

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

2/6 (Ślōka 13-22), Sunday, 27 April 2025

Interpreter: GĪTĀ VIDUṢĪ SAU VANDANA WARNEKAR JI

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/e-vY0WHi2hE>

Act Without Ego, See Without Division, Live Without Bondage

Chapter 18 of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā – **Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yog: The Yoga of Renunciation and Surrender.**

With deep reverence and devotion, we continue our study of the eighteenth and final chapter of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā—Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yog, the Yoga of Renunciation and Surrender. Before delving into its profound teachings, let us offer our salutations at the holy feet of Gurudev, Maa Saraswati, and Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, seeking their divine blessings for clear understanding and inner transformation.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णु गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः।
गुरुः साक्षात्परब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥

ॐ कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय हरये परमात्मने।
प्रणतः क्लेशनाशाय गोविंदाय नमो नमः ॥

नमामि सद्गुरुं शान्तं सच्चिदानंद विग्रहम्।
पूर्णब्रह्मपरानन्दमीशं आलन्दिवल्लभम् ॥

यानंद श्रुतिमंत्र शक्ति महती ब्रह्मात्म विद्यावती।
यासूत्रोदित शास्त्रपद्धतिरीति प्रद्योदिनान्तरद्युतिः।
या सत्काव्यगतिप्रसादितर्मतिर्नागुणालंकृतिः।
सा प्रत्यक्ष सरस्वती भगवती मान्नायतां भारती ॥

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयम्।
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम्।
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीमष्टादशाध्यायिनीम्।
अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

नमोस्तुते व्यास विशाल बुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।
येन त्वया भारत तैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमय प्रदीपः ॥

Chapter 18 serves as the grand summary—the essence—of the entire Gītā.

We have seen that the Bhagavadgītā begins when a grief-stricken Arjuna, overwhelmed with despondency, drops his bow and refuses to fight. Starting from verse 2.11, Śrī Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord Himself, imparts the eternal wisdom—the Gītā—which Gurudev aptly describes as a divine song that transforms the dejected (vishanna) into the joyous (prasanna).

Thus, the timeless wisdom spoken over 5000 years ago remains as relevant and illuminating today as it was then, guiding us towards the supreme purpose of life.

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj describes this eighteenth chapter as the "Kalasha" (Kalasho Adhyaya).

He offers a beautiful analogy: if the entire Bhagavadgītā is likened to a divine temple, then each chapter is a precious gem adorning that sacred edifice. The 18th chapter is the Kalasha—the sacred pinnacle crowning the temple's shikhara—holding and radiating the temple's highest sanctity. Just as having darshan of the Kalasha itself grants the full merit of visiting the temple, similarly, the study and internalisation of this final chapter leads to supreme spiritual fulfilment.

In this sacred vision:

- The 12th Chapter is considered the Garbha-Griha—the innermost sanctum.
- The 15th Chapter is likened to the Sri Vighraha—the very form of Bhagavān installed within.
- And the 18th Chapter shines as the Kalasha, crowning and completing the temple of Gītā.

In the Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yog, Śrī Bhagavān firmly guides Arjuna—and through him, all of us—toward the proper understanding of Tyāga (renunciation) and Sannyāsa (abandonment).

He cautions that mere abandonment of duties under the pretext of renunciation, especially considering them burdensome, is not true renunciation but is Tāmasika Tyāga (renunciation born of ignorance).

Śrī Bhagavān goes on to explain the profound difference between Sannyāsa and Tyāga, deeply rooted in the understanding of the three Guṇas—Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance).

- Sattva leads to clarity, joy, and wisdom.
- Rajas drives restlessness, attachment, and desire
- Tamas manifests as ignorance, laziness, and delusion.

The infinite diversity of human behaviours and temperaments arises from the countless combinations and proportions of these three Guṇas.

As Dnyaneshwar Maharaj joyously sings:

"तैसा वाग्विलास विस्तारु । गीतार्थे विश्व भरु । आनंदाचे आवारु । मांडू जगा ॥"

— "Just as eloquence expands and fills the world, the meaning of Gītā is an expansive courtyard of bliss open to all."

One of the key messages of this chapter is that true renunciation lies not in abandoning action but in performing all prescribed duties with detachment, renouncing the craving for the fruits of actions.

Śrī Bhagavān teaches in verse 18.10 that:

"The truly wise renunciate neither hates unpleasant work nor becomes attached to pleasant work."Such a person acts in the spirit of Sattva, with a mind purified of doubts.

In everyday life, people often seek work that suits their passions and avoid what feels disagreeable.

However, a Sāttvika Tyāgī—a truly renounced soul—undertakes all duties assigned by Dharma without personal preference, performing even challenging tasks with equanimity and grace.

Śrī Bhagavān Himself is the supreme example of this attitude:

- In Gokul, He humbly tended cows like a simple Vaishya.
- As a Kshatriya, He vanquished evil by slaying Kamsa.
- During the Pandavas' Rājasūya Yajña, He washed the feet of guests and cleaned used plates.
- On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, He drove Arjuna's chariot, performing his duty as a friend and guide.
- Daily, He cared for the wounds of the horses, demonstrating that no duty is too small when done in the spirit of service.

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj conveys this spirit beautifully through an analogy:

"माळिये जेउते नेले । तेउते निवांतचि गेले । तया पाणिया ऐसे केले । होआवे गा ॥"

— "Just as the water flows effortlessly wherever the gardener channels it, one's actions should naturally follow the course set by Paramātmā's will."

Thus, the seeker focuses not on personal likes and dislikes but on discerning the divine duties assigned to him and fulfilling them wholeheartedly.

In the 3rd Chapter, Śrī Bhagavān had already instructed:

"नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।

शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥" (3.8)

— "Perform your prescribed duties, for action is superior to inaction. Even the maintenance of your body would not be possible by inaction."

Again, in the 11th verse of the 18th chapter, Śrī Bhagavān clarifies that complete renunciation of all action is not possible for one possessing a body. True renunciation lies in renouncing the fruits of action.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj cautions:

"परिस पां सव्यसाची । मूर्ति लाहोनि देहाची । खंती करिती कर्माची । ते गांवढे गा ॥"

— "O Arjuna, those who neglect their duties simply because of the body's existence are indeed foolish."

As long as the embodied soul lives in this world, performing action in a spirit of surrender is necessary. Both superiority and inferiority complexes disrupt the natural bliss (Ānanda-svarūpa) of the soul.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj offers another profound analogy:

"वृक्ष का वेली लोटली, फळे आली तैसी

सांडी निपजली, कर्म सिद्धे ॥"

— "Just as a tree or a creeper naturally sheds its fruits once they ripen, so too should a seeker let go of attachment to the results of action."

Śrī Bhagavān emphasises in verse 18.12 that for those who do not renounce, the fruits of actions—pleasant, unpleasant, or mixed—remain. However, for true renunciates, no bondage of karma remains.

This teaching is beautifully exemplified in the life of Śrī Rāma.

When asked by Vashistha Muni about Śrī Rāma's reaction to the news of his coronation being replaced by exile, it was said that Śrī Rāma's expression remained unchanged, equally serene in joy or sorrow, accepting both as divine will.

Further, when Nishadraj asked Śrī Rāma why such suffering befell him, Śrī Rāma calmly replied:

"सुखस्य दुःखस्य न कोऽपि दाता ।"

— "No one else is the giver of happiness or sorrow. It is the consequence of one's own actions."

Thus, equanimity amidst the dualities of life is the true hallmark of a renunciate.

In the upcoming verses, Śrī Bhagavān elaborates on the five essential factors that lead to the accomplishment of all actions, further deepening our understanding of Karma and renunciation.

18.13

**pañcāitāni mahābāho, kāraṇāni nibodha me,
sāṅkhye 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 introduces Arjuna to the five essential factors responsible for the execution of any action. These factors, as described in *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, help in understanding that no action is performed by an individual alone.

- **pañcāitāni mahābāho kāraṇāni nibodha me**

"O mighty-armed Arjuna, understand from Me the five causes of all actions."

- Bhagavān emphasizes that every action has multiple contributing factors and is not merely the result of personal effort.
- **sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarvākarmaṇām**
"These five causes have been declared in *Sāṅkhya*, the philosophy that teaches how actions can be transcended."
- *Sāṅkhya* philosophy systematically explains both the process of action and the way to become free from its bondage.
- It teaches that understanding these factors leads to wisdom and detachment, ultimately leading to liberation.
- The *Sāṅkhya Darshana* (philosophy) was systematized by **Sage Kapila Muni**, who is considered the founder of *Sāṅkhya*. His teachings laid down a detailed analytical approach to understanding the interplay of nature (*Prakṛti*) and consciousness (*Puruṣa*).

Key Insights:

- **Actions Are Not Performed Alone** – Every action depends on multiple causes, not just individual effort.
- **Wisdom from Sāṅkhya** – The philosophy of *Sāṅkhya* helps one understand action and transcend its bondage.
- **Beyond Doership** – Recognizing the factors behind action helps in developing detachment and humility.
- **Preparation for Liberation** – Understanding the nature of action is a step toward freeing oneself from its binding effects.

This verse prepares Arjuna to see action from a broader perspective, leading him gradually toward self-realization and ultimate liberation.

18.14

**adhiṣṭhānaṃ(n) tathā kartā, karaṇaṃ(ñ) ca pṛthagvidham,
vividhāśca pṛthakceṣṭā, daivaṃ(ñ) caivātra pañcamam. 18.14**

The following are the factors operating towards the accomplishment of actions, viz., the body and the doer, the organs of different kinds and the different functions of manifold kinds; and the fifth is Daiva, latencies of past actions.

Having introduced the idea that five causes lead to the execution of actions, Śrī Bhagavān now lists them one by one:

- **adhiṣṭhānaṃ** — *The body*, which serves as the seat or base where action unfolds.
 - Without the body, no worldly action is possible.
- **kartā** — *The doer*, the conscious being who initiates and wills the action.
 - The sense of "I am acting" stems from this.
- **karaṇaṃ ca pṛthagvidham** — *The different organs* (of perception and action), each specialized in their own functions.
 - Eyes, hands, speech, legs, mind—all act together to perform duties.
- **vividhāḥ pṛthakceṣṭāḥ** — *The manifold efforts*, meaning the various specific motions, movements, and internal-external activities involved in action.
- **daivam ca eva atra pañcamam** — *The divine factor*, destiny, which manifests as unseen influences based on accumulated karmas from past lives.
 - This factor may unexpectedly assist or obstruct the result despite effort.

Importantly, the *Daiva* factor is **only one among the five**—it constitutes **just 1/5th** of the factors involved in any action.

Gurudev advises that **while performing actions, one should not focus on Daiva.**

- One must apply full effort, wisdom, and dedication without blaming destiny prematurely.
- Only **after** the action is fully completed, one may reflect whether destiny (*Daivam*) played a role in the final outcome.
Thus, blaming destiny in advance is wrong and an excuse for laziness or lack of effort.

Key Insights:

- **Comprehensive View of Action** – Action results from the combination of the body, senses, doer, efforts, and divine influence.
- **Daiva Is Only One Factor** – Destiny is just 1/5th of the process. Overemphasis on fate is a misunderstanding.
- **Right Focus During Action** – Gurudev teaches that we must not think about destiny while acting; wholehearted effort is required.

- **Humility and Acceptance** – After the action, one can humbly recognize if Daiva affected the result, without self-condemnation or blame.
- **Balance Between Effort and Faith** – True wisdom lies in performing duties with full vigor, leaving the results to Divine will after honest effort.

This understanding frees the seeker from fatalism, encourages full-hearted action, and prepares the mind for surrender and equanimity, the core message of Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yog.

18.15

śarīravāñmanobhiryat, karma prārabhate naraḥ, nyāyyaṃ(m) vā viparītaṃ(m) vā, pañcaite tasya hetavaḥ. 18.15

These five are the contributory causes of whatever actions, prescribed or prohibited, man performs with the mind, speech and body.

Śrī Bhagavān now reinforces the teaching of the previous verse by summarising the universality of the five causes:

- **śarīravāñmanobhiḥ yat karma prārabhate naraḥ**
"Whatever action a person undertakes through body (*śarīra*), speech (*vāñ*), or mind (*manas*)."
 - Every action—whether physical, verbal, or mental—originates not solely from individual effort, but through the interplay of multiple factors.
- **nyāyyaṃ vā viparītaṃ vā**
"Whether the action is right (*nyāyyaṃ*) or wrong (*viparītaṃ*)."
 - Actions under Dharma (righteousness) and those opposed to it are both performed under the influence of these five causes.
- **pañca ete tasya hetavaḥ**
"All such actions are the result of these five causes."
 - No action, good or bad, arises from the doer alone; it is always supported by the body, senses, efforts, divine factors, and the inner initiator.

Thus, Śrī Bhagavān again points out that individual agency is partial and relative. Even when a person engages in noble deeds or wrong actions, the same five factors operate behind the scenes.

The kind of inhuman act that happened in Pahalgam in which 27 innocent people died, this is opposite karma, this is forbidden karma, this is unjust karma. The irony is that when such unjust acts happen, the reason they give is that our scriptures say that the way we believe in our God, everyone should believe in the same way, otherwise they should be killed considering them atheists. They asked all

the victims to read Kalma to identify Hindus and Muslims. This heinous incident happened in the name of their God which is unjust, that is why our Sanatan Dharma is called the best because nowhere in it is it said that worship only this God, rather it is said that whatever type of God you worship, God will become like that. He will come in form or formless form. In Hinduism, some people do not believe in God but if they do good deeds, they also get good results. There is no separate rule for them.

The principle of Srimad Bhagavad Gītā is:

“सर्वभूतहिते रताः”

(One whose actions are for the welfare of all attains God.)

We live four types of supreme lives :

- **vyāṣṭi:** means individual life
- **samaṣṭi:** means society, towards which we have some duties
- **parameṣṭi:** Paramātmā (Supreme Being). The one who made all this available to us i.e. the Creator. The work that will be beneficial for these four is the responsibility entrusted to us by God, therefore, gunning down people who do not believe in God cannot be God's work. Opposite works are being done in the name of God.
- **srṣṭi:** Creation due to which we get air, water, food etc.

क्या धरा हमने बनाई। क्या बनाया हमने गगन।
क्या हमारी ही वजह से बह रहा सुरमीत पवन।
या अगन के है स्वामी नियंता जगधार के
या जगत के सूत्रधार नियामक संसार के ॥

Key Insights:

- **Universality of the Five Factors** - Whether an action is good or bad, mental, verbal, or physical, these five causes are always at work.
- **Reduction of Ego** - Understanding this interdependence weakens the false pride of "I am the sole doer."
- **Detachment and Wisdom** - By knowing the true mechanism behind action, one gradually cultivates humility and equanimity.
- **Alignment with Dharma** - Even while knowing the causes, one must consciously strive to choose righteous (*nyāyā*) actions aligned with Dharma.
- **Foundation for Renunciation** - This prepares the seeker to perform actions selflessly, dedicating the fruits to the Divine, thereby progressing toward Mokṣa (liberation).

This verse deepens Arjuna's understanding that even his participation in the battle is not an isolated personal decision, but part of a much larger cosmic arrangement. It gently prepares him to act without ego and to surrender the results at the feet of Śrī Bhagavān.

18.16

tatraivaṃ(m) sati kartāram, ātmānaṃ(ñ) kevalaṃ(n) tu yaḥ, paśyatyakṛtabuddhitvān, na sa paśyati durmatih. 18.16

Notwithstanding this, however, he who, having an impure mind, regards the absolute, taintless Self alone as the doer, that man of perverse understanding does not view aright.

Śrī Bhagavān now addresses a major delusion that arises from ignorance:

- **tatra evaṃ sati kartāram ātmānaṃ kevalam tu yaḥ paśyati**

"Even in the presence of the fivefold causes, one who sees the Self (*Ātman*) alone as the doer."

- Such a person wrongly attributes action to the eternal Self, which is actionless, pure, and unchanging.

- **akṛtabuddhitvāt**

"Due to impure, unrefined understanding."

- Their intellect has not been purified through right knowledge (*jñāna*) and discrimination (*viveka*).

- **na sa paśyati durmatih**

"Such a person, being of perverted intellect (*durmatih*), does not see the truth."

- Their vision is clouded; they mistake the changing body-mind complex as the Self and assign doership to the pure consciousness.

To explain this concept poetically and memorably, our saints have given a very beautiful teaching:

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

"I am not this body; nothing is truly mine.

This body too is a gift from someone else.

Whatever wealth, possessions, or abilities I seem to have are also given by the Divine and are not mine."

This realization dissolves the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and helps us live in constant remembrance that we are mere instruments (*nimitta*) in the hands of the Supreme.

Key Insights:

- **Ātman Is Non-Doer** - The real Self (*Ātman*) is merely the witness; it neither acts nor causes action.
- **Ignorance Causes Misidentification** - Due to impurity of intellect, people wrongly believe that "I (the pure Self) am doing this."

- **Humility through Surrender** – By realizing "I am not the doer," the sense of ownership (*mamata*) and ego (*ahamta*) dissolves.
- **Importance of Right Knowledge** – True vision (*samyag-darśana*) comes from understanding that actions arise from body, mind, senses, efforts, and divine forces—not from the pure Self.
- **Foundation for Liberation** – Recognizing the Self as untouched by action leads to freedom from bondage and brings peace and bliss.

This verse powerfully alerts Arjuna—and all seekers—not to falsely identify with the action, but to act as surrendered instruments in the Divine plan.

18.17

yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvo, buddhiryasya na lipyate, hatvāpi sa imāṃlokān, na hanti na nibadhyate. 18.17

He whose mind is free from the sense of doership, and whose reason is not affected by worldly objects and activities, does not really kill, even having killed all these people, nor does any sin accrue to him.

Śrī Bhagavān now describes the true state of a liberated soul who acts without bondage:

- **yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvaḥ**
"One whose inner disposition is free from egoism ('I am the doer')."
 - Such a person performs actions, but does not claim authorship over them.
- **buddhir yasya na lipyate**
"One whose intellect is untainted and unattached."
 - His discriminative faculty remains pure, unaffected by desires, attachments, or aversions.
- **hatvā api sa imān lokān**
"Even if he slays all these beings (in the battle)."
 - Despite engaging in apparent acts of great violence like a battlefield slaughter, he remains inwardly pure.
- **na hanti na nibadhyate**
"He neither kills in truth nor is he bound by the results of such actions."
 - For him, no karma accrues because he acts without ego, purely as an instrument of Divine will.

Thus, Bhagavān reassures Arjuna that when actions are performed with the right understanding—without ego and selfish motive—no sin or bondage arises, even in the gravest of circumstances. This is the peak teaching of *Karma Yoga* — action without attachment to doership or results.

Key Insights:

- **Freedom from Ego** - Liberation begins when the sense of "I am the doer" is removed from action.
- **Purity of Intellect** - A non-attached, clear intellect prevents entanglement in karma, even during significant action.
- **Instrument of Divine Will** - The liberated being acts as a mere instrument (*nimitta*) in the hands of the Supreme.
- **Beyond Sin and Merit** - Without ego and attachment, actions do not generate binding consequences (*pāpa* or *puṇya*).
- **True Non-Violence** - Even in external actions like fighting, the internal state of non-doership determines spiritual purity.

Thus, Śrī Bhagavān prepares Arjuna to rise above confusion and sorrow, to act as a fearless instrument of Dharma, without accruing any sin.

Real-Life Reflection: Sachin Tendulkar's Retirement Speech

In his emotional retirement speech (November 2013 at Wankhede Stadium), Sachin Tendulkar expressed profound gratitude to the many people who shaped his legendary cricketing career. Rather than focusing solely on his own achievements, he humbly credited the entire support system around him for his success.

Notably, he acknowledged the contributions of his **family, coaches, teammates,** and **fans** in helping him reach the pinnacle of the sport. He thanked his parents, siblings, wife, and children for their sacrifices, his childhood coach Ramakant Achrekar for shaping his game, his teammates for being like family, and the millions of fans whose prayers and encouragement inspired him.

This deep sense of humility—recognizing that greatness is never the result of individual effort alone but a confluence of many visible and invisible supports—is a living example of the *Gītā's* teaching of non-doership.

Sachin Tendulkar's speech reflects that true success comes with gratitude, humility, and the recognition that the "I alone am the doer" attitude is false. By acknowledging the collective contributions behind his achievements, he demonstrated the spiritual maturity that Bhagavān extols: acting sincerely but without pride, and offering success as a tribute to others and to the Divine.

18.18

**jñānaṃ(ñ) jñeyaṃ(m) pariñātā, trividhā karmacodanā,
karaṇaṃ(ṅ) karma karteti, trividhaḥ(kh) karmasaṅgrahaḥ. 18.18**

The Knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge-these three motivate action. Even so, the doer, the organs and activity-these are the three constituents of action.

Śrī Bhagavān now presents a deeper analysis of action by classifying the elements involved:

- **jñānaṃ (Knowledge)**

The understanding or awareness that enables perception of an object.

- Without knowledge, no purposeful action can be initiated.

- **jñeyaṃ (Object of Knowledge)**

That which is to be known or attained through action.

- The goal or objective that the action seeks to accomplish.

- **parijñātā (Knower)**

The conscious entity—the doer who possesses the knowledge and acts upon it.

- The person who desires to know or achieve something.

These three (*knowledge, the known, and the knower*) inspire and motivate action—they form the *cetanā* or conscious drive behind karmic endeavors.

Further:

- **karaṇaṃ (Instruments)**

The means or tools such as senses, body, and mind used to perform the action.

- Hands, speech, mind, eyes, etc.

- **karma (Action Itself)**

The activity or process undertaken toward achieving the desired goal.

- **kartā (Doer)**

The agent who initiates and carries out the action, thinking "I am doing this."

These three (*instruments, action, and doer*) form the *physical* and *practical* side of karma—the execution side of the cycle.

Thus, action has both a **motivational** (*jñāna-jñeya-parijñātā*) and an **executional** (*karaṇa-karma-kartā*) framework.

Key Insights:

- **Action Is Driven by Knowledge and Desire** – No action occurs without a motivating knowledge, a desirable goal, and an agent who seeks it.

- **Action Is Executed Through Tools** – Once motivated, the physical body and senses carry out the action.
- **Holistic View of Karma** – Understanding the motivation and the execution helps one see the full cycle of karma.
- **Path to Detachment** – Knowing these components helps one detach from the false ego, realizing that the Self merely observes this interplay.

This verse systematically breaks down the dynamics of action to help Arjuna (and all seekers) perform their duties with right understanding, and move toward freedom from bondage.

18.19

jñānaṃ(ñ) karma ca kartāca, tridhaiva guṇabhedataḥ, procyate guṇasañkhyāne, yathāvacchr̥ṇu tānyapi. 18.19

In the branch of knowledge dealing with the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti, knowledge and action as well as the doer have been declared to be of three kinds according to the Guṇa which predominates in each; hear them too duly from Me.

Śrī Bhagavān now prepares Arjuna to understand a more detailed classification based on the *three Guṇas*—Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance):

- **jñānaṃ karma ca kartā ca**

"Knowledge, action, and the doer."

- These three elements, which were explained as the essential components of karma, are now further subdivided.

- **tridhaiva guṇabhedataḥ**

"Each is divided into three kinds according to the differences of the Guṇas."

- The nature of a person's knowledge, the nature of their actions, and their manner of performing actions vary depending on whether Sattva, Rajas, or Tamas predominates in their personality.

- **procyate guṇasañkhyāne**

"This classification is explained in the science of the Guṇas."

- The ancient teachings classify all activities and tendencies according to the influence of Prakṛti's three fundamental qualities.

- **yathāvat śṛṇu tāni api**

"Listen to them from Me properly."

- Bhagavān lovingly invites Arjuna to hear carefully, as this understanding is essential for self-assessment and spiritual growth.

Thus, Śrī Bhagavān sets the stage to describe, in the coming verses, how *jñāna* (knowledge), *karma* (action), and *kartā* (the doer) are colored differently depending on whether Sattva, Rajas, or Tamas predominates.

Key Insights:

- **Everything is Colored by the Guṇas** – Even knowledge, action, and the doer differ based on the inner nature (Sattva, Rajas, or Tamas).
- **Self-Assessment** – This classification helps seekers assess their tendencies and correct their course toward Sattva and liberation.
- **Invitation to Deeper Understanding** – Bhagavān invites Arjuna (and us) to hear attentively, emphasizing the importance of discriminative wisdom in the spiritual path.
- **Foundation for Next Teachings** – This verse prepares for the detailed explanation that will follow in the next few verses (18.20 onwards).

By understanding how the Guṇas influence every aspect of human life, one can gradually transcend them and reach the state of pure, unaffected consciousness.

18.20

**sarvabhūteṣu yenaikaṃ(m), bhāvamavyayamīkṣate,
avibhaktaṃ(m) vibhakteṣu, tajjñānaṃ(m) viddhi sāttvikam. 18.20**

That by which man perceives one imperishable divine existence as undivided and equally present in all individual beings, know that knowledge to be Sāttvika.

Śrī Bhagavān begins the classification of *Jñāna* (knowledge) according to the three Guṇas, starting with *Sāttvika Jñāna*—the highest and purest form of knowledge.

- **sarvabhūteṣu yena ekaṃ bhāvam avyayam īkṣate**

"That by which one perceives one imperishable essence in all beings."

- The Sāttvika knower realizes that beyond all distinctions of body, mind, caste, or creed, there is one eternal Divine Presence.

- **avibhaktaṃ vibhakteṣu**

"The undivided reality appearing within the divided forms."

- Although externally beings are seen as many, the realized person sees no real separation at the level of the Self.

- **tad jñānaṃ viddhi sāttvikam**

"Understand that such knowledge is Sāttvika."

- This vision of unity is pure and liberating, leading to equality, compassion, and selfless action.

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj explains this beautifully in his Amṛtānubhava:

"हे विश्वचि माझे घर । ऐसी मती जयाची स्थिर ।
किंबहुना चराचर । आपण जाहला ॥ २१३ ॥"

"He believes that the entire universe is his home; indeed, he regards himself as one with all that is movable and immovable."

Such is the expanded vision of one whose knowledge is illuminated by Sattva. The feeling of separateness dissolves completely, and everything is seen as one's own Self.

A touching real-life example of this vision is seen in the life of **Thakur Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa**.

In his last days, when he was suffering from throat cancer and could not eat solid food, devotees would lovingly bring sweets, especially *sandesh* (his favorite milk sweet). Though he could not physically eat, he smiled and told his disciples, "Oh, who is eating with all your mouths? I am tasting through all of you!" He truly felt that the joy experienced by his devotees was his own, because he saw himself living equally in them. This is the living experience of seeing **oneness in all beings** — the hallmark of Sāttvika knowledge.

Key Insights:

- **Oneness in Diversity** – True knowledge is seeing one imperishable Self manifesting through all beings.
- **Non-Discrimination** – The wise do not judge based on outer forms but recognize the Divinity in every being.
- **Universal Compassion** – This vision naturally leads to love, respect, and service to all beings without selfishness.
- **Path to Liberation** – Sāttvika Jñāna dissolves ego and leads to true spiritual freedom (*Mokṣa*).
- **Living Examples** – Saints like Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj and Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa lived immersed in this Sāttvika vision.

Thus, Bhagavān teaches Arjuna—and all of us—that the highest knowledge is to see unity amidst apparent diversity, and to live with love and reverence for all creation.

18.21

**pr̥thaktvena tu yajjñānaṃ(n), nānābhāvānpr̥thagvidhān,
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu, tajjñānaṃ(m) viddhi rājasam. 18.21**

The knowledge by which man cognizes many existences of various kinds, as apart from one another,

in all beings, know that knowledge to be Rājasika.

Śrī Bhagavān now describes the second type of knowledge influenced by *Rajas*—knowledge that is outwardly active but inwardly divisive.

- **pr̥thaktvena tu yat jñānaṃ**

"The knowledge by which separateness is perceived."

- It sees each being as distinct and unrelated, focusing on divisions rather than unity.

- **nānābhāvān pr̥thagvidhān vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu**

"Which perceives the many different forms and natures of beings individually."

- This knowledge emphasizes differences like caste, creed, species, wealth, nationality, and external attributes.

- **tad jñānaṃ viddhi rājasam**

"Understand that knowledge to be Rājasika."

- It is born of Rajas (the Guṇa of passion and restlessness), and leads to attachment, conflict, pride, and partiality.

Such knowledge binds the intellect to the external attributes of beings, leading to judgments based on outward appearances, competition, superiority complexes, and egoistic involvement.

Key Insights:

- **Vision of Division** - Rājasika knowledge sees multiplicity and misses the underlying oneness.
- **Focus on External Differences** - Instead of unity, it promotes categorization, comparison, and separation.
- **Fuel for Attachment and Conflict** - By emphasizing differences, this knowledge feeds attachment, rivalry, and worldly entanglement.
- **Obstruction to Liberation** - Such fragmented perception keeps the soul bound to samsara (the cycle of birth and death).
- **Need for Higher Vision** - Moving beyond Rājasika knowledge toward Sāttvika vision is essential for spiritual progress.

Thus, Bhagavān teaches Arjuna that it is not enough to act; the lens through which we perceive the world must be purified. Only Sāttvika knowledge, seeing unity amidst diversity, leads to peace and ultimate liberation. Rājasika knowledge, driven by division and attachment, keeps the soul entangled in worldly

bondage.

18.22

yattu kṛtsnavadekasmin, kārye saktamahaitukam, atattvārthavadalpaṃ(ñ) ca, tattāmasamudāhṛtam. 18.22

Again, that knowledge which clings to one body as if it were the whole, and which is irrational, has no real grasp of truth and is trivial, has been declared as Tāmasika.

After describing Sāttvika and Rājasika knowledge, Śrī Bhagavān now explains *Tāmasika Jñāna*—knowledge shrouded by ignorance.

- **yattu kṛtsnavat ekasmin kārye saktam ahaitukam**

"That which, irrationally, sees only a small part as the whole and is attached to it."

- A person with Tāmasika knowledge clings stubbornly to a limited viewpoint, ignoring the bigger picture.

- **atattvārthavat alpaṃ ca**

"Which is based on false understanding, trivial, and insignificant."

- Such knowledge mistakes the non-essential for the essential, leading to confusion, superstition, and fanaticism.

- **tat tāmasam udāhṛtam**

"Such knowledge is declared to be Tāmasika."

- It is born of Tamas (ignorance, inertia, and delusion), and keeps the soul trapped in darkness.

In essence, Tāmasika knowledge binds one to narrow-mindedness, ignorance, false perceptions, and an inability to grasp the true nature of reality.

Key Insights:

- **Narrow and Fragmented Vision** – Tāmasika knowledge confines the mind to one limited view, ignoring the vastness of truth.
- **Attachment to the False** – It clings to superficial, unessential, or even harmful notions mistaking them for reality.
- **Lack of Reason and Discrimination** – It operates without rational inquiry or deeper understanding.

- **Obstacle to Spiritual Progress** – Tāmasika knowledge strengthens ignorance, superstition, and leads to stagnation.
- **Need for Awakening** – The seeker must move from Tāmasika to Rājasika, and then to Sāttvika knowledge to reach liberation.

Thus, Śrī Bhagavān teaches that not all knowledge is uplifting. Only Sāttvika knowledge, rooted in the vision of unity and truth, leads toward spiritual freedom. Rājasika and Tāmasika knowledge bind the soul to confusion and bondage.

The session ended here and was followed by a Question and Answer session.

Question and Answer

Sangita Satkalami Ji

Q: In the Bhagavadgītā, it is mentioned that "**Eśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām**"—the Lord resides in the heart of all beings. At the same time, it is said that all beings have the three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. If the same three Guṇas exist in everyone and the same God resides within, how is it that saints reflect divinity through purity (dominance of Sattva), while criminals fall into delusion and wrongdoing (dominance of Rajas and Tamas)? How can we understand this apparent difference?

A: The verse you are referring to is:

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

"The Supreme Divine dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings to revolve according to their karmas, as though mounted on a machine operated by Māyā."

While it is true that the Supreme Divine is equally present in all beings and that the same three Guṇas exist in everyone, **the relative dominance** of the Guṇas in each individual **differs based on past karmas and saṃskāras (impressions accumulated from previous births)**.

- In the case of **saints**, accumulated merits (*puṇyas*) and virtuous karmas cause **Sattva Guṇa** to dominate. This leads to purity, wisdom, compassion, and detachment.
- In the case of **criminals**, the mind is conditioned by past actions dominated by **Rajas** (passion, greed, restlessness) and **Tamas** (ignorance, inertia, delusion), leading to wrong actions and deluded behavior.

Thus, although the Lord is impartial and the structure of Prakṛti (Nature) remains the same for all, the **conditioning of the mind-intellect equipment**—the **preloaded tendencies**—results in different expressions of character among individuals.

Q: In Chapter 10 of the Bhagavadgītā, Śrī Bhagavān mentions that although He is present everywhere, He

specifically says "Among months, I am Mārgaśīrṣa" (**Māsānāṃ Mārgaśīrṣo'ham**).

If God is everywhere and in everything, why does He highlight specific representatives? Why single out certain things as special manifestations?

A: The Sanskrit verse referred here is:

मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः।

Meaning: "Among the months, I am Mārgaśīrṣa, and among seasons, I am the flowering spring."

Though Bhagavān pervades all existence equally, in **Chapter 10**—known as *Vibhūti Yoga*—He highlights His special manifestations to make it easier for Arjuna (and seekers like us) to **perceive His presence** in a tangible and relatable manner.

Since the human mind grasps concepts more easily through vivid, exalted examples, Bhagavān points to the **best, the most glorious** in each category as expressions of His divinity.

Other examples from Chapter 10:

- Among rivers, **I am Ganga** (*Srotasām asmi Jāhnavī*).
- Among mountains, **I am Meru** (*Śikharīṅām ahaṃ Meruḥ*).
- Among weapons, **I am the thunderbolt** (*Ayudhānām ahaṃ vajram*).
- Among warriors, **I am Rāma** (*Rāmāḥ śastra-bhṛtām ahaṃ*).

Thus, while Bhagavān is present equally everywhere, He highlights certain vibhūtis (special manifestations) to **inspire devotion, facilitate meditation, and strengthen Arjuna's understanding** of His cosmic presence.

Meghana Kulkarni Ji

Q: During the explanation of Verse 15, you mentioned four specific concepts: *Veshti*, *Sṛṣṭi*, *Parameṣṭhi*, and *Samaṣṭi*.

Could you please elaborate on what these terms mean and how they relate to the context of actions described in the Bhagavadgītā?

A: The four concepts mentioned are:

- **Veshti** – The individual existence (one's personal body, mind, and senses)
- **Sṛṣṭi** – The entire external world or Nature (*Prakṛti*)
- **Parameṣṭhi** – The Supreme Being (*Paramātmā*) who governs and pervades everything
- **Samaṣṭi** – The collective existence (society, the community of beings)

These concepts help us understand that **our actions are not isolated** but occur within a larger framework of personal, social, and cosmic realities.

Further, referring specifically to **Verse 18.14**, Bhagavān lists **five factors** involved in every action (*pañca hetavaḥ*):

1. **Adhiṣṭhāna** - The body (the seat of action)
2. **Kartā** - The doer (the one who initiates the action)
3. **Karaṇa** - The various senses and instruments
4. **Cēṣṭāḥ** - The manifold activities and movements
5. **Daivam** - Destiny or unseen divine influence

Thus, every action performed by an individual through body, speech, or mind—whether righteous (*nyāyā*) or unrighteous (*viparīta*)—is shaped by these five factors.

Understanding this framework dissolves egoism and helps cultivate a balanced, detached approach to life.

Archana Singh Ji

Q: Even though I am sincerely reading the Bhagavadgītā, memories of family quarrels and past unpleasantness remain in my mind and disturb my focus during study and meditation.

How can I deal with such lingering emotions and stay centered?

A: This is a genuine and relatable challenge on the spiritual path. One effective way to overcome such disturbances is to **dedicate all actions, thoughts, and emotions to Paramātmā**.

Cultivate the attitude:

"O Bhagavān, I am doing this for You."

If someone insults us once, it affects us naturally.

However, if we **repeatedly recall the insult, replay it in our mind**, and **nurture resentment**, it is **we ourselves** who are causing prolonged suffering—not the original insulter.

Śrī Bhagavān advises **Karma Yoga** in the Bhagavadgītā:

- Perform your duties sincerely.
- Offer all results—pleasant or unpleasant—to the Divine.
- Do not identify yourself with praise or blame.

By sincerely practicing this attitude, the mind gradually disconnects from past emotional wounds and

focuses on the present duties with calmness and joy.

Thus, **Karma Yoga** becomes a healing medicine (*Aushadhi*) for mental agitation.



We are sure you enjoyed reading the Vivechan write-up. Please invest three minutes of your time to provide us your feedback. Use the link below:

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/feedback/>

Thank you-For reading the summary

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

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

Har Ghar Gītā, Har Kar Gītā !

Let's come together with the motto of Geeta Pariwar, and gift our Geeta Classes to all our Family, friends & acquaintances

<https://gift.learngeeta.com/>

Geeta Pariwar has taken a new initiative. Now you can watch YouTube videos and read PDFs of all the interpretation sessions conducted earlier. Please use the below link.

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/>

Learn Geeta, Spread Geeta, Live Geeta

|| OM ŚRĪKṚṢṆĀRPAṆAMASTU ||