



## 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/tayGI7G4G4U>

## Śhraddhā Rooted in the Gunas Shapes One's Identity

Chapter 17 of the Srimad Bhagavad Gītā - **Śhraddhā Traya Vibhāg Yog - The Yog of the three divisions of faith**

The session started with the customary lighting of the lamp, followed by prayers to Śrī Bhagavān, Maa Saraswati, Veda Vyasa ji, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji and obeisance at the feet of Gurudev.

The BhagavadGītā is the Song of Bhagavān, sung amidst the chaos of the Mahabharata War to Arjuna. Our lives are also a Kurukshetra—*kuru* meaning "to do," and *kshetra* meaning "area" or "field." The Bhagavad Gītā serves as a timeless guide providing practical wisdom on how to live a balanced and meaningful life. It provides knowledge of the path to follow for the welfare of mankind, making Arjuna an instrument of that purpose.

In this chapter, Bhagavān encourages us to look within while living in harmony with other beings and the rest of the universe. This can be achieved only with a charioteer like Bhagavān Sri Krishna, whom Arjuna chose to guide him. Śrī Krishna offered Arjuna the choice between an Akshauhini army and HIMSELF, unarmed. Arjuna chose Bhagavān over the army and entrusted the reins of his chariot to HIM.

When we perceive Gītā as a personification of Krishna HIMSELF, we will be graced by HIS Divine guidance by surrendering our lives to HIM,

जयतु जयतु गीता वाङ्मयी कृष्णमूर्ति।

**Bhagavadgītā awakens the power of discernment and illuminates the path to one's well-being.**

In the following Ovi, Dynaneshwara Maharaj compared Bhagavadgītā to Durga Saptashati as both texts contain 700 verses. Just as in the Saptashati, Maa Durga slays the demon Mahishasura, the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā frees mankind from delusion.

"कीं गीता हे सप्तशती, मंत्रप्रतिपाद्य भगवती,  
मोहमहिषा मुक्ति, आनंदली असे ॥ १६६७ ॥

In the last verse of the 16th chapter Bhagavān told Arjuna that he should follow the scriptures in determining what should be done and what should not be done; and to understand the scriptural injunctions and teachings, and then perform actions in this world accordingly.

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

The absolute authority in ascertaining the propriety of any activity, or lack of it, are the Vedic scriptures.

**Śāstras (scriptures) are the source of all knowledge.** They are of various kinds. The Gītā or the Ramayan are Divine or *Aloukik Śāstras*, whereas, Science, music, arts, law etc. are the *Laukik Śāstras*. All work is done according to the scriptures.

Śāstras are described as:

**संशया शास्त्र शासना शास्त्राहा**

i.e.. The scriptures dispel our doubts and provide us with knowledge. They establish the rules that guide our actions. Without rules, no work would be possible; no judiciary could function, and no treatment could be administered. There is a Śāstra / scripture and a set of rules for everything. Our lives are governed by these principles in every aspect. To walk the path of welfare, we must understand what is truly best for us.

During Corona we had to follow guidelines to save ourselves from the disease. We are not just the body, but the consciousness of the Divine that dwells within. Therefore just like we follow rules for our material progress, likewise we need to follow the rules in our scriptures for our spiritual progress.

Einstein postulated  $E=mc^2$ , describing the relationship between matter and energy. The functioning of the universe relies on the interconnectedness of the physical (*sthool*) and the subtle (*sukshma*) aspects. For example, the discourse you are receiving reaches you through a laptop (*sthool*), facilitated by electricity, the internet, and the worldwide web (*sukshma*).

Truth, or *Sat*, is not visible. The knowledge of Truth is found in the Śāstras. Just as we gain expertise in various fields by learning from authorities in those subjects, similarly, to attain the knowledge of the subtle Śāstras, we must approach the realised masters.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj wrote

**शास्त्र म्हणेल जें सांडावें, तें राज्यही तृण मानावें,  
जें घेववी तें न म्हणावें, विषही विरु ॥ ४६० ॥**

Whatever the scriptures tell us to give up [we should do so]; we should consider even a kingdom to be as worthless as grass. Whatever we are told to accept, we should take it without objection, even if it were poison.

By having complete faith in the Śāstras one can achieve the ultimate goal i.e.. HIS Abode.

Dharma does not merely mean religion. It encompasses our duties, such as *matri dharma* (duties towards one's mother), *pitri dharma* (duties towards one's father), and *putra dharma* (duties towards one's

children). These duties have sometimes been referred to as religious obligations.

While pursuing material pleasures, we must not lose sight of our ultimate goal. We should also remember not to become restless in the pursuit of achievements. The Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā teaches us how to navigate these aspects of life, which is why it is such an important text.

Arjuna, mesmerised by Bhagavān's teachings, poses a profound question to HIM. Arjuna says:

## 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 desired to know the nature of the faith of those who worship without reference to the Vedic scriptures. Arjuna's question was to clarify his own state, that although he has faith, he does not know the scriptures. So, when he worships with faith, what is the nature of his state - Satvik, Rajasik, or Tamasik?

If even a child observes and worships according to the example set by his parents, what kind of faith is that?

**Sattvik qualities represent the light of knowledge**, Rajas represents action, and Tamas represents inactivity or emptiness. **The term Guna means rope**. Thus, our lives are bound by this rope of qualities.

All animals are also endowed with all these three Gunas. Even if an animal hunts for itself, that action can be seen as having a Satvik quality because it involves knowledge and instinct.

To illustrate this an example which Gurudev usually shares was given. Consider a car: it has a steering wheel, requires petrol, and has brakes. Petrol represents the Rajas (active quality) of the car, which fuels its movement. The steering wheel is essential for directing the car, symbolising the Satvik quality needed for purposeful action. If you use the brakes to stop the car, this represents the Tamas (inertia or inactive quality) that halts its movement.

Similarly, in life, action continues with the interplay of the three gunas. The Rajo Guna drives the action forward, the Satva Guna ensures that it moves in the right direction, and the Tamas Guna causes it to stop or become inert. This dynamic can also be applied to the light of knowledge and devotion, which can be influenced by these three qualities.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj explains this saying that a child who has complete faith in his parents treads on their footprints.

एथ वडील जें जें करिती, तया नाम धर्मु ठेविती।  
तेचि येर अनुष्ठिती, सामान्य सकळ ॥ १५८ ॥

However, in our country, alongside faith, blind faith has begun to emerge, and questions are being raised on our faith, resulting in a faithless society.

Paramātmā responded to Arjuna's query in the next verse.

## 17.2

### **śrībhagavānuvāca trividhā bhavati śraddhā, dehinām(m) sā svabhāvajā, sāttvikī rājasī caiva, tāmasī ceti tām(m) śrṇu. 17.2**

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

The Supreme Divine said, every human being is born with innate faith, which can be of three kinds—Sāttvika, Rājasika, or Tāmasika.

Svabhavaja herein means one's innate nature based on the intensity of gunas. Sāttvika, Rājasika, or Tāmasika. It has been formed through the collective impressions made upon one's consciousness through one's experiences in many lives. This was illustrated with the example of a lotus. A lotus is called *Pankaj* because it is born in mucky water (*panka* means mud, and *ja* means born). Its nature, influenced by the three gunas, is inherent due to its birth. Similarly, an individual's nature is shaped by the faith they are born with, which is also influenced by the three gunas present at the time of their birth. These gunas—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas - determine the tendencies, actions, and beliefs that form the foundation of a person's character and life path.

#### **What is one's nature (svabhāv)?**

In the 8th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā, Bhagavān **explains that HIS Atma Swaroop (consciousness) is the inherent nature (svabhāv) of all individuals.** This essential nature is universal, but the rest of one's *svabhāv* is shaped by external factors, including the environment and the *sanskārās* (impressions) from previous births. For example, a mother may bear two children, yet each has a different nature. This difference arises because nature is influenced by both heredity - primarily the *sanskārās* from past lives - and the environment in which one is raised.

An individual's nature, in turn, determines their faith (*shraddhā*). A child born to a thief, for instance, may acquire Tamasika qualities because they are exposed to unrighteous actions and thoughts from a young age. Conversely, a child raised in a pious environment may develop a strong faith in their elders, learning righteousness from them due to their *shraddhā* in those role models.

Our intellect seeks reasoning, while the mind is driven by emotions. These two are often in conflict. The mind desires something, but the intellect reasons and tries to guide it in the right direction. However, the mind can sometimes overpower the intellect, leading to actions driven by emotions rather than reason. This ongoing struggle between the mind and intellect shapes an individual's actions and faith, as influenced by their inherent and acquired nature.

Bhagavān has said that HE provides the divine knowledge with which one can attain Yoga of the intellect which helps one attain HIM.

**बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥ 18.57॥**

Taking shelter of the Yoga of the intellect, keep your consciousness absorbed in Me always.

**ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ 10.10॥**

I give the divine knowledge by which they can attain Me.

Yoga of the intellect develops steadfast faith / shraddha in an individual, which helps one reach the ultimate destination ie. attain HIM.

In chapter 4 Bhagavān said the same

**श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानं तत्-परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।**

Those whose faith is deep and who have practiced controlling their mind and senses attain divine knowledge. Through such transcendental knowledge, they quickly attain everlasting supreme peace.

A student of science when asked what is water, would reply H<sub>2</sub>O, 2 parts of Hydrogen and one part of oxygen. It is his faith on empirical evidence and trust in scientific methods of the scientist who postulated the formula, that he believes so. An interesting fact of water was shared, that hydrogen is combustible and oxygen facilitates combustion. The mixture of two is water which aids in extinguishing fire.

Just as a student of science trusts in the knowledge passed down by scientists, those on a spiritual path should place their trust in the insights and realisations attained by the Rishis and Munis, through deep meditation and penance. They were able to awaken their "third eye" or "Jnana Chakshu" , that means they were able to attain an awakened state of consciousness, where one perceives the truth beyond the physical senses.

By cultivating faith in their teachings, and by following the practices and disciplines they prescribed, one can progress on the path of self-discovery and ultimately attain the knowledge of the Self, leading to liberation and inner peace.

A story was narrated to illustrate this. Once, a Guru was teaching in his ashram that the soul is indestructible. Some people passing by questioned him, saying, "If you cannot prove this, why are you teaching it?" They had a book with them, and the Mahatma asked what was written in it. (The book was written in another language.) The Mahatma responded, "I don't believe what you're saying is true." The people replied, "To understand its meaning, you would need to learn this language first."

The sage replied, that he was teaching the language of the soul to these seekers sitting before him. He said this is the science of experience, and cannot be explained merely through words. To grasp it, one must gain the necessary knowledge.

### 17.3

**sattvānurūpā sarvasya, śraddhā bhavati bhārata,  
śraddhāmāyo'yaṁ(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.

**In this verse sattvā implies to the conditioning of the *Antahkaran*.** Bhagavān told Arjuna the faith of all humans conforms to the conditioning of their mind. All people possess faith, and whatever the nature of their faith, that is what they are.

Where one decides to place his faith and what one chooses to believe in, practically shapes the

direction of his life. Some develop conviction on their Guru, some on certain principles. Their beliefs shape their lives. However, their actions are influenced by their inherent Gunas.

This was explained with an example: Suppose there is a ₹2000 note lying on the road. If a Sattvik person finds it, he will donate it to a temple or use it for a good cause. A Rajasik person, on the other hand, will spend the money on entertainment for himself and his friends. A Tamasik individual might use the money for unvirtuous activities like buying liquor or gambling. **Each person uses the money based on the nature of their *antahkaran* (inner consciousness).**

Thus, **individuals are not defined by their external appearance but by their internal nature.** It is this inner nature that truly describes them. The Gītā is a text that encourages individuals to look within and recognise their internal instincts. In Chapter 16, Bhagavān listed 26 divine virtues, which are not attributes of the external self but are inherent qualities within.

Gurudev describes this chapter a tool for self training and self screening, for us to know ourselves and what our basic nature is for us to improve on it.

## 17.4

### **yajante sāt̥tvikā 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.

Arjuna inquired whom do they worship?

Bhagavān said those in the mode of goodness (Sattva) worship the celestial gods in whom they perceive the qualities of goodness.

Those in the mode of passion (Rajas) worship the *yakṣhas* (semi-celestial beings who exude power and wealth) and *rākṣhasas* (powerful beings who embody sensual pleasure, revenge, and wrath).

Those who are Tamasika or are in the mode of ignorance worship ghosts and spirits despite the evil and cruel nature of such beings.

"Guna" means "rope." Sattvaguna is a golden rope, Rajoguna is a silver rope, and Tamoguna is an iron rope. Each of these ropes binds a being and influences how individuals experience and interact with the world, shaping their actions, thoughts, and ultimately their path in life.

The golden rope also binds an individual with a Sattvik disposition; Eg. he gets agitated when he is unable to go to the temple or do his daily worship due to some reason.

Gulab Rao Maharaj ji said that to elevate or uplift oneself, one must focus on increasing Sattvic activities and decreasing Rajasik and Tamasik activities. Dominating the Sattva Guna will uplift a person and guide them towards their final and ultimate destination.

Dnyaneshwara maharaj described Sattvika Guna very beautifully.

भूतजात माझें लोपो, नामरूप हारपो,  
मज झणेंअसतेपण वासिपो, ॥ १९८ ॥

He said whether or not I am there forever, whether or not someone remembers me, I will keep doing good Karma.

In another ovi, he described Rajo Guna by saying that a person who believes that no one should surpass or exceed them is influenced by Rajoguna. Thus it can be observed that these Gunas describe the aptitude of the individual. To illustrate this, the following story from the Mahabharata was narrated.

When the Pāṇḍavas were living in their Brahmin guise after the incident at *Lakshagriha*, they attended Draupadi's *Swayamvar* disguised as Brahmins. Drupada had resolved to marry his daughter to Arjuna and had set the challenge of piercing the eye of the fish, knowing that only Arjuna could achieve it. When Arjuna, in disguise, succeeded in piercing the fish's eye and Draupadi came forward with a garland to select him, Drupada wondered whether he should give his daughter to a Brahmin.

Dhrishtadyumna, Drupada's son, sensed his father's hesitation and decided to test the prospective groom. He organized an exhibition with different rooms: one for weapons, another for scriptures and religious books, one for beautiful clothes, and one for musical instruments. When the Pandavas arrived, they first went to the room with the armory.

The king's messengers quickly reported that the Brahmins had entered the armory. The prince and the king concluded that they were not Brahmins, as true Brahmins would have been drawn to the scriptures and religious books. Instead, their interest in the armory revealed their true nature as Kshatriyas. Despite their discussion of the scriptures, their actions confirmed their Kshatriya identity.

Similarly, we also act according to our instincts.

## 17.5

### **aśāstravihitaṃ(ñ) ghoraṃ(n), tapyante ye tapo janāḥ, dambhāhaṅkārasamyuktāḥ(kh), kāmarāgabalanvitāḥ. 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 said some people perform stern austerities that are not instructed by the scriptures. These severe practices are motivated by desire and attachment and are mostly done by hypocrites driven by egotism, for the sake of showoff.

Some people stand on one foot or perform extreme acts, with the intention of adding their names to the Guinness Book of Records, but these activities have no spiritual relevance. What truly matters is not the amount of tapas (austerity) one performs, but whether it is done in accordance with the scriptures and whether it benefits society, one's family, or oneself.

The life of every individual is influenced by four levels:

1. **Vyashti**: Personal level, which involves individual experiences and actions.

2. **Samashti**: Influence of society, encompassing social interactions and collective norms.
3. **Srishti**: Influence of the universe, including natural elements like food, water, air, heat, etc.
4. **Parmeshti**: The Atma Swaroop or Paramātmā Tattva, which represents the ultimate, universal truth or the essence of the self.

The Bhagavad Gītā teaches us how to live a harmonious life by synchronising these four levels to achieve a balanced and meaningful existence.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji says:

आपलेनीचि आटोपें । धनित्वाचेनि दर्पे ।  
साचचि पाखंडाचीं तपें । आदरिती ॥ ९५ ॥

Overwhelming in their power and proud of their riches they perform unauthorised penances.

Doing penance by causing pain to the body, does not benefit the self or the society, instead it leads to the downfall of the one doing so. Thus, the Gītā urges us to live a balanced and Sattvika life. The knowledge of the Self, as propounded in the Gītā, reveals the presence of the Divine in each individual. Consequently, inflicting pain on the body is akin to causing pain to the Divine within.

Sant Eknath ji said

काया ही पंढरी आत्मा हा विठ्ठल ।  
नांदतो केवळ पांडुरंग ॥१॥

My body is Pandhari and my soul is Vittal.  
Only Panduranga dwells inside me.

## 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.

Bhagavān classified those who abuse and torture their own physical body, thereby disrespecting the Supreme Soul residing within, as demoniacal in nature.

Excessive fasting or overexertion in the gym is not favoured because Bhagavān in the last verse said that HE resides in each one of us, and when we inflict pain on our bodies, we are indirectly causing pain to HIM.

In many other places including the 15th and the 16th chapter Bhagavān reiterated HIS presence in the hearts of individuals.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ॥ 15.7 ॥

The embodied souls in this material world are My eternal fragmental parts.

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।  
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ 15.15 ॥

I am seated in the hearts of all living beings, and from Me come memory, knowledge, as well as forgetfulness.

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।

अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ 10.20॥

O Arjuna, I am seated in the heart of all living entities. I am the beginning, middle, and end of all beings.

Bhagavān has not discriminated between religions or nationalities. HE said HE is seated in the hearts of ALL individuals.

17.7

**āhārastvapi sarvasya, trividho bhavati priyaḥ,  
yajñastapastathā dānaṃ(n), teṣāṃ(m) bhedamimaṃ(m) śṛṇu. 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.

Bhagavān told Arjuna that to elevate his personal life, he must pay attention to his food. The body is the instrument used to perform sacrifices, austerities, and charity. Therefore, maintaining a healthy body is essential to carry out these activities without hindrances and disturbances.

HE said that the food people prefer is according to their dispositions, and this food, in turn, influences their nature. Therefore, there are three kinds of food. Similarly, there are three types of Yajnas (sacrifices), penance, and charity, each aligned with one's intrinsic nature.

A couplet by Ghalib suggests that one should not get carried away by others' good or bad fortune. Instead, one should engage in self-introspection, examining where they stand, what their intrinsic nature is, and what influences they are under. It is important to reflect on how their own standing affects themselves, their loved ones, and society at large.

उम्र भर ग़ालिब यही भूल करता रहा,  
धूल चेहरे पे थी आइना साफ़ करता रहा।

Gurudev says that each person's faith will differ from another's. One should not be influenced by another's faith, nor should one try to impose their own faith on others. Instead, one should strive to move forward with steadfast faith, focusing on their own path towards the ultimate destination.

17.8

**āyuh(s) sattvabalārogya, sukhapṛītivivardhanāḥ,  
rasyāḥ(s) snigdhaḥ(s) sthirā hr̥dyā, 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.

In this verse Bhagavān explained the nature of sattvika food. HE said that persons in the mode of goodness prefer foods that promote life span, and increase virtue, strength (**bala**), health (**ārogya**), happiness (**sukha**), and satisfaction (**pṛīti**). Such foods are juicy (**rasyāḥ**), succulent (**snigdhaḥ**), nourishing (**sthirā**), and naturally pleasing to the heart (**hr̥dyā**).

The popular saying goes:

**जैसा अन्न वैसा मन**

Essence: our thinking ability is influenced by the food we eat.

Often, when we see food prepared for puja or yajna, our hunger intensifies because of its aroma, freshness and purity. The best food is that which is full of moisture and nourishment, such as those containing milk, buttermilk, or fruit juice. It should not contain acidic elements that cause sour belching. Food made with cow's ghee and that is not dry is considered the best. A Sattvika person prefers such food that strengthens the heart and delights the mind.

Dnyaneshwara Maharaj ji says:

**आंगें सानें परीणामें थोरु, जैसें गुरुमुखींचें अक्षरु,  
तैशी अल्पीं जिहीं अपारु, तृप्ति राहे ॥ १२९ ॥**

When we receive initiation from a Guru, the mantra given may be very small, but it holds great benefits.

Similarly, consuming even a small amount of Satvik food can satisfy the mind. For example, by eating a little fruit or drinking fruit juice and consuming nutritious food, the mind, intellect, and appetite become calm. In this way, the food that provides great satisfaction even in small quantities is considered Satvik food. A virtuous person greatly values this type of food.

In the following verses, the Supreme described Rajasic food.

**17.9**

**kaṭvamlalavaṇātyuṣṇa, tīkṣṇarūkṣavidāhinaḥ,  
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.

Foods that are too bitter (**kaṭu**), too sour (**amla**), salty (**lavaṇā**), very hot (**uṣṇa**), pungent (**tīkṣṇa**), dry (**rūkṣa**), and full of chillies (**vidāhinaḥ**), are dear to persons in the mode of passion. Such foods produce pain (**duḥkha**), grief (**śokā**), and disease (**mayapradāḥ**).

Eating too much of such food can cause pain to the body, increase anxiety, and lead to diseases. Describing this, Śrī Bhagwan has elaborated on the effects of Rajasic food in the eighteenth chapter

**विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्, यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम्।**

**परिणामे विषमिव, तत्सुखं(म्) राजसं(म्) स्मृतम्॥18.38॥**

Rājasic happiness is experienced as a thrill that arises from the contact between the senses and their objects, is as short-lived as the contact itself, and leaves in its wake greed, anxiety, guilt, and a thickening of the material illusion.

Dnyaneshwara Maharaj explained Rajasic Food as:

**आधींच द्रव्यें चुरमुरीं । वरी परवडिजती मोहरी ।**

**जियें घेतां होती धुवारी । नाकेंतोडें ॥ १४६ ॥**

The ingredients of this food are already pungent and mustard is added to it so that when eating it hot

vapour passes through the mouth and nose.

तैसेँ एकमेकां सळें । रोग उठती एके वेळे ।

ऐसा राजसु आहारु फळे । केवळ दुःखें ॥ १५१ ॥

So disease and troubles arise at once in rivalry one with another; thus does the food of a passionate quality result in suffering.

## 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.

Describing Tamasika foods, Bhagavān said that foods that are undercooked, insipid (**gatarasaṃ**), stale (**yātayāmaṃ**), putrid (**pūti**), polluted (**paryuṣitaṃ**), left over (**ucchiṣṭam**) and impure (**āmedhyaṃ**) are dear to persons in the mode of ignorance.

Food that smells very foul should not be consumed. Food mixed with salt that has been left for one night should also be avoided. Some may argue that eating food from the fridge is not bad, but such food is still considered stale. At home, we never feed stale food to small children, pregnant women, and new mothers. This is because we recognise that stale food is detrimental to health.

During the Corona epidemic, the practice of sharing food from each other's plates nearly stopped. People became more cautious about consuming food from others plates. Similarly, after the Upanayana Sanskar, it is emphasised that one should avoid eating stale food. Though modern life has led us to forget such practices, they are well described in our scriptures. We should also avoid giving stale food to our servants, as it can harm their health.

Gurudev also says that eating stale food occasionally is not wrong, but consuming it every day can have a negative impact on health. We should be able to discern what constitutes a healthy diet for ourselves.

A balanced diet is essential, and this concept is thoroughly explained in the Srimad BhagavadGītā. The text describes that food sustains the body, sacrifices benefit creation, penance aids the spirit, and charity supports ancestors. **This interdependent universe exemplifies TEAMWORK ie Together Everyone Achieves More.**

**From this chapter, we learn a valuable lesson: food is not limited to what we consume through our mouth. Everything we take in through our five senses is also considered food.**

The cosmos is made of the *Pancha Mahabhutas*, the 5 basic elements which in turn originate from the "*Pancha Tanmatras*" known as **sound (shabda)**, **touch (sparsha)**, **vision (roopa)**, **taste (rasa)**, and **smell (gandha)**.

1. **sound (shabda)** is the food for the ears.
2. **touch (sparsha)** is the food / nourishment for the skin.
3. **vision (roopa)** is food for the eyes
4. **Taste (rasa)** is food for the tongue
5. **smell (gandha)** is food for the nose

Therefore, food should not be understood only as what we eat through our mouth and tongue. Form, taste, smell, sound, and touch are all considered food that our body receives through its various senses (Jnana Indriyas).

Adi Shankaracharya has also remarked that the term "Aahar" (food) does not refer only to what is consumed through the tongue. He also stated that the food of the five senses can also be categorised as Rajasika, Tamasika, or Sattvika. **Our body is shaped by what we see, hear, touch, smell, and eat, depending on the nourishment and influences of the five senses.**

The food and sights taken in by the eyes are imprinted on our mind. What you watch, the pictures or serials you view, and what you listen to—all these have a significant impact on the mind. The thoughts in our mind are shaped by what we read and what we consume. Accordingly, our personality can be Rajasika, Tamasika, or Sattvika.

Dnyaneshwara Maharaj said

**अन्न सकाळचे तीसर्था प्रहरी, आज रात्रि चे उद्या दुपारी,  
ऐसी शिळ्या अन्ना ची आवड भारी, तामसी लोकांना।**

The tamasika individuals eat stale food, and by repeatedly consuming stale food they are not in good health.

It is better to create a pit in the house and bury stale food in it, effectively returning them to the soil. Always consuming fresh food will guide us toward Sattvikta (purity). By changing our habits, we can transform our lives, as emphasised in the Bhagavad Gītā. Adopting the mantra, "**I shall become better and better**," should be fundamental to our lives.

Guruji says that just as values enhance the worth of a piece of iron, its utility and value increases depending on how it is treated. For example, if a piece of iron is shaped into a nail, it can be used in a bicycle. If it is made into a screw, it may be used in various instruments. If it is crafted into a spring, it could even be used in spacecraft. Thus, we see that the treatment given to a piece of iron determines its use and value.

**Man can also elevate his life to a higher state through values, making it more meaningful and valuable.**

With this encouragement, and salutations at Gurudev's and Dnyaneshwara Maharaj, today's discussion session ended.

## **Question Answer Session**

**Suman Ji**

**Question:** We are told to introspect time and again. On self introspection I found that I am very stubborn. How to overcome this habit?

**Answer:** Stubbornness is not good, but at times to get an beneficial work done it may not be so bad. However, everytime one should not be stubborn. 'My way or the highway' is a wrong approach to sort things out. So do not leave your way but that should not be the only way. Whenever you feel that way focus on the then emotions and try to control them by not reacting or over reacting to them. Slowly emotions will evaporate.

One needs to understand one's own nature and the nature of whom dealing with. This alone sometimes effectively helps in our attitude towards them.

Another way is by narrating your negative emotions to nature, say Tulsi Maa or Ganga Maa. Nature absorbs our emotions thereby ridding us from their results.

### **Sudhir ji**

**Question:** My question is concerning the 16th chapter. Do we have to bear results of our Karmas of the previous birth in this life?

**Answer:** Yes this is the principle of karma. Karma is action and the result is the reaction. Bhagavān said to do karma without expectation of results. However, every karma will bear fruits, whether good or bad, whether in this life or next. Karma phalas of the previous births are called Sanchit karmas (which constitute the Prarabdha), which are equated with the karmas of this life depending on the kind of life one is leading. Prarabdha is of 4 kinds:

*Manda Prarabdha, Ati manda Prarabdha* : The karma phalas of these can be negated easily by virtuous deeds. *Teevra Prarabdha and Ati Teevra Prarabdha* are difficult to overcome. However, severe austerities do negate *Teevra Prarabdha*.

### **Manish Ji**

**Question:** In the 16th chapter Bhagavān listed the divine and Demonic qualities. HE has listed Ahimsa as Divine quality. For the last few centuries, Daivi qualities are on the decline and Asuri or demonic qualities are on the rise. There is crime all over. How can we overcome so much negativity by following Daivi Gunas?

**Answer:**

अहिंसा परमो धर्मः धर्म हिंसा तथैव च ।

Our scriptures tell us that violence undertaken to protect dharma and for the welfare of all beings is not considered violence or himsa. Gurudev also repeatedly points out that in the Mahabharata war, Krishna fought and killed those who had strayed from the path of dharma. Thus, if the situation demands it, one may resort to guile and deceit to uphold righteousness. Bhagavān also resorted to deceit to kill Karna.

One should remember that violence or deceit should not be undertaken for personal gain. It is only considered justifiable if it benefits society and humanity.

Tolerating **adharmā** (unrighteousness) is also not favoured by the scriptures.



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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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