

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 17: Śraddhā-Traya-Vibhāga-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/rf121E5IWkw>

The Nature and Fruits of Tapas, Dāna, and Yajñā: The Path of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas

The 17th chapter of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā is titled *Śraddhātrayavibhāga Yoga - The Yoga of the Threefold Division of Faith*. This chapter explores how faith, born of one's inherent nature shaped by the three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas, manifests in various aspects of life: in worship, in austerity, in food habits, and in actions.

The discourse commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the Dīpam (lamp) at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, invoking His divine presence and enveloping the gathering in an atmosphere of profound bhakti and reverence.

With deep devotion, we offer our prostrations to Mātā Sarasvatī, to Gurudev, and to Saint Jñāneśvar, the beacon of divine wisdom:

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

नमामि सद्गुरुं शान्तं सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहम् ।

पूर्णब्रह्मपरानन्दम् ईशमाळन्दिवल्लभम् ॥

यानन्द श्रुतिमंत्र शक्ति महती ब्रह्मात्म विद्यावती
यासूत्रोदित शास्त्रपद्धतिरीति प्रद्योदिनान्तरद्युतिः ।
या सत्काव्यगतिप्रसादितर्मतिर्नानागुणालंकृतिः
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 ॥

Countless salutations at the lotus feet of Mātā Sarasvatī, Bhagavān Vedavyāsa, and Śrī Govind Dev Giri Ji Maharaj, as we invoke their blessings at the start of this sacred journey of Gītā study.

The Bhagavad Gītā, revealed on the sacred soil of Kurukṣetra, is not merely a dialogue between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. It is a divine outpouring of transformative wisdom, a sacred current flowing directly from the lotus lips of the Supreme. Through Arjuna, Bhagavān spoke to all humanity, distilling in 700 verses the essence of the Vedas and the nectar of the Upaniṣads. The Gītā offers a beautiful and practical pāthya (course) for inner evolution and spiritual harmony.

Spoken over 5000 years ago, this eternal wisdom continues to illuminate lives today. The timeless truths of the Gītā purify the heart, guide us towards a life of joy, peace, and fulfilment, and serve as a manual for living in alignment with dharma. It is both a beacon for self-mastery and a map to the inner reservoir of bliss.

Saint Jñāneśvar Mahārāj, in his profound commentary, extolled the Gītā's power with deep reverence. He declared that memorising its śloka is akin to chanting sacred mantras, and internalising their meaning is a sure path to divine realisation. His prayer was:

तैसा वाग्विलास विस्तारू । गीतार्थेसी विश्व भरूं ।
आनंदाचें आवारूं । मांडूं जगा ॥

(May my words expand the Gītā's glory, may the world be filled with its wisdom, and may I help awaken the world with bliss.)

This expresses the vision of a world transformed by spiritual wisdom, a world where the deeper truths of life are embraced, suffering is alleviated, and peace and contentment prevail. But this transformation begins with each of us: "

गीता पढ़ें, पढ़ायें, जीवन में लायें

Read the Gītā, share the Gītā, live the Gītā.

Indeed, Sat-Chit-Ānanda, the Supreme Reality, is nothing other than the Bhagavad Gītā itself

जयतु जयतु गीता वाङ्मयी कृष्णमूर्तिः.

Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa guided Arjuna as his charioteer through the battlefield, so too the vāṅmayī rūpa (embodied in words) of the Gītā guides us through the challenges of life.

As Param Pujya Gurudev beautifully expresses:

सद्गुणों की साधना में, ध्येय-ज्योति नित जले।

संग्राममय जीवन धरा पर, विजय रथ ले हम चले ॥

If our vijaya-ratha (chariot of victory) is to move forward, we must constantly embody the Gītā. Just as iron must be moulded to become a useful nail or screw, we too must be moulded by the sanskāras of Gītā-jñāna. The more we are shaped by these teachings, the more refined and valuable our lives become.

Chapter 17, Śraddhātrayavibhāga Yoga, is vital in this moulding process. It shows us how faith, shaped by our guṇas, determines our spiritual path, and how by purifying our faith, we can elevate

ourselves towards the highest realisation.

Śraddhā - The Foundation of Inner Transformation

According to Gurudeva, the term śraddhā signifies the innate tendency to uphold and embody satya (truth). It is only through śraddhā that satya is assimilated into the innermost being (antaraṅga). Pure tarka (logic) alone cannot grant the realization of truth; tarka may refine (taraśita) the buddhi (intellect), but śraddhā alone leads to the direct prāpti (attainment) of truth. This śraddhā, as earlier discussed, manifests in three distinct forms.

Life is lived and shaped through saṁskāras (refinements, impressions). These operate on pañca-stara (five levels):

- **Śarīra-stara** — the physical body
- **Manah-stara** — the level of the mind
- **Vāñī / Indriya-stara** — the level of speech and senses
- **Buddhi-stara** — the level of intellect
- **Ātma-tattva-stara** — the supreme essential self

It is up to this highest level, the ātma-tattva, that the ṛṣis, munis, sant-mahātmas and great realised beings (mahānubhāvas) ascend, and from that state they reveal the nature (svarūpa) of supreme bliss (paramānanda) which is none other than Paramātman.

When life is to be lived at all these five levels, each must undergo purification (śuddhi). This refining process is called saṁskāra—the uplifting (unnayana) of one's own life.

Āhāra, Yajña, Tapas, and Dāna

In this adhyāya, Bhagavān first speaks of āhāra (food) and yajña (sacrifice). Later, He will speak of tapas (austerity) and dāna (charity).

Āhāra sustains the **vyaktigata jīvana** (personal life). It can lead either to upliftment (unnayana) or degradation (apanayana), depending on the saṁskāras absorbed. Su saṁskāras elevate life, whereas ku-saṁskāras lower it.

Human birth (manuṣya-janma) alone provides the opportunity for unnayana; other births are primarily bhoga-yoni (for experiencing karmic results), whereas human birth is a **yoga-yoni**, a chance for conscious evolution.

The Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā is a divya grantha (divine scripture) where Bhagavān reveals the **samādhi-vidyā**—the science of raising life to the spiritual plane and uniting with Paramātman. Alongside, it also imparts the āhāra-śāstra—the science of food.

These four, āhāra, yajña, tapas, and dāna, can be classified into:

- Personal disciplines: Āhāra and tapas
- Social / collective disciplines: Yajña and dāna, which contribute to the upliftment of society, nation, and ancestral heritage.

Yajña - The Spirit of Collective Offering

A yajña is any saṅghaṭita kriyā (collective action) performed with a selfless spirit (samarpana-bhāva) for the welfare (hita) of creation.

- A sāttvika yajña is performed solely as kartavya (duty), without selfish desire.

- A rājasa yajña is outwardly similar but is undertaken with a wish for personal fruit (phala-kāṅkṣā) or fame (yaśa-kāma).
- A tāmasa yajña brings harm (ahiṃsa-viparīta) to creation and results in akalyāṇa (non-welfare).

The example of the Gītā Mahāyajña was given, where various teams, speakers, coordinators, and behind-the-scenes workers function collectively. The purest yajña arises when the inner feeling is: *“I have received from my Guru; therefore, it is my kartavya to share this wisdom with others.”* Such sāttvika yajña fulfils duty in the highest sense.

Tapas - The Discipline of Refinement

After yajña, Bhagavān turns to tapas. In the sanātana-sanskṛti, tapas is a central principle, signifying “to heat” or “to refine.” Just as gold, when heated, loses impurities and becomes pure (kuṇḍana), so too life must undergo refinement to unite with Paramātman.

Every moment, life draws from creation, air (vāyu), water (jala), and other resources, causing a form of depletion (rāsa). This is replenished through yajña and dāna. Likewise, the personal life-force is depleted, like a battery discharging, and tapas is the process of recharging it, restoring inner strength.

Bhagavān states that tapas is of three kinds:

- **Śārīrika tapas** – discipline of the body (sthūla-śarīra)
- **Vācika tapas** – discipline of speech (vāk)
- **Mānasa tapas** – discipline of the mind (manas)

Control begins from the sthūla (gross) and moves toward the sūkṣma (subtle). Without mastery over the body, mastery over speech and mind is difficult.

Each of these three can themselves be:

- **Sāttvika** – imbued with clarity and leading to jñāna-prakāśa
- **Rājasa** – active, restless, mixed with desire
- **Tāmasa** – inert, harmful, or opposed to upliftment

In this way, Bhagavān teaches Arjuna to see beyond the mere form of action, to its inner bhāva (quality of intention), which determines whether it leads to spiritual ascent or descent.

17.14

devadvijaguruprājña, pūjanaṃ(m) śaucamārjavam, brahmacaryamahimsā ca, śārīraṃ(n) tapa ucyate. 17.14

Worship of gods, the Brāhmaṇs, one’s guru, elders and great soul, purity, straightforwardness, continence and non-violence –these are called penance of the body.

Bhagavān says: ”

“Worship of the devatas, of the twice-born, of the guru and of the wise; purity and straightforwardness; brahmacharya and non-violence — these are called bodily tapas (austerities).”

Now, what is physical tapas? During chātur-māsa (the four-month period), we observe various vratas (vows). We take on these vows, for example, fasting (anāśana, upavāsa), precisely to train ourselves and to practise control over the body, especially control over food. So which of these practices are called tapas? How should tapas itself be defined?

There is a classic definition: tapas is the endurance of dualities — **tapo dvandva-sahanam**. Life alternates between favourable and unfavourable circumstances. We all want comfort and favour, but life cannot be lived only in favourability. Behind favourable times come adversity; behind adversity come favourable times. Pleasure is followed by pain; pain is followed by pleasure: this cycle continues. One must learn to endure both sides. Even pleasure must be borne; it must not make one overflow, it must not be displayed ostentatiously. One must acquire the strength and capacity to endure. That capacity is what tapas gives.

So, what is called bodily tapas? The worship of devatas is one form: going to the temple, performing pūjā. During chāturmāsa, for instance, many observe worship of the Śiva-liṅga or perform a small Rudra-homam; our sanātana tradition prescribes such processes in the Vedic way. The devatas (deities) are the presiding powers of this creation; they govern and sustain the world. For example, we speak of Vāyu as the deity of wind, Varuṇa as the deity of water. Through these various rites, we venerate the devatas.

Then there is the worship of the dvija — the brāhmaṇa. By “brāhmaṇa” here, we do not mean merely a caste-label; the word points to those who preserve the Vedas. Those brāhmaṇas who keep the Vedas on their tongue, who cultivate ojas and discipline their life, who give a form and maintenance to the tradition, they are the crown of our sanātana culture. Therefore, we pay respect to them. Likewise, we reverence the guru: **prājña** — the learned and wise. Those from whom we receive instruction, our spiritual guides, deserve veneration. The term “guru” has a wide meaning, and included here are our parents and elders: those senior in the household, our mother and father, our in-laws, whose worship and service is itself a duty. You may have seen pictures of our Prime Minister with his mother, who lived to a hundred; he bows to his mother and receives a blessing, for without someone having carried us in the womb and reared us, none of us would have reached this life. No one is truly “self-made.” Therefore, worship and gratitude toward devatas, dvijas, gurus, and the wise are enjoined.

Worship of the wise, the prājña means reverence for those who cultivate jñāna; honor those who revere knowledge. Now, śauca (purity) and ārjava (straightforwardness), these refer to keeping life pure and simple, and require their own exertion, their own tapas. ārjava is the absence of crookedness, not having a split inside and outside; it means being straightforward inwardly and outwardly. To maintain that simplicity, one must hold to satya (truth). A person who habitually speaks untruth becomes entangled: sometimes he speaks one untruth here, another there; he slips into confusion. Today, our politicians construct elaborate narratives, spread falsehoods, and attempt to build an ecosystem of deceit, but falsehood cannot endure long. One must be mindful even of the small untruths one tells. Simplicity and truth must be established.

We see this in the example of the students of Drona: the same lesson was taught to the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, “*satyam vada, dharmam chara*” (speak the truth, practise dharma). When Dronācārya asked the next day, everyone recited the lesson, but Yudhiṣṭhira sat silent. Asked again, he still could not reply, and on the third day, he said: “Until yesterday I had been speaking small untruths; today I remembered the lesson and therefore am ashamed.” One must cleanse one’s life of untruth, establish satya. In this context, the injunctions “*devad, dvija, guru, prājña pūjanam; śaucam ārjavam...*” find their meaning. ārjava (straightforward simplicity) is even present in Arjuna’s name, one who is simple and straight from the heart draws close to the Supreme; God dwells near such a person.

Next, brāhmacharya and ahiṃsā are called **śarīra tapa — austerities of the body**. By brahmacharya, here is meant conduct that leads to the realisation of Brahman; it does not necessarily mean mere unmarried status. Even the vow of a faithful wife is sometimes described as a form of brahmacharya. Ahiṃsā means not to cause harm to any living being, not by mind, not by word, not by body. This non-injury is a bodily tapas.

We have also seen the Yaksha-question episode: the Yaksha posed a hundred questions to Yudhiṣṭhira, and Yudhiṣṭhira answered them. The other brothers failed to answer and would have perished. When asked, Yudhiṣṭhira said that tapas is **svadharmavarttittvam** — the observance and perseverance in

one's own duty. This is an exposition in the Mahābhārata: to follow one's svadharma (own duty) there will be difficulties, and those difficulties themselves are tapas. **"Tapaḥ svadharma-varṭittvam"**, we face constant exertions in fulfilling our duty; that exertion is tapas.

As Jñāneśvar Maharaj says:

स्वधर्म जो बापा । तो नित्य यज्ञ जाणपा । तेथे वर्तता पापा । संशय नाही ॥

("One who follows his own svadharma knows that to be a daily yajña; for one engaged in it, there is no doubt of sin.")

This observance is like a nitya-yajña (daily sacrificial practice). Every day we must offer something, that is our daily yajña. The austerities we perform through the body are therefore called śārīra tapa.

But we do not live only at the level of the body. Speech, vāṇī, is extremely important. It must be controlled; it requires restraint and discipline. One must not speak wrong things. That much is clear. Nor must one consume wrong food. Hence, the reason why fasting (anāśana/upavāsa) is prescribed, to discipline intake, and why certain vratas during chāturmāsa are deemed especially important. Another practice is mauna, silence.

Now, what is the tapas of speech? First, let us look at what Bhagavan says...

17.15

anudvegakaraṃ(m) vākyam(m), satyam(m) priyahitam(ñ) ca yat, svādhyāyābhyasanam(ñ) caiva, vāñmayam(n) tapa ucyate. 17.15

Words which cause no annoyance to others and are truthful, agreeable and beneficial, as well as the study of Vedas and other Śāstras and the practice of the chanting of Divine Name— this is known as penance of speech.

Our daily Gītā-pāṭha (recitation of the Gītā) also comes under this category of austerity. Bhagavān says: Anudvega-karaṃ priya-hitam ca satyam yat vākyam, meaning, the words that leave our lips should be such that they cause no agitation to anyone. They should be gentle, soft, and soothing.

The first test of such speech is: it must cause no distress, anudvega-karaṃ vākyam. But that alone is not enough. It must also be true (satyam). It should be pleasant (priyam), and it should be beneficial (hitam).

If we praise someone but that praise is not truly beneficial for them, if it doesn't lead to their real welfare, then it fails the test. Thus, the criteria for austerity of speech are:

- 1. No one should feel agitated or hurt by it.
- 2. It must be truthful.
- 3. It must be pleasant.
- 4. It must be beneficial.

Sometimes a truth may be unpleasant. If it is not beneficial, it is better to avoid saying it. But where someone's welfare depends on hearing the truth, even if it is unpleasant, it should be spoken. Conversely, if speaking the truth would harm them, it is better to remain silent.

It is said: **Satyam brūyāt, priyam brūyāt** - Speak what is true, speak what is pleasant. But one must not speak falsehood just because it is pleasant, nor speak truth in a way that causes

unnecessary hurt.

Kabir ji says:

ऐसी वाणी बोलिए, मन का आपा खोए।

औरों को शीतल करे, खुद भी शीतल होए॥

Speak in such a way that you lose the fever of your own mind; words that cool others will also cool you.

Our speech should be like a steady stream of peace, flowing continuously, refreshing others and ourselves.

Śrī Jñāneśwar Mahārāj has expressed this beautifully:

तैसे साच आणि मवाळ, मितुले आणि रसाळ।

बोल जैसे कल्लोळ अमृताचे ॥

॥ २७० ॥

“Speak as gently as the moon’s rays at twilight, as sweet as the murmuring of nectar.”

The words of Jñāneśwar Mahārāj themselves seem like nectar; when they enter the ear, they travel inward and soothe the heart, as if infusing nectar within.

Such speech does not come naturally; it requires tapas. One must cultivate it consciously. This is why Bhagavān also adds: svādhyāyābhyasanam caiva, the practice of svādhyāya (spiritual self-study).

What is svādhyāya?

Reading the newspaper, messages on WhatsApp, or posts on social media is reading (vācanam), but it does not purify the mind; it is volatile and quickly forgotten.

Studying worldly knowledge is adhyayana.

But svādhyāya is a study undertaken for the purification of the mind. This includes reciting the Bhagavad Gītā, the Rāmcaritmānas, the Jñāneśwarī, the Dāsboḍh, and the Vedas.

As Gurudev says, such recitation purifies speech. Here, when we learn the Gītā, memorise it, and practise correct pronunciation, that is svādhyāya. Bhagavān calls this tapas.

Why? Because it requires discipline. You must wake up at a set time, attend your class punctually, adjust your lifestyle to fit your practice, and follow certain rules to be present for discourses. All this is part of tapas.

Our speech reveals our inner saṁskāras. Some people’s words are naturally harsh, crude, or even laced with abuse. But the speech of one who practises vāñmaya tapas is refined and uplifting.

Here is an example. Once, a blind saint was seated under a tree in a forest, absorbed in study and meditation. The king of that land entered the forest with his minister and a soldier to hunt. In the forest, they became separated.

First, the soldier came across the saint and shouted harshly, “Hey, blind man! Did you hear anyone pass by here?” The saint replied calmly, “No, I did not hear anyone pass.”

Later, the minister arrived and said, “O holy one, has anyone passed this way?” The saint said, “Yes, someone passed earlier. He asked me if I had heard footsteps. That was probably the soldier. He went this way.”

Finally, the king arrived. Before speaking, he removed his footwear, bowed at the saint’s feet, and said respectfully, “Revered Mahārāj, did you hear anyone passing by?” The saint replied, “O King, your minister and, earlier still, your soldier passed this way.”

Surprised, the king asked, “Maharaj, you are blind, how did you know that I am the king, and also identify the minister and the soldier?” The saint said, “From your speech. Your tone was filled with humility; you removed your shoes, bowed, and addressed me respectfully as ‘Maharaj.’ The minister called me ‘Baba’, less formal but still courteous. The soldier called me ‘Hey, blind man!’, rude and unrefined. From speech alone, one’s saṁskāras are revealed. This is vāñmaya tapas.”

But Bhagavān does not stop at the austerity of speech; He says, there must also be austerity of mind. For that, inner purity is essential, and that too requires its tapas.

17.16

manaḥ(ph) prasādaḥ(s) saumyatvaṁ(m), maunamātmavinigrahaḥ, bhāvasaṁśuddhirityetat, tapo mānasamucyate. 17.16

Cheerfulness of mind, placidity, habit of contemplation on God, control of mind and perfect purity of inner feelings—all this is called austerity of the mind..

Manah-prasādaḥ means cultivating the habit of keeping the mind in a state of constant cheerfulness, both in favourable and unfavourable situations. This is an inner discipline; no one else can see what is going on inside. Whether things go according to our wishes or not, the mind should remain poised.

Favourable situations should not make us leap into euphoria; unfavourable situations should not plunge us into sorrow or depression. This inner cheerfulness (antaḥkaraṇa-prasannatā) is a sign of great strength.

In Marathi, there is a saying: "

मन करा रे प्रसन्न ।

सर्व सिद्धीचें कारण ।

मोक्ष अथवा बंधन ।

सुख समाधान इच्छा ते ॥१॥

A cheerful heart is the cause of all success. If the mind can be trained to remain steady and pleasant, it will not be shaken even by a thousand sorrows. But if the mind wilts, our very steps will falter.

The Bhagavad Gītā is a deeply psychological scripture, it offers us the inner support and tools needed to steady the mind.

Saumyatvam—gentleness in our behaviour. The word saumya is related to Soma, the Moon. Just as the moon is cooling, pleasing, and refreshing, so too is the nature of one who is saumya. Such a person’s presence brings joy to others; their very arrival creates a sense of ease and delight in the minds of people.

Maunam—silence. Here, silence is considered an austerity of the mind. Notice, Bhagavān does not classify it as an austerity of speech. Simply keeping the lips closed is not true silence if the mind is still chattering—making comments, reacting internally, or generating endless thoughts.

True mauna is when the mind itself becomes silent. The mind is moulded into stillness. This is a tapas, a conscious effort.

Jñāneśwar Mahārāj describes this beautifully:

बोलतया बोलताचि भेटे । तेथें बोलिलें हें न घटे ।
तें मौन तंव गोमटें । स्तवन माझें ॥

“Where words themselves meet their fulfilment, there speaking does not decrease; there, silence itself becomes praise.”

Such silence is perfect when the mind becomes one with Paramātmā, when the very One we wish to speak about, Bhagavān, becomes directly experienced. In that union, silence itself becomes stavanam (praise). That is the supreme mauna.

Ātma-vinigrahaḥ—self-control. Until a person learns to discipline themselves, they cannot hope to influence or discipline others. If I myself do not observe certain vows, I cannot ask my daughter-in-law or children to follow them.

When elders in a family take up certain vows sincerely, such as observing fasts in the holy month of Śrāvaṇa, these naturally get transmitted to the younger generation. The daughter may ask her mother, “What do you do on Mondays?” and begin following it herself. The daughter-in-law may see her mother-in-law’s practice and adopt it without being told. This is the quiet power of ātma-vinigraha.

The poet Ghalib expressed the opposite of this beautifully:

ताउम्र गालिब ये भूल करता रहा,
धूल चेहरे पर थी और मैं आइना साफ़ करता रहा

All his life, Ghalib kept making the same mistake: the dust was on his face, but he kept polishing the mirror.

Unless we purify our own life, we cannot hope to purify the lives of others. And if we try without self-purification, we will fail. Hence, Bhagavān includes ātma-vinigraha as a mental austerity.

Bhāva-saṁsuddhiḥ—purification of emotions and intentions. Gurudev explains this as: Always think positively. Whatever happens, try to see the good in it.

Do not fall into suspicion, thinking, “They must be talking about me.” Remove such wrong assumptions from your life. If negative feelings arise, consciously turn them into positive ones. If that is difficult, then turn the mind towards a place where such feelings can be purified, the lotus feet of the Bhagavān.

Jñāneśwar Mahārāj gives a beautiful image:

रुणुझुणु रुणुझुणु रे भ्रमरा । सांडीं तूं अवगुणु रे भ्रमरा ॥१॥
चरणकमळदळू रे भ्रमरा । भोगीं तूं निश्चळू रे भ्रमरा ॥२॥
सुमनसुगंधु रे भ्रमरा । परिमळु विद्गु रे भ्रमरा ॥३॥

सौभाग्यसुंदरू रे भ्रमरा । बाप रखुमादेविवरू रे भ्रमरा ॥४॥

“O, mind! You are like a restless bee, flitting here and there, drinking from any flower. Leave aside these flawed pursuits and drink only the pollen from the lotus feet of the Bhagavān. There you will find stillness, and your emotions will be purified.”

When the mind takes refuge at the Bhagavān’s feet, its emotions become clear and clean. These pure feelings reflect the presence of the Divine within.

To remember Bhagavān, to keep the memory of Krishna alive, to recall His smiling face even in times of struggle, this is bhāva-saṁśuddhi. Gurudev says that even in the most challenging circumstances, the smile never leaves Krishna’s lips.

In this way, we must train our minds to remain in a state of cheerfulness.

मन के हारे हार है, मन के जीते जीत।

कहे कबीर हरि पाइए मन ही की परतीत ।।

If the mind is defeated, we are defeated; if the mind wins, we win.

Thus, the Gītā, as a supreme psychological guide, teaches us about mānasa tapas, the austerities of the mind. And Bhagavān further explains that all these three types of austerities, of body, speech, and mind, can be sāttvika, rājasika, or tāmasika.

17.17

**śraddhayā parayā taptam(n), tapastattrividham(n) naraiḥ,
aphalākāṅkṣibhiryuktaiḥ(s), sāttvikam(m) paricakṣate. 17.17**

This threefold penance performed with supreme faith by Yogīs expecting no return is called Sāttvika.

Bhagavān describes the threefold austerity (trividha tapas), physical, verbal, and mental tapas, which themselves can be categorized into sāttvika, rājasika, and tāmasika types.

When is tapas called sāttvika?

Bhagavān says: Śraddhayā parayā taptam, a tapas performed with supreme faith, parayā śraddhā, an unwavering, complete conviction.

Not just ordinary faith, but the highest faith based on truth as expressed by the ṛṣis and Gurudev in the Gītā. For instance, Mira Bāī’s guru said to her with complete conviction:

“मेरे तो गिर गिरिधर गोपाल दूसरो न कोई”

“Mine is only Gir Giridhara Gopal; there is no other.”

This is the essence of parayā śraddhā, wholehearted acceptance and surrender to the Divine truth.

A person who practices all three types of tapas with such unwavering faith, without any desire for results (aphalākāṅkṣa), is said to be performing sāttvika tapas. Such a tapas seeks true upliftment, aspiring to reach the Supreme Reality and transform life into pure gold.

This selfless tapas, free from craving, leads to spiritual progress and true purification.

However, when austerities are done for show, hypocrisy, or to impress others, “*What will people say if I don’t do it?*”, or to get worldly recognition like in newspapers or the Guinness Book of Records, that

tapas is rājasika tapas.

Though rājasika tapas might bring some worldly gains or advancement, it is driven by desire and ego, thus limiting its spiritual effectiveness.

Bhagavān clarifies that tapas done for fame or personal glory falls under this category, and while it may yield some fruit, it is far from the highest spiritual tapas.

17.18

satkāramānapūjārthaṃ(n), tapo dambhena caiva yat, kriyate tadiha proktaṃ(m), rājasaṃ(ñ) calamadhruvam. 17.18

The austerity which is performed for the sake of renown, honor or adoration, as well as for any other selfish gain, either in all sincerity or by way of ostentation, and yields an uncertain and momentary fruit, has been spoken of here as Rājasika.

Bhagavān now describes the second type of tapas, rājasika tapas. This applies to the physical, verbal, and mental austerities that are performed with the desire for honor, recognition, and praise.

These austerities are done so that one receives satkāra, respect, and reverence from others. One wishes their name to be mentioned publicly, to be honored in newspapers, or to be praised by the community.

All such tapas done for show and external recognition, motivated by pride or vanity (dambha), are considered rājasika tapas.

Bhagavān explains that this tapas yields adhruva, temporary, and unstable results.

The word dhruva means permanent, certain, or lasting fruits, but adhruva means fleeting, momentary, or temporary outcomes. Thus, rājasika tapas is described as producing adhruva fruits, fruits that do not endure across time. These austerities are performed for ostentation, to display greatness, or to gain social status and honor.

Therefore, any tapas motivated by ego, show-off, or hypocrisy falls under rājasika.

The third kind of tapas is tāmasika tapas, explained in the next Sloka

17.19

mūḍhagrāheṇātmano yat, pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ, parasyotsādanārthaṃ(m) vā, tattāmasamudāhṛtam. 17.19

Penance which is resorted to out of foolish obstinacy and is accompanied with self-mortification or is intended to harm others, such penance has been declared as Tāmasika.

Bhagavān explains that austerity (tapas) performed with ignorance and stubborn attachment to false or rigid doctrines, mūḍha-grāhaṇa, is futile and worthless.

Mūḍha-grāhaṇa means to grasp a principle or belief so rigidly and ignorantly that one is unwilling to change or reconsider it, no matter what. This kind of dogmatism is known as rūḍhi in the scriptures, fixed habits or views that become deeply entrenched, often blocking spiritual progress. Scriptures

warn that such rūḍhi (rigid attachments to wrong beliefs) can obstruct true understanding. Those who truly know the scriptures and have deep knowledge understand this well.

Bhagavān further states that austerities undertaken to cause harm to others, or to bring suffering upon them, are considered tāmasika tapas, the lowest and darkest form of austerity.

It is important to note that merely inflicting pain upon the body, hoping thereby to attain Bhagavān, is misguided.

The speaker has clarified that the body itself is the sacred abode of Bhagavān.

In Bhagavad Gītā, Chapter 13, it is said:

"Kṣetraṁ hi mām eva ye prapadyante nānyaḥ paśyati"

The body (kṣetra) and the knower of the body (kṣetrajña) are both essentially Divine. All living beings are eternal parts of Bhagavān (mama vaṁśo jīvo jīva-bhūta sanātanaḥ).

Hence, the body deserves respect, balance, and care. Excessive pain or harm to the body contradicts this principle.

Further, some perform austerities with the intention of harming others.

The speaker recounts a story of a man who performed intense tapas, and Bhagavān appeared before him.

The man requested a boon.

The Bhagavān said, *"Whatever you desire will be given to you, but your neighbour or enemy will receive twice as much."*

Faced with this, the man reflected deeply and finally said, *"Then let one of my eyes be blinded, so that both eyes of my enemy will be blinded."*

This reflects the mindset of those who perform austerities for the harm of others.

Bhagavān calls such austerities tāmasika, the darkest kind.

Now, turning towards dāna, charity and giving, Bhagavān speaks of purification for social upliftment. While tapas purifies the individual body and mind, dāna is the practice that uplifts society and the entire creation. When one takes from creation for personal needs, it may cause some harm or depletion in the cosmic balance. To compensate, one must give back to the world; this is the principle of yajña and dāna, the sacred institutions of reciprocity and generosity.

The speaker explains that charity removes inner impurities (malinata) and brings honour and respect (yaśa) to the giver.

Just as life can be viewed on four levels:

- **Vyasti** (individual),
- **Samashti** (collective/social),
- **Sṛṣṭi** (creation/nature), and
- **Parameṣṭhī** (the Supreme Being),

and the five layers of human existence are:

- body,
- senses,

- mind,
- intellect, and
- soul,

Similarly, these levels correspond in the spiritual and social spheres.

Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of purification at all these levels. What one receives from the world must be purified and returned appropriately. Thus, dāna is not merely charity, but a sacred duty to restore balance in the cosmic order.

17.20

dātavyamiti yaddānaṃ(n), diyate'nupakāriṇe, deśe kāle ca pātre ca, taddānaṃ(m) sātṭvikam(m) smṛtam. 17.20

A gift which is bestowed with a sense of duty on one from whom no return is expected, at appropriate time and place, and to a deserving person, that gift has been declared as Sātṭvika.

The scripture declares that charity (dāna) must be given with proper consideration of the cause, place, time, and recipient. Simply giving is not enough; where, when, and to whom one gives are crucial factors that determine the quality of the charity.

Bhagavān teaches that giving (dāna) is a sacred duty (kartavya). Life can be understood as having two distinct phases,

- The **ādāna kāla** (period of receiving),
- And the **pradāna kāla** (period of giving).

When we are young and dependent on our parents, it is our natural phase to receive (ādāna). This is our destiny and necessity. But giving (pradāna) is our true blessing and fortunate opportunity. Once we receive blessings and resources, we owe it to life and society to return a portion, as a mark of gratitude and respect.

Jñāneśvar Maharaj beautifully expresses this principle in his words:

तरी स्वधर्मा आंतौतें । जें जें मिळे आपणयातें ।

ते तें दीजे बहुतें । सन्मानयोगें ॥ २६६ ॥

Whatever a man has received through performing his religious duties he should respectfully give [again to others].

Even if it is as little as 10% of what one has received, giving is essential. Thus, dātavyam means the charity that must be given; it is a solemn responsibility. However, this dātavyam is not merely about giving; it must be done at the right place (deśa), at the right time (kāla), and to the right recipient (pātra).

- **Place (Deśa):** Charity given at sacred and auspicious places, like the holy banks of the River Ganges, has far greater spiritual merit.
- **Time (Kāla):** Charity done at auspicious moments, such as Amavasya (new moon) or Vyatipāta (certain astrological timings), is said to yield eternal and lasting merit.
- **Recipient (Pātra):** The recipient must be deserving and worthy. Charity given indiscriminately, without understanding the needs or character of the recipient, may not lead to true welfare of the world.

For example, giving blankets to people during winter is beneficial, but throwing away old unused

items or giving indiscriminately is not considered sāt̥tvika dāna. Giving must be thoughtful, considering whether the recipient truly needs the item at that time and place. Charity offered to those protecting cows (gau rakṣaṇa) or serving Gau Māta is regarded as highly meritorious. The attitude with which charity is given is also crucial. It should be done humbly, without arrogance or a sense of superiority.

Bhagavān calls this sāt̥tvika dāna, charity done with devotion, respect, and humility.

The qualities of sāt̥tvika dāna include:

- **Śraddhādeyam:** Giving with faith and conviction.
- **Śriyādeyam:** Giving that is beneficial and auspicious.
- **Bhiyādeyam:** Giving with humility and a sense of smallness before the recipient.
- **Ryādeyam:** Giving with full involvement and sincerity.
- **Saṁvidādeyam:** Giving with full awareness and understanding of the recipient's needs.

A story from the scriptures illustrates the essence of dāna:

When Brahmā was asked by daivas, aśuras, and humans to teach them about charity, he gave one simple word, dā (give).

Yet, this word carries different meanings depending on the nature of the receiver:

- To control the gods (devatā), who are often indulged in luxury, one must practice dama (discipline and control).
- To the demons (dānavas), who are often cruel, one must show dayā (compassion).
- To humans (mānava), dāna (charity) is the highest duty.

Charity cleanses the inner impurities (mala) of the giver and liberates one's ancestors.

When the Yakṣa asked who attains fame and glory (yaśaḥ and kīrti), the answer was that only those who give sāt̥tvika dāna receive lasting honour and reputation.

However, charity given with an expectation of some reward or personal gain, such as political influence, a position of power, or social status, is rājasika dāna.

Such charity, though seemingly generous, is motivated by desire and ambition, and thus lacks true spiritual merit.

17.21

**yattu pratyupakārārthaṁ(m), phalamuddiśya vā punaḥ,
dīyate ca parikliṣṭaṁ(n), taddānaṁ(m) rājasam(m) smṛtam. 17.21**

A gift which is bestowed in grudging spirit and with the object of getting a service in return or in the hope of obtaining a reward, is called Rājasika.

Bhagavān explains that charity (dāna) given with some difficulty or distress, yet for a worthy cause, is not inferior or blameworthy. Such charity, though not the highest or most ideal, is still necessary and acceptable in life.

Sometimes, due to circumstances, one must give with some discomfort or inconvenience. For example, when a trusted institution or group is engaged in noble work, one feels compelled to contribute despite the difficulty. This is considered pariklaṣṭa dāna, charity given with effort or

hardship.

However, when charity is given with the expectation of return or reward, such as public recognition, fame, or a place in some record, this is considered rājasika dāna.

Giving with such a motive means one desires fruit or benefit (phala) from the act.

Bhagavān cautions against this mindset, as it diminishes the spiritual merit of the charity.

True sātṭvika dāna is selfless and humble.

An illustrative story from the teachings of Tulsidas highlights this virtue:

ऐसी देनी देन जु कित सीखे हो सेन।

ज्यों ज्यों कर ऊँचौ करौ त्यों त्यों नीचे नैन॥

A great donor was once asked, "How do you give charity so modestly and humbly, without pride or display? Your eyes look down when you give."

देनहार कोई और है भेजत जो दिन रैन।

लोग भरम हम पर करै तासौं नीचे नैन॥

The donor replied, "I am not the true giver; someone else is the giver, and I am merely the messenger. The true donor is the Divine, who provides me the means to give. I simply pass it along."

Such a spirit of detachment and humility, recognizing oneself as an instrument rather than the source, is the hallmark of sātṭvika dāna.

Bhagavān categorizes charity into three types:

- **Sātṭvika dāna:** Given with faith, humility, and selflessness.
- **Rājasika dāna:** Given with desire for reward, recognition, or influence.
- **Tāmasika dāna:** Given carelessly, without thought, or to unworthy recipients.

Bhagavān stresses that these qualities of life, faith (śraddhā), humility (vinaya), and purity (śuddhi), should permeate all our actions to lead a life of spiritual progress.

Yet, perfection in any action is rare; some deficiency or shortcoming often remains. This reality is acknowledged by Bhagavān, who prescribes a sacred mantra to compensate for such deficiencies.

When we perform worship, rituals, ceremonies, or even social functions like marriages, some imperfection remains in the act. To purify and sanctify these actions, Bhagavān advises invoking the sacred primal sound, the pranava, the eternal cosmic vibration.

This mantra is the sacred Om, the sound symbolizing the Supreme Reality.

As mentioned in the Bhagavad Gītā (Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā), in Chapter 8, Verse 13:

"Om tat sat iti"

meaning "Om, That is the Truth."

Chanting Om before any action sanctifies it, invoking the timeless and all-pervading essence of the cosmos.

Jñāneśvar Maharaj also beautifully emphasizes this practice, recommending that before every act, one invokes Om, thereby connecting with the Supreme and ensuring the work is pure and beneficial for the long-term welfare of all creation.

Thus, the proper giving of charity, coupled with humble intent and sanctified by sacred sound and

devotion, leads to true spiritual progress and societal upliftment.

17.22

adeśakāle yaddānam, apātrebhyaśca dīyate, asatkṛtamavajñātaṃ(n), tattāmasamudāhṛtam. 17.22

A gift which is made without good grace and in disdainful spirit out of time and place and to undeserving persons, is said to be Tāmasika.

Bhagavān explains that charity given without proper consideration of time, place, and recipient, without respect or honor, is worthless and even harmful. When one gives money or resources without discerning the deserving recipient, or disregards the occasion and context, such charity is deemed asat (untrue, improper) and asamudātam (wrongly given).

For example, if money is thrown away or carelessly handed over without respect, or given to those who misuse it, it becomes an insult to both the giver and the receiver.

If funds meant for charity fall into the hands of the wrong people, perhaps those who exploit them to cause harm, such as building weapons or explosives, this constitutes apātrabhyaśa, giving to the unworthy.

This leads not only to waste but also actively contributes to harm in society. Bhagavān calls such charity tāmasika dāna, the lowest and most harmful form of giving.

Even if the act appears charitable, such as funding entertainment programs or festivals that do not contribute to the true welfare and upliftment of society or creation (sṛṣṭi), such charity is considered apātra dāna, charity to the unfit, and is therefore tāmasika in nature.

Bhagavān thus categorizes charity, austerity, and sacrifice (yajña, dāna, tapas) based on the purity of intention, timing, recipient, and manner of offering. True sanctity and spiritual efficacy of these acts arise only when they are performed with awareness, faith, and purity.

To aid this, Bhagavān prescribes invoking the sacred Om tat sat, the supreme name and primal sound of the Absolute.

The mantra "**Om tat sat**" serves as a seal of spiritual purity, sanctifying the offering and action. Through this invocation, the act becomes aligned with the cosmic order and universal welfare.

Thus, our institutions of yajña (sacrifice), dāna (charity), and tapas (austerity) are purified and elevated when performed with devotion, discernment, and sanctity, as symbolized by Om tat sat.

17.23

oṃ tatsaditi nirdeśo, brahmaṇastrividhaḥ(s) smṛtaḥ, brāhmaṇāstena vedāśca, yajñāśca vihitāḥ(ph) purā. 17.23

OM, TAT, and SAT- this has been declared as the triple appellation of Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss. By that were the Brāhmaṇas and the Vedas as well as sacrifices created at the cosmic dawn.

Om Tat Sat , The Supreme Vedic Names and Their Profound Significance

The sacred phrase "Om Tat Sat" is a triple directive given by Bhagavān, rooted deeply in the Vedas and Brahmanic tradition. It represents the supreme Absolute Reality, Parmatmā, in its fullest manifestation.

The Threefold Names: Om, Tat, and Sat

Bhagavān designates Om, Tat, and Sat as the threefold names of the Satcitānanda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) Brahman, the Ultimate Divine Principle.

- **Om** is the primordial sound and symbol of the Absolute.
- **Tat** means "That," pointing to the ineffable Supreme.
- **Sat** means "Truth" or "Existence," referring to the eternal reality.

Om: The Primordial Syllable and Its Cosmic Significance

Om is the primal sound, the seed bīja mantra of creation. It contains within itself the essence of the three major cosmic functions represented by the Hindu Trimūrti:

- ॐ
(A), Akar, represents Brahmā, the Creator.
- ँ
(U), Ukar, represents Viṣṇu, the Preserver and Sustainer.
- ऌ
(M), Makar, represents Mahēśvara (Śiva), the Destroyer and Transformer.

This A-U-M sound symbolizes the complete cosmic cycle of creation, preservation, and dissolution.

The Turiya and the Subtle Sound

Beyond the threefold sound, Om also encompasses the Turiya state, the fourth state of consciousness transcending waking (jāgrat), dreaming (svapna), and deep sleep (suṣupti). This transcendent silence or ardha-chinha (the half-moon shaped symbol in Om) denotes the ultimate reality beyond all states of mind.

Om Tat Sat as a Brahmanic Mantra

The phrase Om Tat Sat is traditionally used to consecrate and sanctify all auspicious actions. It is the Vedic directive that guarantees purity and spiritual efficacy in one's deeds, be they rituals, sacrifices (yajña), charity (dāna), or austerity (tapas).

The Eternal Foundation of Creation and Dharma

The Vedas, Brahmins, and yajñas themselves emerged from this supreme truth, symbolized by Om Tat Sat. At the beginning of cosmic creation, these three were established as pillars sustaining dharma and cosmic order.

Invocation in Daily Life and Rituals

The sacred mantra Om Tat Sat is chanted at the start and end of spiritual acts to cleanse and elevate them. It is said that chanting Lord Viṣṇu's name twelve times after any action removes all faults and errors from that deed.

Universal Peace and Spiritual Power

Om is also recognized across many traditions as a universal sound of peace, symbolizing the One Reality behind all religions and spiritual paths. It resonates as a cosmic vibration that calms the mind and connects the seeker to the Divine.

Thus, Bhagavān's instruction to invoke Om Tat Sat before all actions serves as a spiritual safeguard,

aligning our deeds with the highest truth and ensuring that even if errors occur, they are washed away in the cosmic purity of this sacred name.

17.24

tasmādomityudāhṛtya, yajñadānatapaḥ(kh) kriyāḥ, pravartante vidhānoktāḥ(s), satataṃ(m) brahmavādinām. 17.24

Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity as enjoined by sacred precepts are always commenced by noble persons, used to the recitation of Vedic chants, with the invocation of the divine name 'OM'.

Tasmād Om Tat Sat - The Eternal Principle Guiding Yajña, Dāna, and Tapas

Bhagavān says: “Tasmāt”, therefore, it is said, “Brahmavādī nāma”, the person who is a Brahmavādī, i.e., one who reveres Brahman (the Absolute) and upholds the Vedas. The word Brahma here not only means the Supreme but also the Vedas themselves.

The highest among humanity are those who pronounce the Vedas and who perform yajña (sacrifice), dāna (charity), and tapas (austerity) according to the sacred scriptures and prescribed rules (vidhi). These acts, yajña, dāna, tapas, are called “kriyā” (spiritual actions).

Continuous Observance of the Sacred Kriyā with Om

Such a Brahmavādī always performs these sacred acts continuously (satatam), beginning every action with “Om.” All actions start with the utterance of Om, which is the primordial sound and symbol of the Supreme.

As Jñāneśvar Maharaj beautifully explains:

जे ॐकाराने आरंभिले, तत् शब्दाने ब्रह्मार्पिले ।

म्हणून ते कर्म झाले ब्रह्मस्वरूप ॥

(When Omkāra is invoked at the beginning, and the action is offered to Brahman with the word tat, then that deed itself becomes the form of Brahman.)

In other words, every action, whether reading the Bhagavad Gītā or performing any spiritual practice, must begin with Om , calling upon that supreme power and taking it along.

Om as the Divine Name and Its Power

Just as Jñāneśvar Maharaj says, when calling a child, a name is given that the child responds to with “hā hā.” Similarly, Om is the sacred name of the Supreme Being. When we call out Om, the Divine comes immediately, joining us in the act: “Om, come with me.” Whether we are about to undertake tapas, dāna, or any karma, we begin by calling Om to take that power within us.

Tat -The Offering and Surrender

After the action has begun and been performed with Om, what comes next?

Jñāneśvar Maharaj continues:

तत् शब्दाने ब्रह्मा अर्पिले”

With the word tat, we offer the action to Brahman.

Tat means “that”, not a particular name, but the universal supreme principle, the creator, the energy behind all. We dedicate our action to tat, surrendering it to the Divine.

So the sequence is:

- Om, to call the Divine

- Tat, to offer and surrender the act to the Divine

Sat - The Purifying and Dissolving of Duality

Why is the word Sat added?

Sat means “truth” or “reality.” Jñāneśvar Maharaj explains:

When we call upon the Divine with Om and perform the act with surrender through tat, still there remains a subtle sense of “I did this”, the ego of doership and duality.

By invoking Sat, this dualistic sense is cleansed and dissolved. The doer and the action merge into the supreme truth.

The Transformative Power of Om Tat Sat

Thus, when we invoke:

- Om, calling the Divine to be present
- Tat, offering the act to the Divine
- Sat, purifying the action and dissolving the sense of ego

The action becomes sacred, free from ego and duality, and attains perfection.

Jñāneśvar Maharaj poetically expresses this:

म्हणून ब्रह्मातले द्वैतपण, आत्मस्वरूपी व्हाया क्षीण ।
सत् शब्द तो तिसरा जाण, ठेवला आहे नामात ॥

(By uttering Sat, the duality between Brahman and oneself is washed away, merging into the true Self.)

Spiritual Implication: The End of Ego and Complete Surrender

Through this mantra, the doer’s ego vanishes. The thought of “I did this” or “I offered this” disappears. The devotee realizes: “Whatever was done, it was done by the Supreme. I am but an instrument.”

This is the highest teaching in this chapter, the perfection of action through surrender and the cleansing of the ego.

By this, the ego ‘I did it’ vanishes, as does the feeling ‘You did it’—everything is surrendered. Jñāneśvar Maharaj says:

किंबहुना तुमचे केले, धर्म कीर्तन सिद्धीस नेले ।
येथे माझे जी उरले, पाईकपण ।।

The religious acts, devotional singing, and spiritual achievements done through this formula become complete and sanctified.”

Summary

- Om initiates the spiritual action with divine invocation.
- Tat surrenders the action to the supreme cause.
- Sat purifies the action by removing the ego and duality.

Together, Om Tat Sat ensures that all yajñas, dānas, tapas, and other sacred actions are performed in alignment with Brahman, yielding their fullest spiritual benefit.

**tadityanabhisandhāya, phalaṃ(m) yajñatapaḥ(kh) kriyāḥ,
dānakriyāśca vividhāḥ(kh), kriyante mokṣakāṅkṣibhiḥ. 17.25**

With the idea that all this belongs to God, who is denoted by the appellation 'TAT', acts of sacrifice and austerity as well as acts of charity of various kinds are performed by seekers of liberation, expecting no return for them.

O Arjuna, those who aspire for liberation (**mokṣa-kāṅkṣī**), liberation here does not mean merely leaving the physical body, but rather attaining freedom from attachment (moha) and bondage while still embodied. It means liberation from suffering, liberation from the fear of consequences even, while living in this body.

The fear that now troubles you, the fear of the consequences of war, know that this very mantra, “Om Tat Sat” will grant you that liberation. It is for this purpose that I am instructing you. Even the act of engaging in war, when performed with this understanding and feeling of surrender, can be offered as a sacred act.

If your inner attitude is pure and sincere, then even a hangman who executes a death sentence, when accompanied by the mantra “Om Tat Sat”, is performing an act aligned with truth (sat). The deed is sanctified by the invocation of this mantra.

Therefore, the word Tat here signifies offering the fruits of your actions without expectation, performing diverse acts of sacrifice (yajña), austerity (tapas), rituals (kriyā), and charity (dāna) without desire for personal gain or reward.

Those who truly desire liberation, the mūmuksu (seekers of liberation), recite this mantra and perform their life's duties with this understanding. Arjuna, when one performs such acts with the recitation of Om Tat Sat, how do these acts become sanctified? They become “sat”, pure, eternal, and abiding.

Such acts, performed with this spirit, contribute to the welfare of creation (śṛṣṭi), remain ever fruitful, and ultimately reach the Supreme Being. Thus, O Arjuna, this mantra sanctifies all actions, making them a path to liberation and cosmic harmony.

17.26

**sadbhāve sādhubhāve ca, sadyetatprayujyate,
praśaste karmaṇi tathā, sacchabdaḥ(ph) pārtha yujyate. 17.26**

The name of God, 'SAT' is used in the sense of reality and goodness. And the word 'SAT' is also used in the sense of a praiseworthy and auspicious action, Arjuna.

“Sat’ (truth, existence) is used to denote good intentions (sadbhāva), noble feelings (sādhu bhāva), and the excellent nature (satya bhāva) inherent in actions.

O Pārtha, the word ‘Sat’ is employed to indicate these pure, noble, and righteous feelings. Therefore, actions performed with such true and noble sentiments are praised and considered excellent.

When one begins the process of offering their actions to the Supreme, the actions themselves gradually become purified by that very offering. The word ‘karma’ in the Bhagavad Gītā signifies such ‘Satkarma’, true and pure action.

The Bhagavān says:

“Karmaṇi api sat śabda yujyate”

“Even in action, the word ‘Sat’ (truth) is applied.”

This denotes that these actions are not just ordinary deeds, but those that endure for a long time, have lasting effects, and promote the welfare of the entire creation.

These are the actions of the sages and seers (ṛṣis and munis), whose austerities and spiritual practices continue to benefit this universe.

Even today, in the Himalayas and other sacred places, there are sages and ascetics who perform such tapas (austerities), offering their actions without any desire for reward or fruit.

They perform their penances without any expectation of gain, and their actions reach and please the Supreme Being directly. Thus, these are the true, eternal actions dedicated to the highest purpose, the welfare and upliftment of the entire cosmos.”

17.27

**yajñe tapasi dāne ca, sthitiḥ(s) saditi cocyate,
karma caiva tadarthīyaṃ(m), sadyevābhidhīyate. 17.27**

And steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity and charity is likewise spoken of as ‘SAT’ and action for the sake of God is verily termed as ‘SAT’.

“Yajña (sacrifice), tapa (austerity), dāna (charity), and steady conduct, these are all upheld by the word ‘Sat’ (truth, purity).”

When we prefix ‘Sat’ to these acts, it signifies that the actions are performed for the Supreme Being with pure intent and devotion. Such actions, performed with ‘Sat’ (truth and sincerity), become ‘Satkarma’, true, righteous deeds dedicated to the Divine.

This ‘Sat’ purifies life completely by freeing one from all impurities and sins (kliṣṭa). Even if some faults remain in the actions, the essence of ‘Sat’ cleanses those imperfections. Such deeds securely reach the Supreme Being’s ‘account’; they are recorded and preserved in His realm.

These actions continuously inspire and sustain the welfare of creation itself. The cosmos benefits eternally from these actions performed with pure heart and dedication.

This is the very essence of action performed with the sacred mantra **‘Om Tat Sat’**, which sanctifies all deeds.

However, the Bhagavān warns Arjuna that only one who performs actions with true faith (śraddhā) can successfully engage in this sacred process. Those without faith or sincerity cannot offer their actions in this way. Without śraddhā, the action becomes ineffective in reaching the Divine. This is the Bhagavān’s solemn warning at the end, emphasizing the indispensable role of faith and devotion in spiritual action.”

17.28

aśraddhayā hutam(n) dattam(n), tapastaptam(ñ) kṛtam(ñ) ca yat, asadityucyate pārtha, na ca tatpretya no iha. 17.28

An oblation which is offered, a gift given, an austerity practiced, and whatever good deed is performed, if it is without faith, it is termed as naught i.e., 'asat'; therefore, it is of no avail here or hereafter.

“Whatever charity, austerity, or sacrificial rites are performed without faith (śraddhā), O Pārtha, they are considered asat, unreal, untrue.

O Pārtha, acts done without faith are devoid of true essence. Such offerings, sacrifices, or austerities, even if grand, be it great donations, massive Ashvamedha yajñas, or mountains of jewels, even oceans created by sages, are all in vain if they are not dedicated to the Supreme Being.

Because whatever resources and powers we use to perform any action here, they ultimately come from the Supreme. For example, even in a thermal power station where I worked, the coal used to generate electricity is extracted from the earth; it is not man-made. Similarly, atomic energy requires raw materials provided by nature. Everything we receive is from the Divine.

Therefore, whatever work or ritual we perform, we must keep this in constant awareness in our mind and heart, that these actions and their fruits belong to the Supreme. Only then do these deeds free us from the three kinds of sufferings: physical (ādhibhautika), divine or natural calamities (ādhyātmika), and spiritual afflictions (ādhibāhutika). If we act with faith and dedication in this way, our efforts become truly liberating.

Gurudev beautifully states that where my faith lies, there the faith of others will also be found. Instead of expecting others' faith, one should nurture and grow one's own faith.

Otherwise, if we begin to expect others' faith or compare, it leads to inner conflicts, dosa (defects), and duṣṭi (resentment) arise in our hearts. This inner turmoil pollutes our entire being, our body, mind, speech, intellect, and environment.

Therefore, cultivating pure faith and keeping the entire inner and outer environment sanctified and pure is essential.

In narrating this, the speaker gratefully bows at the feet of Gurudev, by whose divine grace this deep contemplation on the Gītā could be offered. Every word, every insight flowed from his lotus mouth, each one a mantra of wisdom.

And finally, all of this is lovingly dedicated at the holy feet of Śrī Jñāneśwar Mahārāj, whose blessings alone make it possible to reflect on the Bhagavad Gītā in this manner.

ज्ञानेश्वर महाराज की जय।

सद्गुरुदेव भगवान की जय।

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Bhushan ji

Q: What is the meaning of 'sadbhāva sādhu bhāve ca'?"

A: Sadbhāva means a good, true, and pure feeling in the heart. It is also called satya-bhāva (true feeling). Sādhu-bhāva is the noble feeling that arises within us. When we want to bring eternal and lasting feelings into our life, the Bhagavan advises using the word "sat."

"Sat" means a feeling that never perishes, which is free from faults and eternal. When we combine the word "sat" with our actions, those actions become excellent and full of merit.

The Bhagavān said that great sages, wise ones, and saints use the word "sat" because they

understand that no action can ever be completely faultless. By using this word, the faults are destroyed and the heart is purified.

Thus, the word “sat” guides our life towards progress and fills us with noble feelings.

V.P Agarwal ji

Q: Verse nine is about rājasik food, pungent, sour, sharp, and hot. We eat sāttvic food at home, but at celebrations or gatherings, we often eat rājasik food. What should we do about it?

A: Bhagavān is guiding us on this path, but we also have social responsibilities. Sometimes, when invited to someone’s home or at celebrations, it’s okay to eat pungent, sour, or spicy food occasionally; there’s no harm in that.

However, this should never become our daily lifestyle because regular consumption dulls our sensitivity and harms our health. Too much spicy, salty, or heavy food can cause digestive issues like acidity.

The advice in the Gītā is for householders like Arjuna and us, not for renunciates. Balance is key. Occasionally enjoying such food is fine, but it shouldn’t become a habit. Use wisdom (viveka) to decide when and how much to eat.

This discernment is the core teaching of the Gītā and the true guru, as Kabir says, guiding us on what to accept and reject wisely, so we stay healthy and joyful.

कहो कहीं मैं वो गुरु पाया जाका नाम विवेक रे

The discourse concluded with a prārthanā (prayer) at the **padakamala (lotus feet) of Śrī Hari**, followed by the recitation of the **Hanumān Chalisa**.

**om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyām(m) yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde
śraddhātrayavibhāgayogonāma saptadaśo'dhyāyaḥ.**



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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.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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