

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/Tt8peHEpPRg>

## The Three Gunas and Their Influence on Action and Willpower

The 18th chapter of the **Bhagavad Gītā, Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga**—The Yoga of Liberation through Renunciation—offers profound guidance on attaining ultimate freedom through detachment and self-realization. Our session began with the **Auspicious Lighting of the traditional lamp**, symbolizing the unwavering flame of wisdom that lights the path of Dharma. This sacred flame not only illuminates our spiritual journey but purifies the **Antaḥkaraṇa** (inner consciousness), dispelling ignorance and allowing the light of knowledge to shine within. Following this, we humbly offered our salutations to **Bhagavān** and **Guru**, seeking their divine blessings as we embark on this sacred path of self-discovery and growth.

We are deeply fortunate to engage in the study of the **Bhagavad Gītā**, enriching our lives with purpose and striving toward the highest goal of human existence—**Mokṣa** (liberation). This precious opportunity could be the result of the **puṇya** (righteous deeds) we have accumulated in this life or past lives, or it may be the grace of saints and spiritual masters who have blessed us with the wisdom to walk this path.

Spiritual masters have long proclaimed that no scripture in the world compares to the **Bhagavad Gītā** in its ability to elevate and guide humanity. Esteemed intellectuals such as **Aldous Huxley**, **Henry David Thoreau**, Swiss poet **Hermann Hesse**, American scientist **J. Robert Oppenheimer**, **Lord Hastings**, and **Albert Einstein** have all drawn deep inspiration from its teachings. Even beyond the Sanatani Hindu tradition, **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**, India's former president, read the **Gītā** daily, finding solace and wisdom in its verses.

The **Bhagavad Gītā** is not just a spiritual scripture; it is a science of well-being, both in this world and the next. Though compact, its wisdom is vast and transformative. In our journey through the **Chardham** (the four levels of learning the Gītā), some have reached the advanced **L4** level, delving deeply into its teachings. **Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj** aptly referred to the 18th chapter as the essence of the entire **Gītā**. Here, **Śrī Bhagavān** describes the three types of **Karta** (doers), offering profound insights into the nature of action, intention, and the qualities that define a true seeker.

As we explore this culminating chapter of the **Bhagavad Gītā**, we are guided toward a deeper understanding of liberation, preparing ourselves for the ultimate journey toward **Mokṣa** and eternal peace.

18.26

**muktasaṅgo'naḥaṁvādī, dhṛtyutsāhaṣamanvitaḥ,  
siddhyasiddhyornirvikāraḥ(kh), kartā sāttvika ucyate. 18.26**

Free from attachment, unegoistic, endowed with firmness and zeal and unswayed by success and failure-such a doer is said to be Sāttvika.

In this verse, **Śrī Bhagavān** describes the qualities of a **Sāttvika kartā** (a doer acting under the influence of Sattva, the mode of goodness). A Sāttvika doer performs actions with purity, selflessness, and focused intention, free from attachment to the results or any sense of ego. Such a doer embodies balance, inner strength, and equanimity, remaining peaceful and composed regardless of success or failure.

- **muktasaṅgaḥ**: Free from attachment.
- **anahaṁvādī**: Without ego or the sense of "I am the doer."
- **dhṛtyutsāhaṣamanvitaḥ**: Endowed with steadfastness and enthusiasm.
- **siddhyasiddhyornirvikāraḥ**: Unaffected by success or failure.
- **kartā sāttvika ucyate**: Such a doer is called Sāttvika.

**1. Freedom from Attachment (muktasaṅgaḥ):**

A **Sāttvika doer** acts without attachment to the fruits of their labor. They engage in their responsibilities with clarity and dedication, but without clinging to the outcomes. This detachment allows them to perform their duties with a sense of freedom, free from the distractions of personal gain or recognition.

However, freedom from attachment is not simply achieved by visiting holy places like Vrindavan, Rishikesh, or Kashi. One can still remain mentally attached to worldly concerns, even in such sacred spaces. Conversely, one can live at home and still remain detached by not interfering in the actions of others.

"जो जग में रहो तो ऐसे रहो,  
जो जल में कमल का फूल रहे।"

*"Live in the world in such a way,  
As the lotus flower lives in water."*

This wisdom is illustrated in Chapter 15, where **Sukhadev Muni** learns a valuable lesson from **King Janak**. King Janak instructs Sukhadev Muni to carry a pot of oil through Mithila city without spilling a single drop. Although the city was full of beauty, Sukhadev Muni's attention remained fixed on the oil, teaching him that even amidst worldly distractions, one can remain focused and unattached.

**2. Absence of Ego (anahaṁvādī):**

A **Sāttvika doer** does not act from a place of ego or self-importance. They do not see themselves as the sole cause of their actions or take pride in their achievements. Instead, they recognize that they are instruments of a higher power, performing their duties with humility and gratitude.

The bhajan by **Pathik Ji Maharaj** reminds us of the need to let go of ego:

"मैं नहीं, मेरा नहीं, यह तन किसी का है दिया।  
जो भी अपने पास है, वह धन किसी का है दिया ॥"

*"I am not, nothing is mine; this body has been given by someone.  
Whatever I have, all the wealth has been given by someone."*

This humility allows the Sāttvika doer to act selflessly, free from pride or personal attachment to their actions.

### 3. Steadfastness and Enthusiasm (dhr̥tyutsāhaṣamanvitaḥ):

A **Sāttvika doer** is characterized by their determination and enthusiasm. They approach their duties with energy and zeal, remaining committed to their responsibilities even in the face of obstacles. Their inner strength and perseverance allow them to stay focused and motivated, regardless of the challenges that arise.

The **12,000+ sevis (volunteers)** of the **Geeta Pariwar** exemplify this quality of the Sāttvika doer. Many of them work tirelessly and with joy, devoting their time and energy to selfless service without any expectation of reward, embodying the steadfastness and enthusiasm of the Sāttvika doer.

### 4. Equanimity in Success and Failure (siddhyasiddhyornirvikāraḥ):

One of the most defining traits of a **Sāttvika doer** is their ability to remain unaffected by the results of their actions. Whether they succeed or fail, they maintain a balanced and composed state of mind. This equanimity comes from their detachment from the outcomes, allowing them to act without the pressure of personal desires or expectations.

The **Sāttvika kartā** performs their duties with full dedication and enthusiasm but remains detached from the results. This detachment frees them from stress, anxiety, and disappointment, enabling them to act with a calm and clear mind. Their actions are rooted in **dharma** (righteousness) and directed toward the welfare of all, rather than personal gain.

A key aspect of the **Sāttvika mindset** is acknowledging that success is a result of divine grace. Equally important is understanding that even failure is part of **Bhagavān's** divine plan for eventual growth and well-being.

Adopting the qualities of a **Sāttvika doer** in daily life involves approaching tasks with dedication, humility, and perseverance while remaining detached from the results. Whether in work, relationships, or personal growth, acting with focus and equanimity leads to greater inner peace and fulfillment. This approach also nurtures a deeper connection to one's true self, rising above the limitations of ego and material desires.

18.27

**rāgī karmaphalaprepsuḥ(r), lubdho hiṃsātmako'śuciḥ,  
harṣaśokānvitaḥ(kh) kartā, rājasaḥ(ph) parikīrtitaḥ. 18.27**

The doer who is full of attachment, seeks the fruit of actions and is greedy, and who is oppressive by nature and of impure conduct, and who feels joy and sorrow, has been called Rājasika.

In this verse, **Śrī Bhagavān** describes the characteristics of a **Rājasika kartā** (one who acts under the influence of Rajas, the mode of passion). A Rājasika doer is driven by desire, attachment, and the pursuit of personal gain. They seek rewards, are deeply affected by the outcomes of their actions, and often act in ways that are harmful or selfish. This type of doer experiences emotional turbulence, marked by greed,

impurity, and emotional instability.

- **rāgī**: Full of attachment.
- **karmaphalaprepsuḥ**: Seeking the fruits of action (desiring rewards or results).
- **lubdhaḥ**: Greedy.
- **hiṃsātmakaḥ**: Violent or oppressive by nature.
- **aśuciḥ**: Impure in conduct.
- **harṣaśokānvitaḥ**: Subject to joy and sorrow based on success or failure.
- **rājasah parikīrtitaḥ**: This doer is called Rājasika (passionate and self-centered).

### 1. Attachment and Desire (rāgī, karmaphalaprepsuḥ):

The **Rājasika doer** is primarily driven by attachment and a strong desire for the fruits of their actions. They are focused on achieving rewards such as wealth, power, or recognition. This creates a restless and anxious mindset, as they constantly chase after personal ambitions. Their motivation is rooted in the outcome, not in the inherent value of the work.

### 2. Greed and Selfishness (lubdhaḥ):

Greed is a defining trait of the **Rājasika doer**. They are never content with what they have and always crave more. This unquenchable greed leads to selfish behavior, where their own interests are prioritized over others, often at the cost of fairness and morality. They focus on accumulating wealth, status, or other material gains, ignoring ethical considerations.

### 3. Oppression and Harm (hiṃsātmakaḥ):

The **Rājasika doer** can also be oppressive or violent by nature, using force, manipulation, or aggression to achieve their goals. They are driven by a strong desire to succeed, even if it harms others. This behavior stems from their single-minded focus on personal success, with little regard for the well-being of those around them.

Even causing emotional harm, such as through harsh words, is considered **hiṃsātmakaḥ**. For example, a hotel owner deducting Rs 20 from a waiter's salary to compensate for a broken glass, hurting the waiter's feelings unnecessarily, exemplifies this tendency.

### 4. Impurity in Conduct (aśuciḥ):

A **Rājasika doer** often engages in impure or unethical behavior. Their intense focus on personal gain leads them to compromise their moral values, behave dishonestly, or act in ways that are spiritually or ethically impure. Their actions are driven by selfish motives, disregarding the impact on others or the greater good.

### 5. Emotional Instability (harṣaśokānvitaḥ):

One of the hallmark traits of the **Rājasika doer** is their emotional instability. They experience swings between joy and sorrow based on the success or failure of their efforts. When they succeed, they feel excessive joy, and when they fail, they experience deep sorrow. This emotional fluctuation is a direct result of their attachment to the outcomes, making them vulnerable to the ups and downs of life.

The **Rājasika kartā** is deeply entangled in personal desires and attachments, which results in actions rooted in selfishness, greed, and harm. They are constantly driven by the need for success, recognition, or power, and their emotional state fluctuates wildly depending on whether they succeed or fail. Their actions may bring temporary achievements, but they do not lead to lasting peace or satisfaction.

In daily life, a **Rājasika doer** can be recognized by their intense focus on personal gain, attachment to

material success, and emotional volatility. This mode of action may bring short-term achievements, but it fails to provide inner peace or long-lasting fulfillment. To transcend this state, one must cultivate **Sāttvika karma**, where actions are performed selflessly, with purity, and without attachment to results. By doing so, one experiences greater inner stability, peace, and alignment with higher spiritual goals.

The journey from Rājasika tendencies to **Sāttvika karma** requires letting go of desires and acting with selflessness. This transition brings a deeper sense of fulfillment and a more balanced approach to life, where success and failure no longer dictate one's emotional state.

## 18.28

### **ayuktaḥ(kh) prākṛtaḥ(s) stabdhaḥ(ś), śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko'lasaḥ, viṣādī dīrghasūtrī ca, kartā tāmasa ucyate. 18.28**

Lacking piety and self-control, uncultured, arrogant, deceitful, inclined to rob others of their livelihood, slothful, despondent and procrastinating-such a doer is called Tāmasika.

In this verse, **Śrī Bhagavān** highlights the qualities of a **Tāmasika kartā** (a doer influenced by Tamas, the mode of ignorance). A **Tāmasika doer** is characterized by ignorance, laziness, arrogance, and deceit. Their actions are rooted in delusion and darkness, resulting in behavior that harms both themselves and others. Such a doer is irresponsible, unethical, and unwilling to exert effort, leading to actions that are either harmful or futile.

- **ayuktaḥ**: Lacking self-control and discipline.
- **prākṛtaḥ**: Uncultured or crude in behavior.
- **stabdhaḥ**: Arrogant and stubborn.
- **śaṭhaḥ**: Deceitful and dishonest.
- **naiṣkṛtikaḥ**: Inclined to rob or harm others for personal gain.
- **alasaḥ**: Lazy and unwilling to put in effort.
- **viṣādī**: Despondent and pessimistic.
- **dīrghasūtrī**: Procrastinating and delaying tasks unnecessarily.
- **kartā tāmasa ucyate**: Such a doer is called Tāmasika (ignorant and deluded).

#### **1. Lack of Self-Control (ayuktaḥ):**

A **Tāmasika doer** is undisciplined and unable to control their mind, senses, or desires. This lack of self-control leads to impulsive actions that are often disorganized and misguided. Such a doer may act without considering the appropriateness of the situation.

For example, visiting a place of mourning in fashionable clothes with overwhelming perfume or giving a lecture on **Vairagya** (renunciation) at a wedding are actions that demonstrate a lack of understanding of time and place, exemplifying **ayuktaḥ** behavior.

#### **2. Uncultured and Arrogant (prākṛtaḥ, stabdhaḥ):**

The **Tāmasika doer** behaves in an uncultured, crude manner, showing little regard for refinement, ethics, or moral values. Their arrogance makes them stubborn, resistant to advice, and unwilling to learn from their mistakes, often resulting in destructive or counterproductive outcomes.

The term "Indian" itself, as used by the British to describe the native populations of various regions, was meant to belittle them as uncultured (**prākṛtaḥ**). Therefore, we should continue to call our country **Bharat**, embracing our cultural richness and heritage, rather than accepting derogatory labels.

### 3. Deceitful and Harmful (śaṭhaḥ, naiṣkṛtikaḥ):

The **Tāmasika doer** is deceitful and dishonest, often resorting to lies, manipulation, or trickery to achieve personal goals. They are also inclined to harm others, either through direct actions like theft or through exploitation and unethical practices. Their selfish desire for personal gain leads to behavior that is harmful to others.

Even causing emotional harm through unwarranted harsh words can be considered **hiṃsātmakaḥ** (violent by nature). For example, a hotel owner deducting Rs 20 from a waiter's salary to compensate for a broken glass, thereby hurting the waiter's feelings, demonstrates this tendency.

### 4. Lazy and Unmotivated (alasaḥ):

Laziness is a defining trait of the **Tāmasika doer**. They are unwilling to put in the necessary effort to accomplish tasks and prefer to avoid responsibility altogether. This laziness often results in missed opportunities and unfulfilled potential, as they fail to act when required.

### 5. Pessimistic and Procrastinating (viṣādī, dīrghasūtrī):

The **Tāmasika doer** is prone to feelings of despondency and pessimism. They focus on the negative aspects of situations and tend to procrastinate, delaying tasks unnecessarily. This tendency to avoid action further hinders their progress and contributes to their lack of success, trapping them in a cycle of stagnation and failure.

The **Tāmasika kartā** is driven by ignorance, laziness, and negative emotions. Their actions are often selfish, deceitful, and undisciplined, leading to harmful consequences for themselves and others. They resist change and remain stuck in a cycle of ignorance and inaction, unwilling to improve or grow.

In daily life, a **Tāmasika doer** can be identified by their lack of motivation, their tendency to deceive or harm others, and their general unwillingness to take responsibility or put in effort. To rise above this state, one must cultivate awareness, discipline, and ethical behavior. Striving for **Sāttvika karma**, where actions are performed with selflessness, clarity, and purpose, leads to a more meaningful and harmonious life, free from the negativity and stagnation of Tamas.

This transformation from a **Tāmasika** to a **Sāttvika** state brings greater inner peace, fulfillment, and alignment with higher spiritual values, leading to progress on the path of righteousness.

18.29

**buddherbhedaṃ(n) dhṛteścaiva, guṇatastrividhaṃ(m) śṛṇu,  
procyamānamaśeṣeṇa, pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya. 18.29**

Now hear, Arjuna, the threefold division, based on the predominance of each Guṇa, of understanding (Buddhi) and firmness (Dhṛti), which I shall explain in detail, one by one.

In this verse, **Śrī Bhagavān** begins the explanation of how **Buddhi** (understanding) and **Dhṛti** (firmness or resolve) are influenced by the three **Guṇas**—**Sattva** (goodness), **Rajas** (passion), and **Tamas** (ignorance). He invites Arjuna to listen attentively as He explains how these qualities manifest differently in individuals based on the predominant **Guṇa** governing their nature.

- **buddherbhedaṃ**: The division of understanding (Buddhi).
- **dhṛteścaiva**: The division of firmness or resolve (Dhṛti).
- **guṇataḥ trividhaṃ śṛṇu**: Based on the three Guṇas, listen to the threefold classification.



- **procyamānam aśeṣeṇa**: I will explain this in full detail.
- **prthaktvena dhanañjaya**: One by one, separately, O Arjuna (Dhanañjaya).

**Śrī Bhagavān** emphasizes that both **Buddhi** (intellect) and **Dhṛti** (resolve or determination) are shaped by the interplay of the three **Guṇas**. Just as actions, desires, and knowledge are influenced by **Sattva**, **Rajas**, and **Tamas**, so too are one's ability to discern (Buddhi) and remain firm in purpose (Dhṛti). He sets the stage for a detailed discussion, revealing how each Guṇa affects these qualities.

### 1. **Buddhi (Understanding)**:

**Buddhi** represents the intellect or understanding, which guides one's decision-making process and ability to discern right from wrong, truth from falsehood. The clarity with which one perceives reality depends on the Guṇa dominating their mind. A **Sāttvika Buddhi** is pure, truthful, and aligned with higher principles. In contrast, a **Rājasic Buddhi** is clouded by desires and personal ambition, while a **Tāmasic Buddhi** is distorted by ignorance, delusion, and confusion.

### 2. **Dhṛti (Firmness or Resolve)**:

**Dhṛti** refers to one's ability to remain steadfast and determined in their pursuits. Like Buddhi, Dhṛti is also influenced by the **Guṇas**. **Sāttvika Dhṛti** is grounded in discipline and righteousness, allowing the individual to persevere in their efforts without being swayed by distractions. **Rājasic Dhṛti**, on the other hand, is driven by ambition, desire for rewards, and personal gain, while **Tāmasic Dhṛti** is characterized by stubbornness, laziness, or apathy.

Just as a strong intellect is essential, so too is a firm resolve. Without this determination, even noble intentions can falter, as illustrated in the following anecdote:

#### **Anecdote on Determination:**

Two friends were heading to school when they discovered that it was closed for the day due to mourning. Though it was not a happy occasion, both were excited about the unexpected holiday. One friend eagerly suggested, "Great! There's a cricket match today, and I wasn't planning to come to school anyway. Let's go straight to the stadium!" The second friend, however, hesitated and said, "I have a routine of visiting Hanuman Ji's temple every Tuesday." The first friend reminded him, "But today is Wednesday!" The second explained, "I missed my visit yesterday because I was sick, so I planned to go today after school. Now that we're free, I'll visit the temple first—I won't feel right otherwise."

The first friend tried to convince him, "Don't be silly! You won't get another chance to watch Kohli bat live! Hanuman Ji isn't going anywhere, but Kohli's innings might end. Let's visit the temple later." Despite the pressure, the second friend insisted, "No, I'll visit the temple first."

Eventually, they parted ways—one went to the stadium, and the other to the temple. The next day, they met again. "Where were you?" asked the first. "Where were you?" replied the second. The first friend explained, "I went to the stadium, but I felt guilty for stopping you from going to the temple. I ended up at the temple, waiting for you, and I didn't feel like watching the match anymore. So, where were you?" The second friend answered, "I started toward the temple, but halfway there, I felt bad for arguing, so I turned around and went to the stadium to find you. But you weren't there either."

In the end, both friends ended up in the place they initially resisted, illustrating how association can quickly influence our thinking and resolve. The friend who initially wanted to visit the temple had a **Sāttvika** mindset, while the other had a **Rājasic** perspective, but through their conversation, their roles reversed. This demonstrates how easily our determination can be influenced by those around us, reinforcing the importance of being mindful of the company we keep.

As **Lord Shiva** said to **Garuda Ji**:

"तबहि होइ सब संसय भङ्गा, जब बहु काल करिअ सत्सङ्गा॥"

"All doubts will only be dispelled when one engages in satsang (company of the wise) for a long time."

### The Role of Satsang and Patience:

This anecdote underscores the value of **satsang** (spiritual gatherings) and the importance of maintaining good company. While it's easy to assume that others' negative behaviors won't affect us, association often leads us down paths we might not have chosen on our own. Attending **satsang** regularly helps build both **Buddhi** (clarity of understanding) and **Dhṛti** (resolve) over time, but it requires patience and persistence.

### The Importance of Dhṛti:

**Dhṛti** is often translated as fortitude, steadfastness, or determination. It represents the mental and emotional strength needed to hold onto one's goals and principles, even in the face of difficulties or distractions. This virtue is not only about patience but about maintaining unwavering focus and commitment over time, regardless of the challenges faced.

A remarkable example of **Dhṛti** is **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, known as the Iron Man of India, who displayed immense determination in his efforts to unite India after independence. Despite facing enormous challenges in integrating over 500 princely states into the Indian Union, Patel's resolve never wavered. His steadfast determination ensured that he successfully overcame political resistance and logistical hurdles. His **Dhṛti** is also exemplified in an incident where, upon learning midway through a court defense speech that his wife had passed away, Patel continued his argument to completion without faltering.

Śrī Bhagavān is now preparing Arjuna to understand the influence of the **Guṇas** on **Buddhi** (intellect) and **Dhṛti** (resolve). By understanding these classifications, Arjuna can learn to cultivate the higher qualities of **Sattva** and rise above the limitations of **Rajas** and **Tamas**. This teaching serves as a reminder of the importance of introspection and self-awareness, as both understanding and determination are essential to spiritual progress.

Through careful reflection on the influence of the **Guṇas** on our thoughts and actions, we can consciously strive to develop **Sāttvika Buddhi** and **Dhṛti**, leading to greater clarity, strength, and alignment with our spiritual goals.

18.30

**pravṛttiṃ(ñ) ca nivṛttiṃ(ñ) ca, kāryākārye bhayābhaye,  
bandhaṃ(m) mokṣaṃ(ñ) ca yā vetti, buddhiḥ(s) sā pārtha sāttvikī. 18.30**

The intellect which correctly determines the paths of activity and renunciation, what ought to be done and what should not be done, what is fear and what is fearlessness, and what is bondage and what is liberation, that intellect is Sāttvika.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān outlines the qualities of a Sāttvika buddhi (an intellect influenced by Sattva). This type of intellect is marked by clarity, discernment, and the ability to make decisions rooted in truth and righteousness. It enables an individual to distinguish between what is beneficial and what is harmful, guiding them toward actions that foster spiritual growth and ultimate liberation.

- **pravṛttiṃ ca nivṛttiṃ ca:** The Sāttvika intellect understands when to act (pravṛtti) and when to refrain (nivṛtti). This discernment is crucial for making wise decisions in life, as one must recognize when engagement is necessary and when renunciation or restraint is more appropriate.



A shining example of this balance is Adi Shankaracharya Bhagavān, who, despite being a proponent of the Nivṛtti Mārga (the path of renunciation), actively engaged in worldly activities (Pravṛtti). His legacy has left a lasting imprint on India's spiritual, cultural, and social landscape. Jagadguru Shankaracharya established four mathas (spiritual monasteries) in the cardinal directions of India—Sringeri (South), Dwarka (West), Puri (East), and Jyotirmath (North)—to preserve and promote Vedic teachings. He also revived and standardized temple rituals and worship practices that had faded in some regions, ensuring that core Vedic traditions remained vibrant for future generations. Moreover, Jagadguru Shankaracharya revitalized key pilgrimage centers like Badrinath, Kedarnath, and Kashi (Varanasi), solidifying their importance in India's spiritual geography.

- **kāryākārye:** The Sāttvika intellect has the ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, what should be done (kārya) and what should be avoided (akārya). This clarity is guided by a strong sense of duty that aligns with dharma (righteousness).
- **bhayābhaye:** The Sāttvika intellect discerns what is truly to be feared and what can be approached without fear. It helps individuals recognize genuine dangers and steer clear of them, while also overcoming unnecessary fears that impede progress.

By cultivating a Sāttvika intellect, one is able to act with wisdom, free from confusion, and aligned with higher spiritual goals. The more one becomes attached to people, material things, and circumstances, the greater the chances of fear creeping in. True freedom from fear lies in surrendering to the Divine, as beautifully expressed in this chant:

सीता राम सीता राम, सीता राम कहिए।  
जहि विधि रखे राम, तहि विधि रहिए।

"Chant the name of Sita and Ram, Keep repeating Sita Ram.  
However Śrī Ram keeps you, In that way, you should remain."

When Śrī Raghunath (Ram) is with us, what is there to fear? Once we have surrendered ourselves at His feet, no fear can touch us:

हमारे साथ रघुनाथ, फिर किस बात का डरना।  
चरण में रख दिया जब माथ, फिर किस बात का डरना।

"With Śrī Raghunath by our side, what is there to fear?  
When we've placed our head at His feet, what is there to fear?"

Swami Ji has rightly pointed out that the more we rely on Kundali (horoscopes), Jyotishya Shastra (astrology), and Vastu Shastra (principles of architecture), the more fear takes hold of us. The deeper we depend on these external supports, the more we weaken our inner strength.

एक भरोसो एक बल, एक आस विश्वास,  
एक राम घनश्याम हित, छोड़ि सभी अवनाश।

"One trust, one strength, one hope, one faith—  
With devotion to Lord Ram and Lord Krishna, I have renounced all else."

In whom should we place our trust? In the name of Śrī Bhagavān and the sacred recitation of the Bhagavad Gita.

When Parashuram Ji first encountered Sri Ram and Lakshman, he was amazed to see them fearlessly

conversing with him, unlike other Kshatriya kings who would flee at the sight of Parashuram:

बिप्रबंस कै असि प्रभुताई।  
अभय होइ जो तुम्हहि डेराई॥

"Such is the majesty of the Brahmin lineage,  
That even those who fear you become fearless."

When Śrī Rama heard the last words of the vulture (Jatayu), He rescued him from the netherworld and purified his soul:

सुनि गीध वचन रघुपति के। उधरे पाताल पर सुधरे मति के॥  
राम दाम पति कर दान लेहु। खिच ही चाप मिटे सन्देहु॥

"Hearing the words of the vulture, Lord Rama, Rescued him from the netherworld and purified his mind.  
O Lord of the bow, accept my offering, And with a single pull of your bow, dispel all doubts."

Thus, devotion to the Divine erases fear and brings courage and clarity. When we place ourselves in the loving care of the Lord, we find strength in knowing that His protection is always with us. True fearlessness comes from surrendering to His will, where all doubts and fears vanish.

**bandhaṃ mokṣaṃ ca yā vetti:** The Sāttvika intellect understands the distinction between bondage (bandha) and liberation (mokṣa). It guides individuals toward actions and thoughts that free them from the cycle of karma, leading to spiritual liberation.

We all desire the four goals of life: Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kāma (pleasures), and Mokṣa (liberation). Yet, many seek Mokṣa without wanting to relinquish the pursuit of the first three. This verse highlights that a Sāttvika intellect, rooted in wisdom and clarity, discerns between what leads to bondage and what leads to liberation. It helps one act in alignment with universal truths rather than being swayed by fleeting desires or emotions.

1. **Discerning Right from Wrong:** A Sāttvika intellect can clearly differentiate between actions that must be performed and those that should be avoided. This discernment enables one to live a life of righteousness, steering away from actions driven by ego or selfish desires.
2. **Understanding Fear and Courage:** The hallmark of a Sāttvika buddhi is the ability to recognize what should truly be feared—such as actions that lead to moral degradation or spiritual downfall—and what should be faced with courage. This clarity fosters inner strength and mental peace.
3. **Guided by Liberation:** The ultimate aim of the Sāttvika intellect is to lead the individual toward liberation (mokṣa). It allows one to see beyond the illusions of worldly attachment and recognize what binds the soul. Through this understanding, the individual can choose actions that foster spiritual freedom.

This teaching encourages the cultivation of a Sāttvika buddhi, where decisions are made with wisdom, guided by righteousness, and focused on long-term spiritual growth rather than momentary satisfaction. It serves as a reminder that true success lies in actions that bring inner peace, clarity, and ultimate liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

**yayā dharmamadharmaṃ(ñ) ca, kāryaṃ(ñ) cākāryameva ca,  
ayathāvatprajānāti, buddhiḥ(s) sā pārtha rājasī. 18.31**

The intellect by which man does not truly perceive what is Dharma and what is Adharma, what ought to be done and what should not be done-that intellect is Rājasika.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān explains the characteristics of Rājasika buddhi (the intellect influenced by Rajas). The Rājasika intellect is clouded by desire, ambition, and ego, resulting in a distorted understanding of what is right (Dharma) and wrong (Adharma). Such an intellect struggles to make clear distinctions between proper and improper actions, often leading to confusion and misguided choices.

- **yayā dharmam adharmaṃ ca:** The Rājasika intellect fails to accurately discern between Dharma (righteousness) and Adharma (unrighteousness). This confusion arises due to the influence of personal desires, ambitions, and selfish motives, which obscure the mind's clarity.
- **kāryaṃ cākāryam eva ca:** It is unable to properly understand what should be done (kārya) and what should not be done (akārya). The Rājasika intellect is often driven by impulsive decisions focused on short-term benefits, leading to actions that are not in harmony with long-term well-being or ethical values.
- **ayathāvat prajānāti:** The person with a Rājasika intellect perceives things inaccurately or incompletely. Their understanding is distorted or biased by self-interest, preventing them from seeing the full truth of a situation.
- **buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī:** Such an intellect is classified as Rājasika, dominated by passion and the desire for personal success, recognition, or pleasure.

Key Points:

1. **Confusion in Moral Judgment (Dharmam adharmaṃ ca):** The Rājasika intellect is easily swayed by personal desires and ambitions, leading to a confused understanding of moral principles. Lacking clarity, it prompts actions driven by self-interest, often disregarding the broader ethical or spiritual consequences.
2. **Improper Discrimination (kāryaṃ cākāryam eva ca):** This intellect struggles to differentiate between what is truly beneficial and what is harmful. Decisions tend to be influenced by immediate gratification or short-term gains, which may seem advantageous in the moment but often result in long-term harm.
3. **Distorted Perception (ayathāvat prajānāti):** The Rājasika intellect views reality through the lens of ego and desire, causing misjudgment and partial understanding. It lacks the ability to see the bigger picture or consider the long-term consequences, leading to choices that further entangle one in attachment and suffering.

While a Rājasika buddhi may bring temporary success or material gain, it is not aligned with higher

spiritual principles or long-term well-being. It focuses on the external and the immediate, neglecting the deeper, inner aspects of life that lead to true fulfillment and peace.

In daily life, the Rājasika intellect manifests through decisions driven by ego, personal ambition, and a craving for recognition or reward. To transcend this, one must cultivate a Sāttvika buddhi, which is grounded in righteousness, selflessness, and clarity. This higher intellect allows for decisions that are aligned with long-term spiritual and ethical values, leading to lasting fulfillment and inner peace.

## 18.32

### **adharmam(n) dharmamiti yā, manyate tamasāvṛtā, sarvārthānviparītāmśca, buddhiḥ(s) sā pārtha tāmāsī. 18.32**

The intellect wrapped in ignorance, which imagines even Adharma to be Dharma, and sees all other things upside-down—that intellect is Tāmasika, Arjuna.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān describes the characteristics of a Tāmasika buddhi (the intellect influenced by Tamas). Such an intellect is veiled by ignorance and delusion, causing an inversion of truth. It mistakes unrighteousness (Adharma) for righteousness (Dharma), leading to distorted perceptions and misguided actions. A Tāmasika intellect, unable to discern reality clearly, makes decisions that perpetuate ignorance and suffering.

- **adharmam dharmam iti yā manyate:** A Tāmasika intellect is so clouded by ignorance that it confuses Adharma (unrighteousness) for Dharma (righteousness). Its distorted perception justifies harmful or immoral actions as virtuous, because it cannot recognize the true nature of right and wrong.

In today's world, we often encounter individuals who neither engage in meaningful spiritual practices nor respect those who do. They ridicule temple-goers and dismiss sacred practices like meditation or chanting, labeling them as unproductive or backward. They even use clever sayings to undermine the value of such practices:

**"माला फेरत जुग भया, फिरा न मन का फेर।  
कर का मनका डार दे, मन का मनका फेर।"**

*"Turning the beads, the whole world has grown old, but the mind's turning has not changed.  
Discard the beads in your hand, and turn the beads of your mind instead."*

Such individuals dismiss the sincere efforts of those who read the Gita or engage in rituals like Yajña, Shraddha, or Satsang, calling them a waste of time and resources. They say, "I will feed the poor instead of offering milk to Lord Shiva," but in reality, they do neither. In contrast, a person with a more evolved intellect offers both to the Divine and to those in need. The Tāmasika intellect, however, is filled with empty words, lacking meaningful action.

- **tamasāvṛtā:** This intellect is completely covered by Tamas—darkness, ignorance, and delusion. The person dominated by this intellect is disconnected from the light of knowledge and wisdom, living in a state of confusion.
- **sarvārthānviparītāmś ca:** A Tāmasika intellect sees everything in an inverted, upside-down manner. It perceives reality incorrectly, leading to decisions and actions based on false assumptions and misguided understanding.

- **buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī**: Such an intellect is classified as Tāmasika, characterized by ignorance, inertia, and delusion. It is unable to grasp higher truths and remains entrenched in confusion and darkness.

Key Points:

1. **Inability to Discern Right from Wrong (adharmam dharmam iti)**: A Tāmasika intellect cannot correctly distinguish between what is ethical and what is unethical. It may justify selfish, harmful, or even destructive actions as morally acceptable, leading to behaviors that deepen ignorance and suffering.
2. **Clouded by Ignorance (tamasāvṛtā)**: Dominated by Tamas, this intellect is entirely lacking in clarity and wisdom. Fear, confusion, and misunderstanding guide the actions of a person with such an intellect, causing them to act out of delusion rather than truth.
3. **Distorted Perception (sarvārthān viparītāmś ca)**: A Tāmasika intellect sees the world in a reversed manner—where truth is mistaken for falsehood, and falsehood is perceived as truth. This distorted view leads to poor decisions and actions that are out of alignment with reality and spiritual principles.

The Tāmasika buddhi represents the lowest form of understanding, where ignorance and delusion overshadow all aspects of perception. It leads to actions that are not only destructive to oneself but also harmful to others. Correcting this type of intellect is challenging because it justifies its errors, refusing to recognize its own misunderstandings.

In daily life, the Tāmasika intellect manifests when someone consistently misinterprets situations, justifies unethical behavior, or makes decisions based on ignorance and delusion. To overcome this, one must seek knowledge, engage in self-reflection, and turn to spiritual wisdom to break free from the darkness of Tamas. By cultivating a Sāttvika (pure and enlightened) intellect, one can realign their understanding with truth and righteousness, leading to clarity, right action, and spiritual growth.

## 18.33

**dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate, manaḥprāṇendriyakriyāḥ,  
yogenāvvyabhicāriṇyā, dhṛtiḥ(s) sā pārtha sāttvikī. 18.33**

The unwavering perseverance by which man controls through the Yoga of meditation the functions of the mind, the vital airs and the senses- that firmness, Arjuna, is Sāttvika.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān describes the quality of **Sāttvika dhṛti** (perseverance or firmness). This type of perseverance is steady, unwavering, and essential for controlling the mind, life forces, and senses through disciplined meditation and focused effort.

- **dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manaḥprāṇendriyakriyāḥ**: Śrī Bhagavān explains that Sāttvika perseverance (dhṛti) is the force through which one can control the mind (manaḥ), the vital airs or breath (prāṇa), and the senses (indriyakriyāḥ). This mastery over mental and sensory activities is crucial for maintaining inner balance and progressing on the spiritual path. It requires continuous effort to bring the fluctuations of the mind and senses under control.

As Patanjali Muni declared:

**"योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः"**

(Yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ)

*"Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind."*

The practice of **Yama** (ethical restraints), **Niyama** (personal observances), and **Asana** (physical postures) forms the foundation of internal discipline. **Pranayama** (breath control) is vital for calming the nervous system and gaining mastery over the mind. Through **Pratyahara** (withdrawal of the senses), one detaches from external stimuli and brings the senses under control. This prepares the practitioner for **Dharana** (focused concentration), **Dhyana** (continuous meditation), and ultimately **Samadhi** (complete absorption or enlightenment).

This eight-limbed path of **Ashtanga Yoga**, as described in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, guides the practitioner from external discipline to the highest state of spiritual union.

- **yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā**: The perseverance described here is sustained through unwavering Yoga practice (avyabhicāriṇyā), meaning it is steady and does not waver. This Yoga is not limited to physical postures but refers to deep, meditative discipline that strengthens one's focus and helps maintain undistracted attention on the spiritual goal.
- **dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī**: Śrī Bhagavān concludes by stating that such perseverance is Sāttvika in nature. Sāttvika qualities are pure, harmonious, and balanced, leading to spiritual growth and self-realization. This Sāttvika firmness is enduring and supports righteousness and inner tranquility.

Key Points:

1. **Control of Mind, Breath, and Senses (manaḥprāṇendriyakriyāḥ)**: Sāttvika perseverance involves mastery over the mind, breath, and senses. This control is crucial for maintaining inner harmony and discipline, both of which are necessary for spiritual progress. Without such firmness, the mind and senses can easily lead one astray into distractions, desires, and worldly entanglements.
2. **Unwavering Practice (yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā)**: The firmness characteristic of Sāttvika perseverance is built through consistent and unwavering Yoga practice. This includes mental and spiritual discipline that remains steady even in the face of challenges. Such perseverance requires dedication, and over time, it leads to mastery over one's thoughts and actions.
3. **Sāttvika Perseverance (dhṛtiḥ sā sāttvikī)**: Sāttvika perseverance is distinguished by balance, purity, and a higher purpose. Unlike Rājasika perseverance, which is restless and driven by ego, or Tāmasika perseverance, which is characterized by laziness or inertia, Sāttvika perseverance is rooted in self-control and inner peace. It leads to spiritual upliftment and aligns with the qualities of clarity, righteousness, and harmony.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of firm and steady perseverance, grounded in unwavering discipline and self-control. Sāttvika dhṛti enables mastery over the mind, breath, and senses, allowing one to remain balanced and focused on the path of spiritual growth. This perseverance is a key ingredient in the journey toward self-realization and inner peace.



**yayā tu dharmakāmārthān, dhṛtyā dhārayate'rjuna,  
prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī, dhṛtiḥ(s) sā pārtha rājasī. 18.34**

The perseverance (Dhṛti), however, by which the man seeking reward for his actions clutches with extreme fondness virtues, earthly possessions and worldly enjoyments—that perseverance (Dhṛti) is said to be Rājasika, Arjuna.

The perseverance by which a person, seeking the reward for their actions, clings with attachment to duty, desire, and wealth—that perseverance, Arjuna, is said to be Rājasika.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān explains the nature of **Rājasika dhṛti** (perseverance driven by Rajas). Unlike Sāttvika perseverance, which is rooted in selflessness and stability, Rājasika perseverance is fueled by a desire for worldly success, pleasures, and attachment to the outcomes of one's actions.

- **yayā tu dharmakāmārthān dhṛtyā dhārayate'rjuna:** Rājasika perseverance involves a person holding on tightly to three main pursuits in life: **Dharma** (virtue or duty), **Kāma** (desire or pleasure), and **Artha** (wealth or material success). While these pursuits are natural parts of life, the Rājasika individual becomes overly attached to them, driven by personal gain and ambition rather than balance and higher purpose.
- **prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī:** This type of perseverance is characterized by attachment (prasaṅgena) and an intense desire for the fruits of one's actions (phalākāṅkṣī). The person focused on Rājasika perseverance is motivated by the rewards—whether they be material wealth, sensory pleasures, or recognition—rather than by the intrinsic or selfless value of their efforts.
- **dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha rājasī:** Śrī Bhagavān concludes by identifying this perseverance as Rājasika in nature. It is driven by personal ambition and attachment to material outcomes, often leading to a restless mind, dissatisfaction, and stress when desires are not fulfilled.

**Key Points:**

1. **Attachment to Duty, Pleasure, and Wealth (dharmakāmārthān):** Rājasika perseverance compels a person to pursue duty, desires, and material wealth not for spiritual or higher purposes, but for the personal rewards they bring. This attachment can lead to an imbalance, where one becomes overly focused on personal gratification at the expense of inner peace and well-being.
2. **Desire for Rewards (phalākāṅkṣī):** Unlike Sāttvika perseverance, which is rooted in selflessness, Rājasika perseverance is driven by the desire for results. The individual becomes more concerned with what they will gain from their efforts than the value of the action itself. This often results in anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction, especially when the desired outcomes are not achieved.
3. **Rājasika Nature (dhṛtiḥ sā rājasī):** Rājasika perseverance is filled with restlessness, ambition, and attachment to worldly success. While it may lead to short-term achievements, it does not provide lasting fulfillment or peace. Instead, it often leads to overwork, burnout, and an insatiable desire for more.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān highlights the nature of Rājasika perseverance, which is focused on external rewards and attachment to outcomes. While this type of perseverance can drive material success, it ultimately leads to mental unrest and dissatisfaction because it is rooted in the pursuit of personal desires rather than inner tranquility or spiritual growth.

## 18.35

**yayā svapnaṃ(m) bhayaṃ(m) śokaṃ(m), viṣādaṃ(m) madameva ca,  
na vimuñcati durmedhā, dhṛtiḥ(s) sā pārtha tāmasī. 18.35**

The perseverance (Dhṛti) by which an evilminded person does not give up sleep, fear, anxiety, sorrow and vanity as well, that perseverance is Tāmasika.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān describes **Tāmasika dhṛti** (perseverance influenced by Tamas), which is marked by laziness, ignorance, and negativity. Unlike Sāttvika and Rājasika perseverance, Tāmasika perseverance is destructive, holding onto harmful emotions and habits rather than promoting growth or well-being.

- **yayā svapnaṃ bhayaṃ śokaṃ viṣādaṃ madameva ca:** The Tāmasika form of perseverance is characterized by attachment to negative mental states such as excessive sleep (svapna), fear (bhaya), grief (śoka), despondency (viṣāda), and arrogance or vanity (mada). Those with a Tāmasika mindset are trapped in these harmful tendencies and are unwilling or unable to free themselves from them.
- **na vimuñcati durmedhā:** A person with a dull or impure intellect (durmedhā) holds tightly to these negative states. Their perseverance is not directed toward personal or spiritual growth but rather clings to inertia, reinforcing self-destructive patterns of behavior. Such individuals lack the clarity or motivation to break free from these limiting tendencies.
- **dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī:** Śrī Bhagavān concludes by stating that this type of perseverance is Tāmasika. It is driven by ignorance, laziness, and attachment to suffering, leading to stagnation and preventing any meaningful progress, whether in material or spiritual life.

### Key Points:

1. **Attachment to Negative States (svapna, bhaya, śoka, viṣāda, mada):** Tāmasika perseverance manifests in the retention of negative emotions and habits like excessive sleep, fear, sorrow, and arrogance. People under its influence remain stuck in their mental darkness, unable or unwilling to seek solutions or rise above their struggles.
2. **Dull Intellect (durmedhā):** Those with Tāmasika perseverance lack mental clarity and wisdom. Their intellect is clouded by ignorance and laziness, preventing them from making decisions that would lead to personal growth, happiness, or spiritual advancement.
3. **Destructive Nature of Tāmasika Perseverance (dhṛtiḥ sā tāmasī):** Instead of encouraging progress or well-being, Tāmasika perseverance reinforces stagnation and suffering. It keeps individuals trapped in harmful patterns, preventing them from realizing their true potential or

breaking free from their limitations.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān highlights the destructive and self-limiting nature of Tāmasika perseverance. Unlike the Sāttvika form, which is aimed at growth and mastery, or the Rājasika form, driven by ambition, Tāmasika perseverance is mired in ignorance, inertia, and attachment to suffering. It serves as a warning against the dangers of clinging to negative mental and emotional states, urging individuals to cultivate clarity and rise above these destructive tendencies.

### **Tāmasika dhṛti can be understood through the following anecdote:**

A long time ago, there was a merchant traveling with twelve camels. As night fell, he reached a rest house (dharamshala) and spoke to the owner, saying, "I have a problem. I have twelve camels, but one of them chewed through the rope, and now I don't have anything to tie them with. I'm worried they might wander off while I sleep." The owner responded, "No worries, there is space outside. You can tie them there." The merchant, however, was still anxious and said, "What if they roam away? I can't afford to stay awake all night." Confused and unsure of what to do, he sought help.

The owner of the rest house suggested consulting his father, known for his wisdom. The father agreed to help, but on the condition that the merchant pay extra, to which the merchant agreed. The father then came up with a clever solution: "Pretend to tie the camels. Mimic the motions of tying a rope around their necks, even though you don't actually have a rope. Do this with all twelve camels."

The merchant followed the instructions, and surprisingly, all the camels sat down as if they were truly tied. Though only one camel was actually tied, the others behaved as though they were as well. The next morning, the camels were still sitting where the merchant had left them. The father then instructed the merchant, "Before you try to move them, pretend to untie them, just as you would normally do." The merchant did so, and as soon as he mimicked the action of untying the ropes, all the camels stood up.

Amazed, the merchant exclaimed, "You deserve more than three annas—I'll give you six! Tell me the secret! Did you chant some mantra?" The wise father replied, "No mantra was needed. The camels have been conditioned to believe they are tied when you pretend to bind them, just as they have been every day. They never questioned whether the rope was real or not because they've always assumed it's there."

This story highlights a profound truth about **dhṛti** and **dharna**—our mental conditioning often binds us more tightly than any physical rope ever could. Like the camels, we, too, tie ourselves to invisible ropes of desires, fears, and attachments. These unseen bindings shape our behavior, keeping us trapped in cycles of inertia and limitation. To break free from these invisible ropes, to direct our perseverance toward a Sāttvika (pure, balanced) path, one must strive with both body and mind.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the characteristics of **Tāmasika dhṛti**, which is rooted in ignorance and negativity. Tāmasika perseverance traps individuals in a cycle of fear, sorrow, laziness, and attachment, preventing them from progressing on the path of self-improvement and spiritual growth. Just as the camels remained tied by an imaginary rope, Tāmasika dhṛti binds individuals in self-imposed limitations, inhibiting them from reaching their true potential.

Unless we tie ourselves to the Sāttvika rope of clarity and balance, we cannot attain the decisive intellect (Nischayatmaka Buddhi) required to walk the path of liberation. True freedom and progress come only when we untie these imaginary ropes and align our perseverance with higher spiritual principles.

The session concluded with a soulful rendition of *Harisharanam*, leaving everyone deeply moved and reflective.

## Question and Answer Session

**Purnima Grover Ji**

**Q:** It is often said that reading scriptures cleanses our sins. However, the Bhagavad Gītā mentions:

"*gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ*" (4.17)

Does this mean our sins are truly cleansed?

**A:** The phrase '*gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ*' and the cleansing of sins (*Pap Nash*) are not directly related.

The meaning of '*gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ*' is that the results or consequences of actions are difficult to predict or fully understand. It highlights the complexity and unpredictability of karma—when and how the fruits of one's actions will manifest is beyond human comprehension.

However, this doesn't mean that sins cannot be cleansed. The cleansing of sins depends on the nature of accumulated karma (*Prarabdha*), which can be of two types:

1. **Madhyam (Moderate):** This type of karma can be balanced or neutralized by performing good deeds, spiritual practices, or acts of penance.
2. **Tivra (Severe):** Severe karma must be endured, and no amount of good deeds can completely erase it.

The complexity lies in discerning which karma is moderate and which is severe, which is why the workings of karma are considered *gahana* (profound and intricate).

**Dr. Rajkumar Sharma Ji**

**Q:** What is the difference between Bhakti Yoga (the path of devotion) and Karma Yoga (the path of selfless action)?

**A:** The Bhagavad Gītā outlines four main paths of Yoga: **Jnana Yoga** (the path of knowledge), **Bhakti Yoga** (the path of devotion), **Karma Yoga** (the path of selfless action), and **Dhyana Yoga** (the path of meditation).

Of these, two—**Jnana Yoga** and **Bhakti Yoga**—are central to its teachings. **Karma Yoga** is closely linked to **Bhakti Yoga**, as both involve action (*Kriya*), while **Dhyana Yoga** is often considered part of **Jnana Yoga**, as both emphasize stillness and contemplation (*akriyata*). These paths can be grouped into:

- **Pravrutti Marga:** The path of action, which includes **Karma Yoga** and **Bhakti Yoga**.
- **Nivrutti Marga:** The path of renunciation, focused on meditation and knowledge, as seen in **Jnana Yoga** and **Dhyana Yoga**.

**Bhakti Yoga** revolves around **nine forms of devotion (*Navavidha Bhakti*) and is rooted in love and surrender to God**. The practitioner offers their heart, emotions, and life in service to the Divine, seeking to deepen their relationship with God.

**Karma Yoga**, on the other hand, **involves performing actions selflessly, without attachment to the results**. The Karma Yogi views themselves as a mere instrument, with God being the true doer of all actions. They perform their duties with dedication but offer the fruits of their work entirely to the Divine.

The primary distinction between these two paths lies in the relationship to the outcome:

- In **Karma Yoga**, the practitioner completely detaches from the results of their actions, offering everything to God without personal desire.
- In **Bhakti Yoga**, while the devotee offers their devotion to God, there may still be an emotional attachment to the outcome of their worship or desires for divine blessings. The emotional connection in Bhakti Yoga can sometimes make it harder to relinquish the desire for certain results.

In essence, **Karma Yoga** emphasizes selfless action, while **Bhakti Yoga** focuses on devotion and emotional connection to the Divine. Both, however, lead the seeker toward spiritual growth and eventual liberation.



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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.

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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