

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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

## Understanding True Renunciation and the Secret of Inner Freedom — A Clear Exploration of Sannyāsa and Tyāga

Chapter 18 of Bhagavad Gītā is **Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yoga - The Yoga of Liberation through Renunciation**

The session commenced with the auspicious ritual of lighting the lamp and offering heartfelt prayers to the Divine.

**Vāsudevasutaṁ Devaṁ, Kaṁsacāṇūramardanam  
Devakīparamānandaṁ, Kṛṣṇaṁ Vande Jagadgurum**

*(Salutations to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the divine son of Vasudeva, the slayer of Kaṁsa and Cāṇūra, the source of supreme joy for Devakī, and the universal Guru.)*

Chapter 18 of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā — **Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yoga** is the concluding chapter, which comprises **78 ślokas**, all composed in **Triṣṭubh Chandas**.

Before delving into the detailed discussions, we will explore a summary to understand the core message of this chapter. The opening verse records Arjuna's sincere inquiry to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and what follows is the divine response — 76 ślokas of profound wisdom imparted by Bhagavān. The chapter concludes with Sanjaya's moving words, describing his ecstasy at witnessing this sacred dialogue.

Being the longest chapter of the Gītā, **Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yoga** offers a wide-ranging review of the entire text, highlighting key principles with crystal clarity and final emphasis. The chapter primarily unravels the subtle nuances of **Sannyāsa** (renunciation) and **Tyāga** (abandonment of the desire for fruits of actions) — central themes for spiritual seekers.

In the first śloka, Arjuna seeks to understand the distinction between **Sannyāsa** and **Tyāga**. Bhagavān, with great compassion, unfolds the differences:

**Sannyāsa** implies the renunciation of all actions, whereas **Tyāga** refers to relinquishing attachment to the fruits of actions. Both concepts, though rooted in the idea of abandonment, represent distinct approaches to life.

A **Sannyāsī** withdraws from worldly engagements, choosing a life of **Sādhanā** and contemplation, having renounced all worldly karmas. In contrast, a **Tyāgī** continues to perform worldly duties but remains untouched by desire for personal gain or reward.

Bhagavān further clarifies that certain actions — **Yajña** (sacrifice), **Dāna** (charity), and **Tapah** (penance) — must never be abandoned. These are fundamental duties for every human being to be performed selflessly and without expectation.

True renunciation lies not in giving up action, but in giving up attachment to results. Even among **Sannyāsīs**, the **Mahātmās** and the enlightened souls, though externally withdrawn, continue performing actions prescribed by **Śāstra**, free from selfish desire. This is the highest form of **Karma Sannyāsa** — to renounce the attachment, not the action.

If such evolved souls, having transcended the **Guṇas** (modes of material nature), continue to act selflessly, why should an ordinary person shy away from fulfilling their essential duties? These are not optional, but obligatory. Performing **Yajña**, **Dāna**, and **Tapah** purifies the heart, dissolves negative tendencies, and gradually prepares one for the divine embrace of **Paramātmā**.

A question worth contemplating is: Why do some people act selflessly, while others remain entangled in expectations? Bhagavān, with precise analysis, explains the factors that shape human action:

- Three motivations that drive action.
- Three influences that shape the outcome.

Each of these is governed by the interplay of the three **Guṇas** — **Sattva** (purity), **Rajas** (passion), and **Tamas** (inertia). Bhagavān explains that these subtle forces dictate human tendencies and bind the results of action.

One of the most profound truths revealed is that an ignorant person, under the sway of ego, perceives themselves as the **Kartā** (doer). In contrast, the wise, those whose vision has matured, know that they are neither the doer nor the enjoyer. They perform all actions as instruments of Bhagavān, offering the actions and their fruits at His divine feet, thereby remaining unbound.

The chapter further explores the threefold classifications of **Dharma**, **Jñāna** (knowledge), and the fivefold factors that influence every action's outcome. The nature of action, its motivation, and its fruit are all intricately woven with the **Guṇas**, and even **Buddhi** (intellect) is molded by these same forces. The **Sāttvika Jñānī**, through a purified intellect, remains firmly established in knowledge and bliss.

Bhagavān also sheds light on the path of **Bhakti** and **Śraddhā** (faith). **Bhakti** is the most powerful and direct path to union with **Paramātmā**. Time and again, Bhagavān extols the transformative strength of devotion. Those whose hearts are filled with loving surrender are unconditionally protected by Him.

This culminating truth is declared in the most famous verse:

**sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja |**  
**ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ || 18.66 ||**

"Abandon all varieties of dharmas and simply surrender unto Me alone. I shall liberate you from all sinful reactions; do not fear."

Such is the power of **Bhakti** — even the greatest of sinners are uplifted when they surrender at the feet of Bhagavān.

Enlightened by this divine wisdom, Arjuna's heart is finally free of all doubts. With clarity and resolve, he declares:

**arjuna uvāca |**  
**naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā tvat-prasādān mayācyuta |**  
**sthito'smi gata-sandehaḥ kariṣye vacanaṁ tava || 18.73 ||**

"O Infallible One, by Your grace my illusion has been dispelled, and I am situated in knowledge. I am now free from doubts, and I shall act according to Your instructions."

Thus, transformed and empowered, Arjuna surrenders to the divine will, ready to act as per Bhagavān's guidance.

Finally, the chapter closes with Sanjaya's deeply moving declaration. Witnessing the sacred dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, his heart is overwhelmed with joy and reverence. The divine vision of **Viśvarūpa** (the cosmic form) and the wisdom imparted have left him in blissful ecstasy.

He concludes with profound certainty:

**yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanur dharaḥ |**  
**tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama || 18.78 ||**

"Wherever there is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Master of all Yog, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will certainly be unending opulence, victory, prosperity, and righteousness. Of this, I am certain."

Thus, Sanjaya affirms that where truth and divinity dwell, there victory and righteousness will surely prevail. **Darkness will always be dispelled by the light of Bhagavān's wisdom and grace.**

## 18.1

**arjuna uvāca**  
**sannyāsasya mahābāho, tattvamicchāmi veditum,**  
**tyāgasya ca hṛṣīkeśa, pṛthakkeśiniśūdana. 18.1**

Arjuna said:

O mighty-armed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, O inner controller of all, O Slayer of Keśi, I wish to know severally the truth of Samnyāsa as also of Tyāga.

Arjuna sought a clear understanding from Bhagavān on the terms **Sannyāsa** and **Tyāga**. Both words denote renunciation, yet their application and depth differ. Arjuna wished to know this distinction precisely.

**Sannyāsa** refers to the renunciation of **karma** — the complete relinquishment of actions, while **Tyāga** refers to the renunciation of attachment and desire for the **karmaphala** — the fruits of

actions. Though both imply an act of abandonment, the subtle difference lies in what is being renounced — the action itself or the attachment to its result.

In the previous chapter — **Shraddhā-Traya-Vibhāga-Yoga** — Bhagavān had elaborated on the threefold nature of **Shraddhā** (faith): **Sāttvik**, **Rājasic**, and **Tāmasic**, explaining how the quality of one's faith influences all actions. The concluding śloka of that chapter emphasised:

**ásraddhayā hutam̐ dattam̐ tapas taptam̐ kṛtam̐ ca yat |  
asad ity ucyate pārtha na ca tat pretya no iha || 17.28||**

*"O son of Pṛithā, whatever acts of sacrifice, charity, or penance are done without faith are called 'Asat'—they are useless both in this world and the next."*

Thus, any action — be it **Yajña** (sacrifice), **Tapah** (penance), or **Dāna** (charity) — performed without **Shraddhā** holds no spiritual significance. These actions, when carried out with faith, purify the mind and pave the path towards **Mokṣa**.

Being an intelligent seeker, Arjuna was not content with partial understanding. He desired complete clarity, for only right knowledge can guide one unerringly on the path to ultimate bliss. His goal was liberation, and for that, he sought precise, conclusive instructions from **Puruṣottama** Himself, knowing well that Śrī Krishna alone could provide true guidance.

Similarly, for every aspirant, it is not enough to merely study or preach the Gītā. **One must strive to live the teachings of the Gītā in daily life** — a message beautifully captured in the motto of **Gītā Parivār**:

**"Learn Gītā, Teach Gītā, and Live Gītā."**

Arjuna sought to internalise the wisdom imparted by Śrī Krishna and make it his life's compass. In the same spirit, we too must aspire to transform the **Bhagavad Gītā** from mere knowledge into a lived reality

However, this transformation requires more than understanding dictionary meanings. Profound concepts like **Shraddhā**, **Sannyāsa**, and **Tyāga** demand deep contemplation. Without preparation, if one rushes towards **Sannyāsa**, mistaking it to be the shortcut to **Īśvara**, the effort will not bear fruit. One must undergo disciplined training — mentally, emotionally, and spiritually — before walking the path of renunciation.

This journey unfolds through the four stages of life, the **Āśrama Dharma**:

- **Brahmacharyāśrama** – The stage of disciplined student life.
- **Gṛhasthāśrama** – The stage of household responsibilities.
- **Vānaprasthāśrama** – The stage of gradual withdrawal from worldly duties.
- **Sannyāsa** – The stage of complete renunciation.

Renunciation is not a one-time act, but a progressive purification of the mind and mastery over the senses. Each stage, lived sincerely and dutifully, prepares the aspirant for the next. Just as a person cannot become a scientist overnight, but must first complete formal education — B.Sc, M.Sc, Doctorate — so too, each stage of life must be completed with awareness and commitment before embracing **Sannyāsa**.

In the opening verse of this chapter, Śrī Krishna is addressed as **Keśiniṣūdana** — the slayer of the

demon **Keśi**. The **Keśi-vadha** episode holds symbolic meaning: the wild horse-like **Keśi** represents the mind, which often gallops uncontrollably in all directions. Just as Śrī Krishna tamed and destroyed Keśi, so too must one subdue the restless mind through devotion and self-discipline. Arjuna, aware of his wandering thoughts and lingering doubts, sought the same divine intervention to still his mind.

Each word Arjuna uses reflects his depth of thought. He specifically asks for the distinction between **Sannyāsa** and **Tyāga**, even though both imply relinquishment. In **Sannyāsa**, it is the action that is renounced; in **Tyāga**, the desire for its outcome. This nuanced difference holds the key to spiritual maturity.

He also addresses Śrī Krishna as **Hṛṣikeśa**, the Master of the senses — for true renunciation begins with mastery over the senses and culminates in mind control.

Throughout the **Bhagavad Gītā**, references to **Sannyāsa** and **Tyāga** appear repeatedly. For instance:

#### **Chapter 5:**

**sarva-karmāṇi manasā sannyasyāste sukhaṁ vaśī |  
nava-dvāre pure dehī naiva kurvan na kārayan || 5.13||**

*"Renouncing all actions mentally, the self-controlled, embodied being resides happily in the city of nine gates, neither acting nor causing action."*

#### **Chapter 9:**

**śubhāśubha-phalair evaṁ mokṣyase karma-bandhanaiḥ |  
sannyāsa-yoga-yuktātmā vimukto mām upaiśyasi || 9.28||**

*"By dedicating all your actions to Me, you will be freed from the bondage of good and bad results. Absorbed in renunciation and devotion, you shall attain Me."*

#### **Chapter 4:**

**tyaktvā karma-phala-āsaṅgaṁ nitya-tṛpto nirāśrayaḥ |  
karmaṇy abhipravṛtto 'pi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ || 4.20||**

*"Abandoning attachment to the results, ever content and independent, though fully engaged in action, such a person does nothing at all."*

#### **Chapter 12:**

**atha etad api aśakto 'si kartuṁ mad-yogam āśritaḥ |  
sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ tataḥ kuru yatātmavān || 12.11||**

*"If you are unable to perform actions for My sake, then, with self-control, renounce the desire for the fruits of your actions."*

In **Chapter 18**, Bhagavān offers a consolidated, panoramic view of these terms, rather than isolated references, the ideas are integrated and woven together with clarity.

It is much like observing each leaf of a tree individually, versus beholding the entire tree in its full splendour. Earlier chapters revealed individual glimpses; Chapter 18 presents the complete, harmonious vision.

Indeed, **Adhyāya 18** is the **Saṅgraha** — the grand summary — of all the preceding teachings. It encapsulates the essence of the Gītā: **a roadmap of spiritual practices, paths, and principles that guide a seeker towards eternal truth.**

And the ultimate conclusion is clear — it is **Bhakti** alone that draws one closest to Bhagavān. HE is the eternal protector, creator, and shelter of all beings. Therefore, cultivating unwavering **Bhakti** at His lotus feet is the highest and most essential path for every seeker.

## 18.2

### **śrībhagavānuvāca** **kāmyānāṃ(ñ) karmaṇāṃ(n) nyāsaṃ(m), sannyāsaṃ(ñ) kavayo viduḥ,** **sarVākarmaphalatyāgaṃ(m), prāhustyāgaṃ(m) vicakṣaṇāḥ. 18.2**

Śrī Bhagavān said :

Some sages understand Samnyāsa as the giving up of all actions motivated by desire; and the wise declare that Tyāga consists in relinquishing the fruit of all actions.

Śrī Krishna explained that the renunciation of all actions driven by desire is referred to as **Kāmya-Karma**.

The wise understand **Sannyāsa** to mean the abandonment of all actions performed with desire, while **Tyāga** refers to the relinquishment of attachment to the fruits of action.

**Kāmya-Karma** encompasses all actions undertaken with the intent of securing worldly success, prosperity, high status, power, and the enjoyment of various pleasures. Even the longing for **Svarga** (heaven) — the celestial realm of the **Devatās** — stems from **Kāmya-Karma**. When one worships **Bhagavān** solely for the purpose of attaining **Svarga**, that too is classified as **Kāmya-Karma**.

However, Śrī Krishna guides us toward a far higher objective. He instructs the seeker to worship **Bhagavān** not for the fleeting pleasures of **Svarga**, but for eternal peace and bliss. **Svarga** is, after all, merely a place of refined sensual enjoyment, reserved for the **Devatās**. Once the merit (**punya**) accumulated through righteous actions is exhausted, the **Jīva** must return to the mortal realm and resume the endless cycle of birth and death.

Thus, **the attainment of Svarga is not the ultimate goal. A true seeker aspires to merge into the infinite, unbroken flow of Bhagavān's cosmic energy — to become free from the cycle of Saṃsāra and experience oneness with the Supreme.**

Any action performed with desire, no matter how noble, falls under **Kāmya-Karma**. Even **Yajña** (sacrificial offerings), **Dāna** (charity), and **Tapah** (austerity), though classified as **Sāttvika Karmas**, lose their purity if they are done with personal desires or expectations in mind.

A **Sannyāsī** has relinquished all desires. Such a person abandons not only the fruits of action but also the sense of doership. Whatever actions a **Sannyāsī** performs are offered at the feet of Bhagavān, as an instrument of His will. There is neither the ego of being the **Kartā** (doer) nor the claim of being the **Kartu** (causer). Actions flow through them as divine expressions, free from personal motive.

Thus, there exists a clear distinction between these two perspectives: one that seeks outcomes and one that renounces them. In the coming śloka, Śrī Krishna will illuminate this topic further, offering

precise and decisive guidance on the matter.

For an ordinary person, performing actions without attachment to the result is indeed a daunting challenge. However, through sustained practice and by cultivating inner purity, the seeker can gradually move towards this ideal. **The source of strength for such transformation is unwavering bhakti — the unshakable devotion to Bhagavān — which alone purifies the heart and grants the resolve to act selflessly.**

### 18.3

#### **tyājyaṃ(n) doṣavadityeke, karma prāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ, yajñadānatapaḥkarma, na tyājyamiti cāpare. 18.3**

Some wise men declare that all actions contain a measure of evil, and are, therefore, worth giving up; while others say that acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not to be shunned.

There exists a longstanding debate among the learned regarding the role of **Karma** in spiritual evolution. Some scholars are of the view that all forms of **Karma** ought to be abandoned, as they bind the individual to worldly entanglements. Others, however, firmly uphold that acts such as **Yajña** (sacrifice), **Dāna** (charity), and **Tapah** (austerity) — which are deeply rooted in the **Vedic** tradition — must never be forsaken, for they form an essential part of righteous living.

This divergence of thought stems from two prominent philosophical schools:

- **1. Sāṅkhya Darśana**
- **2. Mīmāṃsā Darśana**

The adherents of **Sāṅkhya** philosophy assert that all actions — even those prescribed in the Vedas, such as **Yajña**, **Dāna**, and **Tapah** — should ultimately be renounced. They argue that every action, whether performed knowingly or unknowingly, is tainted by some form of **Himsā** (violence).

For example, traditional **Yajñas** often involved animal sacrifices, and even in the case of fire sacrifices (**Homa**), it is likely that tiny airborne creatures might inadvertently perish in the flames. Thus, the **Sāṅkhya** thinkers conclude that the very act of engaging in **Karma** contradicts the principle of **Ahimsa**, and therefore, all **Karma** should be abandoned as swiftly as possible. Their approach can be summed up in the proverb: "**Na rahega bāns, na bājegī bānsurī**" — if the root cause of bondage (action) is removed, the cycle of suffering ceases altogether.

Further, they maintain that **Karma** fosters **Kāma** (desire), which in turn binds the soul to the endless cycle of **Janma-Mṛtyu** (birth and death). Thus, only the bare minimum actions required for the maintenance of the body should be retained; all else must be relinquished.

On the other hand, the **Mīmāṃsakas** strongly advocate the performance of **Yajña**, **Dāna**, and **Tapah**, arguing that these are not merely ritualistic obligations but profound means for inner purification and spiritual elevation. According to them, these actions are an inseparable part of **Dharma**, and abandoning them would deprive the seeker of a vital path toward transcendence.

In fact, the **Mīmāṃsā** school highlights an important principle of **Vedic** interpretation: Every **Śāstra** provides both general and specific instructions. When a specific command exists, it overrides the general one. In the absence of specific guidance, the general instruction holds authority.

From this standpoint, the **Mīmāṃsakas** maintain that the **Vedas** specifically prescribe **Yajña**, **Dāna**,

and **Tapah** as sacred duties for the seeker, and therefore, these must not be forsaken under the pretext of non-violence or detachment.

The **Sāṅkhya** school, however, counters this argument by quoting the universal maxim: "**Ahimsā Sarva Bhūtāni**" — Non-violence toward all living beings, which serves as a general directive across all spiritual practices. Using this, they assert that if even an insect is harmed during **Yajña**, it violates the higher ethical principle of **Ahimsa**, and hence, the ritual should be avoided.

The **Mīmāṃsakas**, in turn, maintain that when the **Vedas** explicitly enjoin the performance of **Yajña**, such specific instruction must take precedence over general ethical considerations, including **Ahimsa**, within the ritual context.

Thus, this profound philosophical discourse illustrates the depth of **Panditvāda** — the refined art of scriptural reasoning — as scholars from both schools earnestly seek to reconcile **Vedic Dharma** with the ultimate goal of **Mokṣa**.

## 18.4

### **nīscayaṃ(m) śṛṇu me tatra, tyāge bharatasattama, tyāgo hi puruṣavyāghra, trividhaḥ(s) samprakīrtitaḥ. 18.4**

Of Samnyāsa and Tyāga, first hear My conclusion on the subject of renunciation (Tyāga), Arjuna; for renunciation, O tiger among men, has been declared to be of three kinds—Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika.

#### **Puruṣavyāghra** – The Tiger Among Men

##### Bhagavān’s Teachings on Renunciation

In this verse, Bhagavān Śrī Krishna addresses Arjuna as “**Puruṣavyāghra**” — the Tiger among men, and imparts the true meaning of **Tyāga** (renunciation). In the previous verse, we explored various views on renunciation. Now, we will delve into what renunciation means from Śrī Krishna’s perspective.

Renunciation is not a one-time or temporary action; it is a profound, deeply rooted process. It requires immense motivation and determination to embody its true essence. To renounce something means to entirely abandon it — heart, mind, and senses. There should be no lingering attachment, no trace of longing for the object of renunciation. Therefore, before renouncing anything, its impact on the self must be thoroughly analyzed and understood.

Actions such as **Yajña** (sacrifice), **Dāna** (charity), and **Tapah** (austerity) must be performed with the intention of renouncing their fruits (**Tyāga**). Such actions should always be undertaken under the **guidance of a Guru**, who ensures that they are carried out with the right understanding and dedication.

Śrī Krishna explains that renunciation can be classified into three types, which He elaborates upon in verses 7, 8, and 9 of this chapter. Each type of renunciation is connected to the level of attachment one holds to worldly desires.

Addressing Arjuna as “**Puruṣavyāghra**” (the Tiger among men), Śrī Krishna highlights that true renunciation is no easy feat. It is not a practice for the faint-hearted or the weak-willed. Just as a tiger

is powerful and brave, so too must one possess immense inner strength, courage, and fortitude to practice Tyāga sincerely.

As an old saying goes:

**“Tir tupak se jo laṛe, so to śhūr na hoy;  
Māyā taji bhakti kare, sūr kahāve soye.”**

*“One who fights with arrows and guns is not truly brave;  
Only the one who renounces all Māyā (material attachments) and engages in devotion to Paramātmā  
is worthy of being called courageous.”*

This powerful verse reminds us that the real battle is not fought on a battlefield, but within the mind. The war is against desires and temptations. One should strive to win this inner battle through renunciation and devotion.

Bhagavān also outlines some of the essential prerequisites for **Tyāga**:

- True renunciation is not possible without the purification of past Karma, proper education, and understanding.
- Renunciation is the cornerstone of higher spiritual life.
- To attain something greater, one must be willing to give up something lesser.

In other words, **lower desires must be renounced to make room for higher aspirations**. By letting go of mundane, worldly actions, we make space to dedicate ourselves to higher duties and move towards enlightenment.

Ultimately, **renunciation is the key to spiritual evolution**. It allows the individual to rise above the material and to seek the eternal, leading them towards the supreme goal of **Mokṣa**.

## 18.5

**yajñadānatapaḥkarma, na tyājyaṃ(ñ) kāryameva tat,  
yajño dānaṃ(n) tapaścaiva, pāvanāni manīṣiṇām. 18.5**

Acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not worth giving up; they must be performed. For sacrifice, charity and penance—all these are purifiers to the wise men.

Bhagavān Śrī Krishna gives His definitive verdict on the subject of renunciation (**Tyāga**). He states clearly:

Actions based on **Yajña** (sacrifice), **Dāna** (charity), and **Tapa** (penance) should never be abandoned. These actions, even when performed by the wise, have a purifying effect.

Such acts of helping others, serving others, and sacrificing without any selfish motive go a long way in purifying the heart. When performed with **Sraddhā** (devotion or faith), these actions effortlessly cleanse the heart.

**When the heart is purified, all material desires are naturally eradicated. A desireless heart is the state of true purity.**

The soul, by its nature, is free from desires. **When the heart is devoid of desires, it naturally**

**becomes aligned with the eternal, leading to a state of divine communion.**

Even if one of the three — **Yajña**, **Dāna**, or **Tapa** — is performed properly, good results are inevitable. These actions yield spiritual benefits when carried out with dedication and purity of heart.

Bhagavān further emphasizes that we should never renounce actions that benefit humanity. He advises us to perform these **karmas** (actions) with full devotion, without attachment to the fruits that arise from them. By doing so, we begin to orient our minds towards spirituality.

To illustrate this, compare our spiritual journey to the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. A caterpillar remains inside its cocoon during its gestation period. When the time is right, it emerges as a beautiful butterfly.

Similarly, we are like caterpillars, remaining bound within the cocoon of worldly attachments and desires. Our cocoon is made of the impurities in our minds and the attachment to material pleasures. Once we purify our hearts through the practices of **Yajña** (selfless action), **Dāna** (charity without ego, with compassion), and **Tapa** (austerity without attachment to illusion or **Māyā**), we emerge from this cocoon and experience the bliss of spiritual freedom.

Thus, Bhagavān emphasizes that these actions of selfless service, charity, and penance should never be abandoned. They are the very means through which we purify our hearts and progress towards spiritual liberation.

## 18.6

**etānyapi tu karmāṇi, saṅgaṃ(n) tyaktvā phalāni ca,  
kartavyānīti me pārtha, niścitaṃ(m) matamuttamam. 18.6**

Hence these acts of sacrifice, charity and penance, and all other acts of duty too, must be performed without attachment and expectation of reward : this is My well-considered and supreme verdict, Arjuna.

Bhagavān told Arjuna that His definitive and supreme verdict is that the three duties — **Yajña** (sacrifice), **Dāna** (charity), and **Tapa** (penance) — should be performed with utmost sincerity and devotion, without any attachment to the results of these actions. Performing these karmas without attachment leads to the cultivation of a pure mind.

A pure mind is free from any **Chitta-Mala** (mental impurities). This can only be achieved when there is no attachment whatsoever to the results of one's actions. With **Chitta-Śuddhi** (purification of the mind), one can aspire to attain the higher abode of Bhagavān.

As stated in the Bhagavad Gita (4.38):

**na hi jñānena sadṛśaṃ pavitram iha vidyate |  
tatsvayam yogasaṃsiddhaḥ kālenātmani vindati ||**

*"In this world, there is nothing as purifying as divine knowledge. One who has attained purity of mind through prolonged practice of yoga receives such knowledge within the heart, in due course of time."*

A pure mind and heart bring about inner transformation. Once this happens, everything in the world appears beautiful. There are no grievances, no animosities, no jealousy. Everyone looks equal, and

everything seems pristine. A pure heart and mind merge together, giving rise to elevated and compassionate feelings.

To further illustrate the power of purity of heart, here is a story of a saint who was always immersed in Bhagavān Bhakti (devotion to the Divine).

On one cold night, a group of thieves broke into the saint's humble hut. Searching for valuables, they found nothing except a single blanket, which the saint used to cover himself while sleeping. Hearing the commotion, the saint woke up. Rather than feeling anger or fear, he was overwhelmed with sorrow. His eyes became moist.

The thieves, puzzled by his reaction, asked, "*Why are you crying?*"

The saint replied, "*You have honored me by coming to my home, yet I have nothing to offer you. If I had known you were coming, I would have prepared something for you. It pains me that you found nothing.*" He then offered them his only possession — the blanket, saying, "*Please take this. It is cold outside, and you will need it more than I do.*"

The thieves, stunned by the saint's kindness, hesitated. They had never met anyone who gave away their only possession instead of scolding them. Overwhelmed, they accepted the blanket, unable to refuse his generosity. As they were leaving, the saint called out to them, "*Please close the door and thank me before you leave.*" Surprised by his words, they did as he asked.

A few days later, the thieves were caught, and the saint's blanket was the only piece of evidence found. The blanket was widely recognized. The court summoned the saint, knowing that his testimony would be final. When asked whether the thieves had stolen his blanket, the saint replied, "*They are not thieves. I gave them the blanket myself, and they even thanked me and closed the door politely. Does that sound like theft? They are good people.*"

As there was no further evidence and the saint spoke of their goodness, the magistrate released the thieves. Overcome with emotion, they fell at the saint's feet, begging to become his disciples.

The saint smiled and said:

**चदरिया झीनी रे झीनी**

*"This blanket is not just a piece of cloth. It was used by me while I was meditating. It carries all the divine energy I had received through my meditative practices. It carries my prayers, my devotion, and my blessings. I knew it would bring you back—not as thieves, but as seekers of truth. It had the power. It had the power of divinity."*

**Moral of the Story: There are no bad people — only hearts waiting to be transformed. Love and kindness have the power to awaken goodness, even in the hearts of the most misguided souls.**

Thus, Bhagavān has reiterated time and again that certain duties must never be neglected. Some duties are inherently noble, like a mother feeding her child with breast milk or a cow nourishing her calf. Non-performance of such duties can lead to chaos and suffering. The practice of **Yajña**, **Dāna**, and **Tapā** is essential, not only for spiritual progress but also for the well-being of society and the purification of the heart.

**niyatasya tu sannyāsaḥ(kh), karmaṇo nopapadyate,  
mohāttasya parityāgaḥ(s), tāmasaḥ(ph) parikīrtitaḥ. 18.7**

(Prohibited acts and those that are motivated by desire should, no doubt, be given up). But it is not advisable to abandon a prescribed duty. Such abandonment out of ignorance has been declared as Tāmasika.

**Tāmasaḥ (ph) parikīrtitaḥ** – It is stated that the prescribed duties should never be abandoned. Renouncing the desire for the fruits of action (**karmaphala**) or the act of sacrifice (**tyāga**) is indeed appropriate. However, renouncing one's prescribed duties is not advisable. Abandoning these duties is an act of folly, leading to a tamasic type of sacrifice. The natural duties as laid out by the sacred scriptures (**śāstras**) for every individual should not be neglected at any cost. These duties are integral to one's dharma and must be performed with sincerity and dedication.

**18.8**

**duḥkhamityeva yatkarma, kāyakleśabhayāttyajet,  
sa kṛtvā rājasaṃ(n) tyāgaṃ(n), naiva tyāgaphalaṃ(m) labhet. 18.8**

Should anyone give up his duties for fear of physical strain, thinking that all actions are verily painful-practising such Rājasika form of renunciation, he does not reap the fruit of renunciation.

To give up one's prescribed duties simply because they are troublesome or cause discomfort is an act of renunciation in the mode of passion (**rajas**). True spiritual aspirants (**sādhakas**) are not disturbed by doing nothing. They walk the path of spirituality, understanding that life is never meant to be free of burdens. Bhagavad Gītā is a call to action.

Arjuna initially wishes to flee from the battlefield, and Bhagavān Śrī Krishna describes this as ignorance. Life is full of challenges, and those who are at peace are those who carry their burdens gracefully while following the spiritual path.

In **Chapter 2** of the Bhagavad Gītā, Bhagavān urges Arjuna to continue performing his duty. He enlightens Arjuna with spiritual knowledge and provides him with the vision of wisdom (**jnāna-dṛṣṭi**). Through listening to the Bhagavad Gītā, Arjuna does not abandon his profession, nor does he transform into a **Brahmin, Vaishya, or Shudra**. He continues to be a warrior (**Kṣatriya**) and upholds his responsibility to secure the Kingdom of Hastinapura. He performs his duty (**kartavya-phala**) with devotion to Bhagavān, dedicating the results of his actions to the divine.

**18.9**

**kāryamityeva yatkarma, niyataṃ(ñ) kriyate'rjuna  
saṅgaṃ(n) tyaktvā phalaṃ(ñ) caiva, sa tyāgaḥ(s) sāttviko mataḥ. 18.9**

A prescribed duty which is performed simply because it has to be performed, giving up attachment and fruit, that alone has been recognized as the Sāttvika form of renunciation.

In this śloka, Bhagavān speaks about actions performed in the mode of goodness (**sattva**). When one performs their duties without attachment to the rewards, this is considered renunciation in the mode of goodness (**sattvic tyāga**). True hermits renounce the world not for the sake of external appearances but with the noble intention of realizing the Divine. Simply wearing golden attire and applying tilak on the forehead does not make one a true yogi. **True renunciation begins with detaching the mind from desires and worldly attachments.** External renunciation holds little

value if the internal environment—the mind and thoughts—remain unchanged. It is the purification of thoughts that shapes the character and brings out the true brilliance in one's personality.

This concept is beautifully illustrated in the story of a woman named Maria. Maria, an adult woman living with her mother in an apartment in New York, works as a secretary in a large company. Her life feels dull and unnoticed by others. One morning, on her way to work, she stops at a hat shop. The shop is crowded, and she notices a little girl with her mother, as well as another customer trying on different hats. Maria, too, tries on a hat that fits her comfortably. The little girl remarks how pretty Maria looks wearing the hat, and the mother adds that it suits her wonderfully. Another customer also compliments her, saying she looks gorgeous. For the first time, Maria feels appreciated, and a warmth spreads within her. She looks at herself in the mirror and feels like she is on top of the world.

She thanks the shop owner and steps out, feeling as if the world around her has changed. The surroundings seem fragrant and refreshing. At a coffee shop, a young man notices her and says, “Hey, damsel, you look beautiful. May I buy you some coffee?” Maria smiles shyly and continues on her way. Upon arriving at the office, the doorman greets her warmly, and her colleagues shower her with compliments. Even her manager starts showing her more respect.

At the end of the day, she decides to take a taxi instead of the bus. Two cabs stop as she signals for one. She takes the first one and heads home. When she arrives, her mother is surprised to see her so radiant. Maria excitedly tells her about the magical day and the effect the hat had on her. Her mother, however, notices something strange—there is no hat on Maria’s head. Maria then realizes that she had left the hat at the cashier’s counter while paying. It was not the hat that transformed her; rather, it was the change in her thoughts and her positive attitude towards life.

This story highlights a powerful truth: **our thoughts either enslave us or lead us to freedom. We are the creators of our own destiny. It is the purity of our thoughts and the quality of our inner environment that shape our external reality.**

## 18.10

### **na dvestyakuśalaṃ(ñ) karma, kuśale nānuṣajjate, tyāgī sattvasamāviṣṭo, medhāvī chinnaśaṃśayaḥ. 18.10**

He who has neither aversion for action which is leading to bondage (□□□□□) nor attachment to that which is conducive to blessedness (□□□□)- imbued with the quality of goodness, he has all his doubts resolved, is intelligent and a man of true renunciation.

The life of those who practice **sattvic renunciation** does not lead to misery, even in the face of adversity. They are not like dry leaves that are tossed about by every passing breeze. As **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** wrote in his book **Gītā Rehasya**, the essence of the Bhagavad Gītā is none other than **Karmayoga**, the path of selfless action.

Before Gandhiji rose to prominence as a freedom fighter, he was asked what position he would desire once India attained freedom. He responded that he would prefer to write a book on **Differential Calculus**. However, he was arrested for inciting unrest and imprisoned. One of his friends visited him in jail and was surprised to find him sleeping peacefully without a trace of worry.

In another instance, **Tilak** was at home, writing an editorial for his newspaper **Kesari**. A villager came to him seeking assistance with a matter. Tilak asked him to wait for five minutes as he was finishing his editorial. The villager patiently waited. After some time, members of Tilak's family came to him

and informed him that the funeral preparations for his elder son had been made. The villager, thinking they were calling Tilak for lunch, kindly said, “Dada, please have your lunch.” But Tilak replied, “They are not calling me for lunch; they are calling me to perform the last rites for my son.”

Hearing this, the villagers' eyes filled with tears. He was deeply moved by Tilak's ability to remain engrossed in his work despite the tragic loss of his son. His ability to focus on his duties came from his inner strength and emotional resilience. If he had been disturbed by his emotions, he would not have been able to sleep peacefully in prison or continue his work with such concentration after his son's passing.

This story illustrates the strength that comes from **sattvic** renunciation—the ability to remain unwavering in the face of trials, to perform one's duties with dedication, and to rise above emotional turmoil. **True renunciation, as taught in the Bhagavad Gītā, is not about avoiding life's challenges but facing them with clarity and equanimity.**

### 18.11

**na hi dehabhṛtā śakyaṃ(n), tyaktuṃ(ñ) karmāṇyaśeṣataḥ,  
yastu karmaphalatyāgī, sa tyāgītyabhidhīyate. 18.11**

Since all actions cannot be given up in their entirety by anyone possessing a body, he alone who renounces the fruit of actions is called a man of renunciation.

For all living beings, it is impossible to completely renounce **karmas**, as they are necessary for the functioning of life. However, one can renounce the attachment to **karma-phala** (the results or fruits of actions). Those who renounce the fruits of their actions are known as **Tyāgīs**.

In the third chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā, it is stated that the true renunciation is not about abandoning actions, but about relinquishing the attachment to the fruits of those actions. It is not the physical act of performing the duty that needs to be renounced, but the ego and the desire for specific outcomes from those duties.

The basic comforts required for the body, such as eating, sleeping, and breathing, cannot be avoided, as they are essential for sustaining life. However, **the key to perfect renunciation lies in giving up attachment to the results of one's actions.** A true **Tyāgī** performs their duties without selfish desires for the outcomes, dedicating their actions to the higher purpose of spiritual growth and service to Bhagavān. This is the essence of **Karma-yoga**, the path of selfless action, as elucidated by Bhagavān.

Thus, **renunciation in the mode of goodness is not about giving up life's essential activities, but about conquering ego, detaching from desires, and dedicating actions to the divine.** The pursuit of perfect renunciation involves the transformation of one's inner being, fostering a state of equanimity and inner peace amidst life's inevitable responsibilities.

### 18.12

**aniṣṭamiṣṭaṃ(m) miśraṃ(ñ) ca, trividhaṃ(ñ) karmaṇaḥ(ph) phalam,  
bhavatyatyāgināṃ(m) pretya, na tu sannyāsināṃ(ñ) kvacit. 18.12**

Agreeable, disagreeable and mixed-threelfold, indeed, is the fruit that accrues after death from the actions of the unrenouncing. But there is none whatsoever for those who have renounced.

Three types of **karma-phalas** (fruits of actions) can arise: **anista** (unpleasant), **mista** (pleasant), and **misra** (mixed). By renouncing these **karma-phalas**, one can free oneself from the consequences of actions both in this world and beyond, even after death.

Righteous actions lead to birth in the celestial realms, while unrighteous actions result in rebirth in hell. A mixture of both leads to human existence. This principle is echoed in Chapter 14, verse 18 of the Bhagavad Gītā:

**ūrdhvaṁ gachchhanti sattva-sthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ  
jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā adho gachchhanti tāmasāḥ**

*"Those who embody the qualities of sattva (goodness) ascend to higher realms, those dominated by rajas (passion) remain in the middle, and those driven by tamas (ignorance) descend into lower states."*

**Karma-phala** is classified into three types: **Sanchit**, **Prarabdha**, and **Kriyaman**.

- **Sanchit** refers to the accumulated actions of past lives,
- **Prarabdha** is the portion of Sanchit karma that manifests in the present life,
- **Kriyaman** refers to the actions that one performs in their current life.

For instance, if a person commits murder, they may be sentenced to death in the material world. However, the same act committed by authorities, such as those who execute notorious criminals, is not considered an offense, and these individuals may even be hailed as national heroes. The actions are judged based on intention and context, reflecting the deeper philosophical understanding of **karma** and **karma-phala** in the Bhagavad Gītā.

## 18.13

**pañcāitāni mahābāho, kāraṇāni nibodha me,  
sāṅkhyae kṛtānte proktāni, siddhaye sarVākarmaṇām. 18.13**

In the branch of learning known as Sāṅkhya, which prescribes means for neutralizing all actions, the five factors have been mentioned as contributory to the accomplishment of all actions; know them all from Me, Arjuna.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna to learn from Him, explaining that the five factors responsible for the performance of karma will be discussed in the upcoming verse. It is possible to perform karma without attachment to the results, a central tenet of the **Sāṅkhya** philosophy. **Sāṅkhya** was established by **Maharishi Kapila**, an incarnation of Bhagavān, born to **Sage Kardama** and **Devahuti**. The **Sāṅkhya** philosophy emphasizes analytical rationality, where rational thinking is seen as the purest form of self-knowledge. In this system, the ultimate goal is to renounce attachment to the fruits of **karma**, aiming to unite with Bhagavān.

To illustrate, a farmer cannot claim sole responsibility for the successful yield of crops. There are many contributing factors, such as the quality of the seeds, the fertility of the soil, and the rainfall. All of these factors work together to produce a good harvest, just as multiple factors influence the outcome of one's actions in life.

## Question and Answer

**Shobha Ji:**

**Q:** What is the exact meaning of **Yajna, Dana,** and **Tapa?**

**A: Yajna** (sacrifice) refers to the prescribed duties, which include caring for parents, family, neighbors, and fulfilling one's responsibilities towards the country.

**Tapa** (penance) is the discipline of enduring challenges while continuing to perform one's duties, even in the face of adversity.

**Dana** (charity) is the act of donating time, money, energy, or knowledge to those in need.

The session concluded with prayers and chanting Hanuman Chalisa.

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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