryātmakaṃ(ñ) karma, śūdrasyāpi svabhāvajam. 18.44**

Agriculture, rearing of cows and honest exchange of merchandise-these constitute the natural duty of a Vaiśya (a member of the trading class); and service of the other classes is the natural duty even of a Śūdra (a member of the labouring class).

Sri Bhagavān continues to expound on the two remaining varnas, namely Vaishya and Shudra:

Vaishya Dharma (Duty of the Vaishya): Sri Bhagavān mentions three primary occupations for the Vaishya, who are the merchant and agricultural class in the traditional Varna system.

These occupations are: कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं (Krishi, Gauraksha, Vaanijya):

Agriculture, cattle-rearing (specifically protection of cows), and trade or commerce. These activities are considered as the natural inclination or duty of the Vaishya class. They are responsible for producing and trading goods, ensuring the economic prosperity of society.

Shudra Dharma (Duty of the Shudra): Sri Bhagavān indicates that service is the natural duty of the Shudra, who are traditionally associated with service occupations. They are considered the labouring class in the Varna system. Those involved in entertainment of the society such as Film industry, Music, Dance, etc also come under this category as they dutifully serve the society.

Svabhava (Inherent Nature): Sri Bhagavān emphasizes performing duties according to one's svabhava, which means inherent nature or disposition. He suggests that individuals should engage in activities that align with their natural inclinations and abilities. This concept is significant as it encourages people to pursue their duties without egoistic attachment and with a sense of duty towards the welfare of society.

Social Order and Harmony: This verse reflects the traditional social structure of which was based on the division of labour according to one's inherent inclination (Varna) and qualities (Guna). Each Varna had specific duties, and by performing them diligently, individuals contributed to the overall well-being and harmony of society. However, it's essential to note that these teachings should not be interpreted as promoting discrimination or inequality, but rather as a means of maintaining social order and cooperation.

In summary, this verse emphasizes the importance of performing one's duties in alignment with their inherent nature and social role, contributing to the overall welfare and harmony of society, as taught by Sri Bhagavān.

18.45

**sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ(s), saṁsiddhiṁ(m) labhate naraḥ,
sVākarmanirataḥ(s) siddhiṁ(m), yathā vindati tacchṛṇu. 18.45**

Keenly devoted to his own natural duty, man attains the highest perfection in the form of Godrealization. Hear the mode of performance whereby the man engaged in his inborn duty reaches that highest consummation.

Sri Bhagavān assures that a person can attain perfection by dedicating himself to his own duty.

Dedication to One's Own Duty: Sri Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of dedicating oneself to their own duty (sva-dharma). Each individual has a unique role and responsibilities based on their inherent qualities, skills, and position in society. By performing one's prescribed duties diligently and with dedication, a person progresses towards perfection.

Samsiddhim Labhate Narah: The term "Samsiddhim" refers to perfection or accomplishment. Sri Bhagavān suggests that by wholeheartedly engaging in one's duties, a person achieves perfection. This perfection is not just in terms of external success but also in terms of inner growth, spiritual evolution, and alignment with one's true self.

Swakarmaniratah Siddhim Yatha Vindati: Sri Bhagavān compares the attainment of perfection to the method of obtaining it. "Swakarmaniratah" means being engaged in one's own duty. The verse implies that just as one who is engrossed in their prescribed duty attains perfection, similarly, the method of attaining perfection lies in diligently performing one's duties.

Sri Bhagavān at the end of 16th Chapter said:

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ 16.24॥

"Let the scriptures be your authority in determining what should be done and what should not be done. Understand the scriptural injunctions and teachings, and then perform your actions in this world accordingly."

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says:

आपल्या साठी रत्न घ्यावे पारख्याच्या हातूनतैसे स्वकर्माचे आचरण शास्त्रानुसार करावे ।

अर्जुना जो या परी विहित कर्मे स्वये करीतो मोक्ष्याच्या वैराग्य द्वारी ।

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj emphasizes the importance of seeking guidance and validation for our actions, much like one would carefully select jewels only from the hands of a knowledgeable jeweller. Similarly, he suggests that we should assess and perform our duties in accordance with the teachings and guidelines provided in scriptures. By checking our duties against the standards set forth in scriptures, we ensure that our actions are aligned with moral and ethical principles. This approach fosters a sense of accountability, integrity, and spiritual growth, enabling us to tread on the path of liberation.

Sri Bhagavān elaborates on how one attains perfection by performing his prescribed duty in the next verse.

18.46

**yataḥ(ph) pravṛttirbhūtānām(m), yena sarvamidam(n) tatam,
sVākarmaṇā tamabhyarcya, siddhiṁ(m) vindati mānavaḥ. 18.46**

From whom all beings come into being and by whom the whole universe is pervaded, by worshipping Him through the performance of his own natural duties, man attains the highest perfection.

Sri Bhagavān elaborates on how one attains perfection by performing his prescribed duty:

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां: "Yataḥ pravrittiḥ bhūtānām" translates to "from whom the origin of all living beings."

येन सर्वमिदं ततम्: "Yena sarvam idam tatam" means "by whom this entire universe is pervaded."

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य: "Svakarmaṇā tam abhyarchya" signifies "worshipping that Supreme Being through one's own prescribed duties."

सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः: "Siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ" translates to "a person attains perfection."

In essence, this verse emphasizes that by performing one's natural duties (karma) and offering them to the Supreme Creator, a person can achieve spiritual fulfillment and attain perfection. It underscores the importance of selfless action and devotion in the pursuit of spiritual growth and realization.

Sant Dyaneshwar Maharaj says:

हे विहित कर्म पांडवा
आपला जीव प्राण मानावा
हीच असे पुजा सर्वात्मक ईश्वराची

त्या सर्वात्मक भगवंता
स्वकर्म कुसुमे पूजिता
अपार संतोष भारता
होत असे

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj emphasizes that the prescribed duties, or "vihit karma," as delineated in the scriptures, are akin to worshipping the divine. He implores the Pāṇḍavas to regard their own life force, their very existence, as a form of worship to the all-encompassing Ishwara, the supreme soul.

Sant Dnyaneshwar maharaj further explains that when one's prescribed duties are performed with this understanding and devotion, they become like lowers offered at the feet of the all-pervading Bhagavān, the divine essence that transcends all limitations. This act of worship brings boundless contentment and fulfilment, alleviating the burdens of worldly existence and fostering a deep sense of inner peace and satisfaction.

In essence, Sant Dnyaneshwar emphasizes the transformative power of embracing one's duties as a sacred offering to the divine, leading to profound spiritual fulfilment and eternal bliss.

18.47

**śreyānsvadharma viguṇaḥ(ph), paradharmātsvanuṣṭhitāt,
svabhāvaniyataṁ(ñ) karma, kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam. 18.47**

Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another well-performed; for, performing the duty ordained by his own nature, man does not incur sin.

One may think that his job is too small and how can it help him to reach the divine. To dispel such doubts Sri Bhagavān elaborates further:

This verse emphasizes the importance of adhering to one's prescribed duties (dharma) based on individual nature and inclination.

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः (Shreyan swa-dharma vighuṇaḥ) **अ** **Swa-dharma** refers to one's own prescribed occupational duty. Even if performed imperfectly, it is better than abandoning it.

परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् (Para-dharmaḥ t sv-anuṣṭhitāt) **ह** **hit** **Para-dharma** refers to another's duty. Even if performed perfectly, it is less beneficial than one's own dharma.

स्वभावनियतं कर्म (Svabhāva-niyataṁ karma) **क** **karma** (duty) aligned with one's innate nature. It is as natural as a bird flying or a fish swimming.

कुर्वन्नाप्रोति किल्बिषम्(Kurvan nā pnoti kilbiṣaṁ hanḥ) performing such duties, a person does not incur sin. The focus is on sincerity and alignment with one's inner disposition.

Arjuna faced a similar dilemma on the battlefield. His Kṣatriya nature inclined him toward military duties. Rather than abandoning his duty, he was advised to perform it sincerely, offering the results to God. As spiritual maturity grows, swa-dharma evolves from bodily duties to devotion itself.

In the third chapter, Sri Bhagavān gave similar concept:

**श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥3.35॥**

It is far better to perform one's natural prescribed duty, though tinged with faults, than to perform another's prescribed duty, though perfectly. In fact, it is preferable to die in the discharge of one's duty, than to follow the path of another, which is fraught with danger.

In this context, Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says:

**आपल्या धर्माचा आचार वाटला जरी दुष्कर
तरी मनी ठेवावा विचार निश्चित**

Despite encountering challenges or uncertainties, individuals should not waver in their commitment to their dharma. Instead, they should trust their inner conviction and continue to uphold their principles and duties.

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj elaborates this point beautifully:

**आपुल्या आईचे शरीर जरी असले कुबडे फार
तरी प्रेममयि तिचे अंतर मुळी नसते वाकडे
आणि दुसऱ्याची माता रंभेहूनही सुंदर दिसता
तरी बालकाच्या चित्ता ना आवडे ती**

**तुपा मध्ये पाण्याहून असले जरी गुण फार
तरी त्यात काय मीन जगू शकेल?**

**पर धर्म सुखकर मानून त्याचे करणे आचरण
ते करणे डोक्या कडून पायाचे चालणे**

Even if a mother's physical appearance is marred by deformity, a child's love for their own mother remains unwavering. Conversely, even if another mother appears outwardly attractive, she may not hold the same endearment in the child's heart. This is because the depth of love is not determined by external appearances, but by the sacred bond between mother and child.

Likewise, just as a fish cannot thrive in ghee despite its superior qualities compared to water, one cannot find fulfilment by performing duties that do not align with their own dharma (duty). Attempting to fulfil another's duties may seem appealing, but it is akin to walking on one's head—a futile and unnatural endeavour.

True contentment and harmony are found in embracing and fulfilling one's own dharma, even if it presents challenges. Just as a blind person relies on a walking stick to navigate their path, adhering to one's dharma guides one's steps towards spiritual growth and fulfilment, regardless of external

circumstances or temptations.

18.48

**sahajaṃ(ñ) karma kaunteya, sadoṣamapi na tyajet,
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa, dhūmenāgnirivāvṛtāḥ. 18.48**

Therefore, Arjuna, one should not relinquish one's innate duty, even though it has a measure of evil; for all undertakings are beset by some evil, as is the fire covered by smoke.

Sri Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of adhering to one's inherent duties, known as "sahaja karma" or natural duties. He advises Arjuna not to abandon these duties even if they may seem imperfect or flawed. The analogy used here is that of fire being covered by smoke: just as fire is inevitably accompanied by smoke, similarly, all actions are bound to have faults or imperfections.

The message conveyed is that it is natural for human endeavours to have shortcomings or drawbacks. However, these imperfections should not deter individuals from fulfilling their duties. Instead, one should focus on performing their responsibilities to the best of their ability, accepting any flaws or limitations that may arise in the process.

By recognizing the inherent imperfections in all actions and endeavours, individuals can cultivate a sense of humility, detachment, and equanimity. They can learn to detach themselves from the outcomes of their actions and instead focus on the sincerity and effort put into performing their duties.

In summary, Sri Bhagavān's teaching in this verse emphasizes the importance of embracing one's natural duties despite their imperfections, understanding that flaws are inherent in all human endeavours. It encourages individuals to focus on their responsibilities with dedication and sincerity, accepting any shortcomings with grace and perseverance.

18.49

**asaktabuddhiḥ(s) sarvatra, jitātmā vigatasprīhaḥ,
naiṣkarmyasiddhiṃ(m) paramāṃ(m), sannyāsenādhigacchati. 18.49**

He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, whose thirst for enjoyment has altogether disappeared and who has subdued his mind, reaches through Sāṅkhyayoga (the path of Knowledge) the consummation of actionlessness.

Coming back to the question that Arjuna had asked to know the distinction between sanyās (renunciation of actions) and tyāg (renunciation of desire for the fruits of actions), Sri Bhagavān describes the characteristics of a person who has attained the highest state of spiritual realization.

Asakta-buddhiḥ: This refers to a mind that is unattached or free from worldly desires and attachments. Such an individual does not cling to material possessions, relationships, or outcomes of actions. Instead, they maintain a state of inner detachment and equanimity.

Sarvatra Jitatma: The term "Jitatma" denotes someone who has conquered the self or mastered the mind. This person has achieved self-control and discipline, enabling them to overcome the impulses of the ego and desires arising from the senses.

Vigata-sprīhaḥ: This signifies being devoid of desires or cravings. The individual no longer harbors selfish

desires for personal gain, recognition, or pleasure. They have transcended the pull of worldly temptations and attachments.

Naiskarmya-siddhim paramam: Naiskarmya refers to the state of selflessness or non-attachment to the fruits of actions. Siddhim paramam means the highest perfection or realization. Sri Bhagavān explains that by embodying these qualities of detachment and self-mastery, one achieves the supreme perfection of renunciation.

Sannyasena adhigacchati: This indicates that such supreme renunciation, characterized by inner detachment and selflessness, leads to liberation or spiritual enlightenment. It is not merely the external act of renunciation but the internal state of consciousness that matters. By renouncing selfish desires and actions, one transcends the cycle of karma and attains the ultimate goal of spiritual realization.

In summary, this verse teaches that true renunciation is not about giving up external possessions or duties but about cultivating inner detachment, self-mastery, and selflessness. By renouncing selfish desires and actions, one achieves the highest state of spiritual perfection and liberation.

18.50

**siddhiṁ(m) prāpto yathā brahma, tathāpnoti nibodha me,
samāsenaiva kaunteya, niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā. 18.50**

Arjuna, know from Me only briefly the process through which man having attained actionlessness, which is the highest consummation of Jñānayoga (the path of Knowledge), reaches Brahma.

Sri Bhagavān begins to explain how one, who has attained perfection (of cessation of actions), can also attain Brahman by being firmly fixed in transcendental knowledge.

Siddhim prapto yatha Brahmā: Sri Bhagavān compares the attainment of spiritual perfection to merging into Brahmān, the ultimate reality or the absolute. Just as a realized soul becomes one with Brahmān upon attaining enlightenment, similarly, one who achieves perfection in spiritual knowledge experiences a similar union with the Supreme Truth.

Tatha-apnoti nibodha me: Sri Bhagavān instructs Arjuna to understand and grasp this concept. HE urges Arjuna to comprehend the analogy presented and its implications for spiritual practice and realization.

Samasena eva kaunteya: Sri Bhagavān emphasizes the simplicity and universality of this principle. HE assures Arjuna that this profound truth can be understood and applied universally, without complexity or ambiguity.

Nishtha jnanasya ya para: The highest state of spiritual steadfastness or devotion, referred to as "*nishtha*," is described as the pinnacle of knowledge (jnanasya para). This implies that supreme devotion or unwavering faith in spiritual knowledge leads to the highest realization of truth and union with the Absolute.

In essence, this verse teaches that just as a realized soul merges into Brahmān upon attaining perfection, similarly, one who is firmly established in transcendental knowledge achieves the highest state of spiritual realization. Sri Bhagavān encourages Arjuna to grasp this profound truth and emphasizes the universal accessibility of this path to spiritual enlightenment.

18.51

**buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto, dhṛtyātmānam(n) niyamya ca,
śabdādīnviṣayāmstyaktvā, rāgadveṣau vyudasya ca. 18.51**

Endowed with a pure intellect and partaking of a light, Sāttvika and regulated diet, living in a lonely and undefiled place, having rejected sound and other objects of sense,

Sri Bhagavān offers guidance on achieving inner purification and self-control.

Buddhya viśuddhaya yukto: The first aspect emphasized is having a purified intellect. This refers to cultivating clarity of understanding, discernment, and wisdom. It involves freeing the mind from ignorance, delusion, and false perceptions, thereby gaining a clear insight into the true nature of reality.

Dhṛitya atmanam niyamya cha: The next aspect involves disciplining the mind and controlling the self (atman) with determination (dhṛitya). It entails exercising self-control, willpower, and discipline to restrain the mind from wandering towards distractions and negative influences. By regulating one's thoughts, emotions, and actions, one can maintain inner equilibrium and focus on spiritual growth.

Shabda adin vishayan tyaktva: This aspect involves renouncing the pursuit of sensual pleasures and external distractions represented by objects of the senses (shabda, adin vishayan). It entails detaching oneself from the allure of materialistic desires and sensory gratification, recognizing their transient nature and their potential to lead to bondage and suffering.

An example of this principle can be found in the life of **Janardan Swami Maharaj**, who followed the practice of Ayachit Vrat. He would refrain from asking for alms; instead, he would eat only if someone voluntarily offered him food. If no one gave him anything, he would abstain from eating. He would sustain himself by consuming leaves from the neem tree.

Raga-dveshau vyudasya cha: The final aspect involves transcending attachment (raga) and aversion (dvesha). It entails overcoming the dualities of likes and dislikes, preferences and prejudices, that arise from the ego's identification with worldly phenomena. By cultivating equanimity and impartiality, one can free oneself from the bondage of attachment and aversion, thereby attaining inner peace and spiritual liberation.

In summary, this verse outlines the path to inner purification and self-mastery, emphasizing the importance of cultivating a purified intellect, disciplined determination, detachment from sensory distractions, and transcendence of attachment and aversion. By embodying these qualities, one can attain spiritual fulfillment and liberation from the cycle of suffering and rebirth.

18.52

**viviktasevī laghvāśī, yatavākkāyamānasaḥ,
dhyānayogaparo nityam(m), vairāgyam(m) samupāsritaḥ. 18.52**

having controlled the mind, speech and body by restraining the mind and senses through firmness of a Sāttvika type, taking a resolute stand on dispassion, after having completely got rid of attraction and aversion and remaining ever devoted to the Yoga of meditation,

Sri Bhagavān describes the characteristics of a spiritual aspirant dedicated to the path of meditation.

Vivikta-sevi: Sri Bhagavān highlights the importance of solitude or seclusion (vivikta) for spiritual

practice. This involves withdrawing from worldly distractions and engaging in introspection and contemplation in a quiet and peaceful environment.

Laghva-ashi: This refers to eating sparingly or consuming food in moderation. It emphasizes the discipline of controlling one's diet and avoiding overindulgence in food, which can lead to lethargy and distraction in spiritual pursuits.

Yatavak-kaya-manasa: Sri Bhagavān underscores the necessity of controlling the body, mind, and speech. This entails disciplining one's actions, thoughts, and words to align with spiritual values and principles. It involves cultivating mindfulness and awareness in all aspects of life.

Dhyana-yoga-para: The verse emphasizes the commitment to meditation and concentration (dhyana-yoga). This involves dedicating oneself to the practice of meditation as a means of attaining inner peace, self-realization, and union with the divine.

Nityam: Sri Bhagavān emphasizes the consistency and regularity of spiritual practice. The aspirant is advised to engage in meditation continuously, making it an integral part of their daily routine and lifestyle.

Vairagyam samupashritah: Finally, Sri Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of cultivating detachment (vairagya). This involves developing a sense of non-attachment to worldly possessions, desires, and outcomes. By renouncing attachment to transient pleasures and material possessions, the aspirant can focus their energy and attention on spiritual growth and self-realization.

In summary, this verse outlines the qualities and practices of a dedicated seeker on the path of meditation. Sri Bhagavān encourages the aspirant to embrace solitude, practice moderation in eating, discipline the body, mind, and speech, engage in continuous meditation, and cultivate detachment from worldly attachments. By embodying these virtues, the spiritual aspirant can progress steadily towards the attainment of inner peace, self-awareness, and spiritual liberation.

18.53

**ahaṅkāraṁ(m) balaṁ(n) darpaṁ(ñ), kāmaṁ(ñ) krodhaṁ(m) parigrahaṁ,
vimucya nirmamaḥ(ś) śānto, brahmabhūyāya kalpate. 18.53**

having given up egotism, violence, arrogance, lust, anger and luxuries, devoid of the feeling of meum and tranquil of heart-such a man becomes qualified for oneness with Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.

Sri Bhagavān delineates the characteristics of a spiritually evolved individual who has transcended the ego.

Ahankaram: Sri Bhagavan refers to egoism or the sense of 'I-ness', which leads to identification with the body, mind, and possessions. Overcoming egoism involves recognizing the self as distinct from the transient aspects of existence and realizing one's innate divinity.

Balam: This denotes forcefulness or exerting power over others. It refers to the tendency to dominate or control others, which arises from a sense of ego and attachment to power and authority. Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj describes how the spiritually evolved individual controls the power of mind and senses.

तो डोहची विषय विषाचा
राजा सर्व दोषांचा

परी आघात ध्यान खड्गाचा

देह दुर्ग हा ज्याचे स्थान ते जिंकले मोडून

मग दुसरा वैरी केला बल नावाचा

The power of the mind and senses is enormous; they often do not heed our commands. Their influence is formidable. The power of the senses is subdued, and the power of the mind is restrained by the spiritually evolved individuals.

Darpanam: Sri Bhagavān mentions arrogance or pride, which stems from a false sense of superiority or entitlement. Overcoming arrogance involves cultivating humility and recognizing the inherent equality and interconnectedness of all beings.

Kamam: Desire or craving for sensory pleasures and worldly enjoyments. Overcoming desire involves transcending attachment to material possessions & sensory gratification, recognizing their transient nature and their potential to lead to suffering.

Krodham: Sri Bhagavān mentions anger or resentment, which arises from unfulfilled desires, expectations, or egoic attachments. Overcoming anger involves cultivating patience, forgiveness, and compassion, and understanding the root causes of anger.

Parigraham: This refers to possessiveness or attachment to worldly possessions. Overcoming possessiveness involves cultivating non-attachment and recognizing the impermanent nature of material wealth and possessions.

Vimuchya nirmamah: Sri Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of being free from the sense of ownership or possessiveness (nirmamah). This entails recognizing that everything belongs to the divine and cultivating a sense of detachment from worldly possessions.

Shanto: This denotes tranquility or inner peace attained through the practice of mindfulness, meditation, and self-awareness. It involves calming the fluctuations of the mind and attaining a state of equanimity amidst the ups and downs of life.

Brahmabhuyaya kalpate: By transcending egoism and its associated qualities, and cultivating qualities such as humility, non-attachment, and tranquility, one becomes fit for realizing Brahman—the ultimate reality or divine consciousness. This is a prequalification for taking the path of renunciation (Saṁnyāsa). This signifies the attainment of spiritual liberation and oneness with the Absolute.

In summary, this verse delineates the qualities of a spiritually evolved individual who has transcended egoism and its associated tendencies. Sri Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of cultivating virtues such as humility, non-attachment, and tranquility, which lead to spiritual realization and oneness with the divine.

The session was concluded by respectfully dedicating the lesson to the feet of the Supreme Being.

Question and Answer Session

Kirti Dikshit:

Q: How can we identify our Swabhav to determine our varna or best-suited duty (karma)?

A: We discern our Swabhav by recognizing which tasks resonate naturally with us, and understanding our intrinsic preferences. The Bhagavad Gītā serves as a reflective tool, allowing us to assess our nature

(Swabhav). Chapters 14, 17, and 18 offer guidance, providing checklists to help unveil our inherent inclinations.

Q: Is it accurate to say that we are born pure, without any specific preferences?

A: Our nature is shaped by the influences of past births and actions, as well as the effects of parental DNA and our environment. Thus, we should select suitable vihit karma (prescribed duties) based on our nature, guiding us towards Paramātmā (the Supreme Soul).

Q: Does niyat karma (daily chores) fall under vihit karma (prescribed duties)?

A: Vihit karma is encompassed within niyat karma. For instance, if I am a student, studying represents my niyat karma. If I choose to specialize in mathematics, studying mathematics aligns with my nature and is considered vihit karma.

Giridharlal Ji:

Q: Are the 16 pillars—4 Varna, 4 Sāadhanā marg, 4 Puruṣārtha, 4 ashram—emanating from Prakṛti (nature) or Ishwar (God)?

A: These pillars are bestowed upon us by our cultural heritage. Our Rishis and Munis (sages) have laid down these fundamental principles, shaping the essence of our societal structure and spiritual practice.



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You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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