



## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 17: Śraddhā-Traya-Vibhāga-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-10), Saturday, 10 August 2024

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/nCTSXfUhh7s>

## Our Faith is based on our Inherent Trait

The session started with the customary lighting of the lamp and obeisance to Krishna Bhagavān, Vedvyas and Saraswati mata.

The 17th chapter of Bhagavad gītā is **Shraddha Traya Vibhag Yoga - Explanation about the three types of Shradhha.**

This chapter is very important as Bhagavān explains in detail about four important concepts - **Food, Yajna, Dana and Tapa.**

Firstly the vivechan karta thanked the Paramātmā for showering HIS grace on all of us for giving us the opportunity to continue in this spiritual path to be able to read, teach and live Gītā.

The reason for naming this adhyaya as **Shraddha Traya Vibhaga** is explained in the 3rd sloka by Sri Krishna Bhagavān as three types of Shradhha is followed by the people in the world. The type of Shradhha is based on the inherent character of the person. Bhagavān also says we become what we believe in. If the basic character of a person is Sattvik then his shraddha is sattvik shraddha. If the person is rajasic then the shraddha is rajasic. If he is tamasic, then the shraddha is also tamasic.

In the 18th chapter, the Bhagavān has used the superlative degree "**most favourite bhakta**". Let us all pray that we all become HIS most favourite.

In the 16th chapter, 23rd sloka, Bhagavān said that people who do not follow the "ordinance of the Śāstras / Scriptures" will not be able to achieve the noble things. They will never be satisfied.

**"yaḥ śāstravidhimutsrjya, vartate kāmākārataḥ,  
na sa siddhimavāpnoti, na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim"**

Arjuna is confused about this concept. He started asking the Bhagavān about those people who do the yajnas which are not in the Śāstra and not knowing about the ordinance of the scriptures.

## 17.1

**arjuna uvāca**  
**ye śāstravidhimutsrjya, yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ,**  
**teṣāṃ(n) niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa, sattvamāho rajastamaḥ. 17.1**

Arjuna said: Those, endowed with faith, who worship gods and others, disregarding the injunctions of scriptures, where do they stand, Kṛṣṇa,- in Sattva, Rajas or Tamas.

Arjuna is asking Bhagavān to clear his confusion about the state of people who are doing sacrifices in the yajnas and ignoring the ordinance of the Śāstras.

Arjuna wanted to know under what category their shraddha is being included- Sattvik, Rajasic or Tamasic, because whatever yajnas they perform, it is being done with utmost faith though not following the ordinance of the Scriptures.

Sri Krishna Paramātmā has already explained in the 15th chapter about the three gunas in details and how they influence the worldly state of affairs.

## 17.2

**śrībhagavānuvāca**  
**trividhā bhavati śraddhā, dehināṃ(m) sā svabhāvajā,**  
**sāttvikī rājasī caiva, tāmasī ceti tāṃ(m) śṛṇu. 17.2**

Śrī Bhagavān said : That untutored innate faith of men is of three kinds- Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika. Hear of it from Me.

Bhagavān speaks about the three types of Shradhha. Based on the nature / inherent character of the person, shraddha is born in a person. If a person's nature is Sattvik, then his faith is Sattvik. If the nature of the person is Rajasic, then his Shradhha is Rajasic, and if the nature of the person is tamasic, his shraddha is tamasic.

if we look at the worldly affairs going on like disturbance in Bangladesh, people are killing innocent people out of hatred and ignorance. The behavior of these people is cruel. Their nature is termed as tamasic. Only tamasic people can be so selfish and cause harm to others.

Compared to those tamasic people, People with Rajasic or Sattvik nature cannot harm others and behave cruelly with their fellow human beings. Scriptures followed by the sattvik or Rajasic people do not encourage harm to fellow human beings. They always encourage truth, justice and harmony.

## 17.3

**sattvānurūpā sarvasya, śraddhā bhavati bhārata,**  
**śraddhāmayo'yaṃ(m) puruṣo, yo yacchraddhaḥ(s) sa eva saḥ. 17.3**

The faith of all men conforms to their mental disposition, Arjuna. Faith constitutes a man; whatever the nature of his faith, he is verily that.

Paramātmā starts explaining the reason for existence of three types of Shradhha. He says the shraddha of a person is depicted by his antahkaran or mind.

**Nature of the person decides the shraddha.** In his every act we can find the kind of faith existing in him.

For eg: If one believes in tantra and mantra Sādhanā, then it works; otherwise it does not.

#### 17.4

### **yajante sāttvikā devān, yakṣarakṣāṃsi rājasāḥ, pretānbhūtagaṇāṃścānye, yajante tāmasā janāḥ. 17.4**

Men of Sāttvika disposition worship gods; those of Rājasika temperament worship demigods and demons; while others, who are men of Tāmasika disposition, worship the spirits of dead and ghosts.

Krishna Bhagavān now tells Arjuna about the Gods worshipped by the three types of people.

People often get confused how to identify these three types of people. Whether they are Sattvik, Rajasic or Tamasic.

- **Sattvik** people worship True **Gods**.
- **Rajasic** people worship **Yaksha** for obtaining siddhi or fulfilling their desires.
- **Tamasic** people worship **Rakshas, Preta and Bhuta** to create harm to others . They perform yajnas only for evil purposes.

We can easily identify the tamasic person based on who they worship. If a tamasic person wants to become a better person, he should immediately stop practising this type of worship.

#### 17.5

### **aśāstravihitam(ñ) ghoram(n), tapyante ye tapo janāḥ, dambhāhaṅkārasamyuktāḥ(kh), kāmarāgalānvitāḥ. 17.5**

Men who practice severe penance of an arbitrary type, not sanctioned by scriptures, and who are full of hypocrisy and egotism are obsessed with desire, attachment and pride of power;

Bhagavān talks about the state of people who have knowingly ignored the ordinances of the Śāstras.

For eg:- while doing pooja at home, sometimes we replace some of the pooja items when we do not easily obtain them. If we cannot obtain mango leaves easily, we try to replace with some other leaf. It should be avoided. Procedures of pooja should be done as per prescribed procedure. We should not pressurize the priest to simplify the procedures for our convenience.

We should preserve our Sanatana Dharma. Take for example, the current situation in Bangladesh. Hindu people are being targeted and being killed as they are in minority. This issue is being subdued in the name of secularism. People of other religions can talk about in secular terms but even some of the Hindu people also ignore it and not take it seriously. This should be avoided. When the incident is clearly done with religious sentiments, people should talk about it and start creating pressure on authorities to stop attacking the minority populations based on the religion. When all the Hindu people start showing their solidarity, then those religious fanatics will reduce their attacks on the minority Hindus with some sense of fear of being attacked by the people in the world. Hence it is our duty to create awareness about the wrong doings of some of the religious fanatics in the world and spread these news so as to summon some support from other sects of people instead of keeping quiet over the issue.

We should also create awareness to our children about our sacred religious scriptures and the

ordinances of Śāstra to them so that they can understand the value system and take a stand when injustice is being done to any community in the world.

There used to be 3 major religions till now- Christians, Muslims and Hindus. A fourth group of people called atheists is being formed now, majorly from the Christian's and Hindus. We should feel happy to be called a Hindu .But many of the Hindus are feeling shy to put tilak on our head, worship our Gods and talk about our scriptures. This is a major concern to the Hindu community. We should educate our children on these issues and counsel them to follow certain religious preaching so that we stand together as one and can thwart the negative influences of the religious fanatics. We should make our children recite slokas from Ramayana, Mahabharata and Gītā to empower and enrich them with good Saṃskāra. We can encourage like minded people to watch Puja swamyji's youtube channel for vivechan on Mahabharata.

Regarding the 5th sloka, Bhagavān speaks about the practices that should be avoided.

The following should be avoided:-

**AŚāstra** = not taught in the scriptures.

**ghoran** = terrific practices that are not in the scriptures.

Fasting for Ekadashi or for any specific pooja that is done with a sankalpa, should be concluded the next day at the maximum, and not done for many days continuously. Any pooja being done should be for personal good/ gratification or for the community welfare. It should not be done to show off, for hypocrisy or egotism. If the yajna or Tapa is done with the above characters, then it leads to attachment, desires and lust which will lead to the down fall of the person both ethically and spiritually.

Bhagavān tells us to avoid all the above characters which are tamasic in nature as they lead us to ignorance and cycle of life & death.

## 17.6

### **karśayantaḥ(ś) śarīrasthaṃ(m), bhūtagrāmamacetasah, mām(ñ) caivāntaḥ(ś) śarīrasthaṃ(n), tānviddhyāsurañīścayān. 17.6**

And who emaciate the elements constituting their body as well as Me, the Supreme Spirit, dwelling in their heart- know those senseless people to have a demoniac disposition.

It is said that good is drawn to good and bad to the bad. Those imbued with sattva guna are attracted to the Divine as they perceive qualities of goodness. Bhagavān gives examples of people with demoniac qualities. HE says some people perform strict austerities not mentioned in the scriptures but are motivated by hypocrisy and egotism. Desire and attachment impels them to torment their body, thus hurting the Bhagavān who dwells within them.

In Sloka 15 of Chapter 15, Bhagavān says

**sarvasya cāhaṃ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo  
mattaḥ smṛtirjñānamapohanam ca,  
vedaiśca sarvairahameva vedyo,  
vedāntakṛdvedavidēva cāham (15.15)**

The purport is Bhagavān is seated in everyone's heart and it is from HIM that all activities are initiated.

It is important to know that such people who torment the Bhagavān within themselves, are demoniacal. One should know what one should do as per the scriptures or what one should not do.

## 17.7

### **āhāstvapi sarvasya, trividho bhavati priyaḥ, yajñastapastathā dānaṃ(n), teṣāṃ(m) bhedamimaṃ(m) śrṇu. 17.7**

Food also, which is agreeable to different men according to their innate disposition is of three kinds. and likewise sacrifice, penance and charity too are of three kinds each; hear their distinction as follows.

This sloka brings forth a question of how one knows which guna one belongs to. The mind has three Gunas:

- **Sattva** (light, bliss, goodness)
- **Rajas** (passion)
- **Tamas** (inertia, darkness).

There are three Vrittis in the mind corresponding to the three Gunas.

- **Santa Vritti** (peace) comes from Sattva Guna
- **Ghora Vritti** from Rajo Guna
- **Muda Vritti** from Tamo Guna

The purpose of this sloka is to tell that people's preferences for food and actions like yajna and tapah are also according to their dispositions. By observing the food habits of people, one can judge to which guna the person belongs.

## 17.8

### **āyuh(s) sattvabalārogya, sukhapritivivardhanāḥ, rasyāḥ(s) snigdhāḥ(s) sthirā hṛdyā, āhārāḥ(s) sāttvikapriyāḥ. 17.8**

Foods which promote longevity, intelligence, vigor, health, happiness and cheerfulness, and which are juicy, succulent, substantial and naturally agreeable, are liked by men of Sāttvika nature.

There are 3 types of food; sattvic, rajas, and tamas.

**People in the mode of goodness eat sattvic food that promotes life span, strength, health, happiness, and satisfaction.** Such sattvic food is juicy, nourishing and substantial.

The food one eats and one's personality is related. The Bhagavad Gītā also explains that the act of eating per se should be an offering to Bhagavān:

**yatkaroṣi yadaśnāsi, yajjuhoṣi dadāsi yat,  
yattapasyasi kaunteya, tatkuruṣva madarpaṇam (9.27)**

*'Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, offer all that to Me'*

## 17.9

**kaṭvamlalavaṇātyuṣṇa, tikṣṇarūkṣavidāhinaḥ,  
āhārā rājasasyeṣṭā, duḥkhaśokāmayapradāḥ. 17.9**

Foods which are bitter, sour, salty, overhot, pungent, dry and burning, and which cause suffering, grief and sickness, are dear to the Rājasika type of men.

**Rajasic foods increase passion, agitation, and restlessness.** Foods that are bitter, sour, salty, spicy, hot, and chilled come under this category. The common example is Fast food.

**17.10**

**yātayāmaṃ(ñ) gatarasaṃ(m), pūti paryuṣitaṃ(ñ) ca yat,  
ucchiṣṭamapi cāmedhyaṃ(m), bhojanaṃ(n) tāmasapriyam. 17.10**

Food which is ill-cooked or not fully ripe, insipid, putrid, stale and polluted, and which is impure too, is dear to men of a Tāmasika disposition.

Food that is not consumed within 3 hours of cooking (1 yam) turns from sattvic to tamasic. **Foods that are stale, putrid, overcooked, and impure are dear to people disposed to a mode of ignorance.**

In these slokas, Bhagavān has given us important insights and information on different types of food that one can consume and what are the benefits or disadvantages of doing so. It is up to us to make our decision about what to eat. Thoughts influence our shraddha and karmas. So, we must keep our thoughts pure and sattvic. **Sattvic thoughts and minds that help us continue on our spiritual journey can be developed by consuming sattvic food.**

The session concluded with a reciting of Namasmarana followed by Questions and Answers.

**Questions and Answers:**

**Neelu ji**

**Q:** It is said we are chosen by God when we are attending Gītā classes. I am repeating the 4 dams. Of late, I have been missing classes and somehow I have become irregular. Is God angry with me?

**A:** No, HE is not angry. God tests everyone once in a way. He is testing if you can manage your time well or not. What is required is time management and if it is daunting for you, attend some classes in managing time. Then try to be the best version of yourself and ask for help from Bhagavān. HE does everything.

**Chandrashekhar ji**

**Q:** Does swabhava evolve in this life also? Does it change?

**A:** Yes, swabhava or the intrinsic nature of a person also evolves in this life. For example, a 5-year-old will face the effect of punar janma karma (past life), but for a 50-year-old it is the present life also. If we are in Sattvic company, swabhava changes to Sattvic.

**Rudra ji**

**Q:** If we take all types of food, Sattvic, Rajasic, and Tamasic, which category are we?

**A:** You are in all three; sometimes in one, sometimes in the others.

**Geeta ji**

**Q:** We are told we must teach our scriptures and our dharma to them. Children ask for justification for

everything. What do we do?

**A:** We all have limited knowledge and not possible to answer all questions. It is best to answer as per our knowledge and capacity and for other questions you can refer to an expert in the area who is knowledgeable and well equipped to answer.

### **GoplaKrishna ji**

**Q:** How do we relate the title of Chapter 17 to all the slokas therein?

**A:** The titles of all the 18 chapters In Bhagavad Gītā were given by VedVyasji. He selected the titles according to the main theme in each chapter. It does not mean that every sloka in the chapter will have the mention of the title.

### **Suman ji**

**Q:** We are habitual eaters of non-vegetarian food. We enjoy eating them. How can we stop and withdraw from eating them?

**A:** You can try to withdraw slowly step by step. Make the quantity small. Then try to eat on alternate days. As far as taste is concerned, it changes. As a child, you may have liked eating something that you don't like today or you start eating something that you hated eating as a child. Just take small steps and make efforts to withdraw.



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### **Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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