

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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

Distinctions of Intellect (Buddhi) and Determination (Dhriti) according to the Three Modes of Material Nature

The 18th chapter of Shrimadbhagavadgītā is Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga - The Yoga of Liberation through the Path of Knowledge and Self Surrender.

Today's session began with the customary lighting of the lamp. Prayers were offered to Śrī Bhagavān and Gurudev.

We are deeply fortunate to engage in the study of the Bhagavad Gītā, enriching our lives with purpose and striving toward the highest goal of human existence, Mokṣa (liberation). We now seek to contemplate and internalise its teachings. This precious opportunity may be the fruit of puṇyas (righteous deeds) accumulated in this life or past lives, or it may be the grace of saints and spiritual masters who have blessed us with the wisdom to walk this path. **It has been reiterated that no one chooses to understand and follow the way of this sacred text; rather, we are blessed to have been chosen to walk it.**

Before delving into the meanings of the Bhagavad Gītā verses, we were reminded that the Shrāvaṇa Pūrṇimā of every year is celebrated as World Sanskrit Day. As yesterday was Shrāvaṇa Pūrṇimā, it was observed as World Sanskrit Day. In 1969, on the 2,500th birth anniversary of Maharishi Pāṇini, this day was officially designated for the celebration of Sanskrit.

Sanskrit is recognised worldwide as the most ancient language. All texts of Sanātana Dharma have been composed in it. It is revered as the language of the Gods and is considered the mother of many languages of the world. The grammatical framework of Sanskrit, laid down over 2,500 years ago, is regarded as one of the most scientific and precise. Unlike English, which has many silent syllables, Sanskrit is written, read, and spoken in exactly the same way.

Its scientific structure is so refined that even if one does not know the meaning of a word, it can often be understood through *sandhi-viccheda* (breaking compound words into their components). Its role as the

mother of many languages can be demonstrated by similarities: *tri* in Sanskrit and “three” in English; *mātr* as “mother” in Sanskrit and *madre* in Latin; *pitṛ* as “father” and *padre* in Latin; *nava* as “new”; *dvāra* as “door”; *sūnu* as “son”; and *gau* as “cow” in English.

Unfortunately, we have neglected and forgotten this treasure of a language - perhaps one of the reasons for our cultural and moral decline. Had our leaders revived Sanskrit as the national language after independence 76 years ago, India might have become the most culturally enriched nation in the world.

A powerful example comes from Israel - a tiny nation oppressed and enslaved for over 2,000 years. Yet, after regaining independence 500 years ago, they revived their original culture by restoring Hebrew, their ancient totally lost language, to daily use.

Just through the power of their language, Israel has stood tall and prevailed, despite being surrounded by many hostile nations. Likewise, if we wish to see India rise to the very top among all countries, we too must learn Sanskrit and ensure that our children do the same. By now, we have realised that it is neither too difficult nor incomprehensible.

We should take pride in our rich cultural heritage. Rupal Didi, Kavita Didi, and Jyoti Didi are shining examples - though they were science students, they pursued Sanskrit and are now renowned masters of the language. At such a young age, they have earned recognition simply by embracing and preserving our cultural legacy.

Sanskrit is so sacred and elevating that it purifies the reader merely by being read. Therefore we all should cultivate the habit of reading and listening to this revered language of the Devas. The Indian Government has brought forth IKS - Indian Knowledge System wherein focus on Sanskrit and our Sanskriti will be predominant. Thus we should inspire the youngsters and their parents to undertake such courses.

A beautiful song glorifying Sanskrit was recited:

"प्रवहतात् संस्कृतमन्दाकिनी
वाल्मीकि मुनि व्यास विरचिता
राम कृष्णयोः पावन गाथा,
अखण्ड दीपो भगवद्गीता
कर्मयोग सन्देश वाहिनी
यं अस्माकं धर्म भारती
राष्ट्रकस्य च महति स्फूर्तिः
विना संस्कृतं नैव संस्कृतिः
इहि परतत्र कल्याणकारिणी |
प्रवहतात् संस्कृतमन्दाकिनी ||"

18.26

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

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

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān described the qualities of a Sāttvika kartā - a doer acting under the influence of Sattva, the mode of goodness.

HE said a Sāttvika doer is free from egotism (**anahamvādī**) and attachment (**muktasaṅgaḥ**), endowed (**śamanvitaḥ**) with enthusiasm (**utsāha**) and determination (**dhṛti**), and equiposed (**nirvikāraḥ**) in success and failure (**siddhi asiddhyor**).

- **muktasaṅgaḥ**: Free from attachment.

Once, King Janak was given an unusual task - to walk through the entire village carrying a pot filled to the brim with water. The condition was that not a single drop should spill. Janak ji accepted the challenge and carefully made his way through the streets with people and beautiful sights along the way. However, he noticed none of it, because his attention was fixed entirely on the pot of water and he could not afford to be distracted else the water would spill.

Just as Janak ji kept his focus on the pot without being diverted by the world around him, a Sāttvika kartā keeps unwavering attention on the goal, avoiding the pull of distractions.

जो जल में रहो तो ऐसे रहो
जैसे जल में कमल का पात।

Just as the lotus leaf remains untouched by the water it lives in, so too you should live in the world without letting the world cling to you or affect you.

One should be fully present and active in life, yet inwardly free from its attachments and impurities.

- **anahamvādī** : Without ego or the sense of "I am the doer."

When we reflect on the vastness of the universe, we realise how small we truly are. There are countless galaxies, each with their own suns and planets. Our Earth is but a tiny dot within the Milky Way galaxy. Within that dot lies our country, then our town, and finally the house we live in, barely visible on the map of the Earth itself.

So what is our significance to the universe? In the grand cosmic scale - almost nothing. And yet, despite our smallness, we carry the weight of ego, pride, and self-importance.

- **dhṛtyutsāhaśamanvitaḥ**: Endowed with steadfastness and enthusiasm

Such a person is steadfast and not discouraged in times of difficulty. He remains equanimous in both favourable and adverse circumstances, and continues to thank the Supreme for whatever comes his way considering it to be HIS will. The following lines reiterate the same

तेरे फूलों से भी प्यार, तेरे काँटों से भी प्यार।

मन की हो गई तो अच्छी बात,
नहीं हुई तो और भी अच्छी बात,
क्योंकि तब उसके मन की हुई।

Another quality of such a seeker is that he is filled with enthusiasm and completely free from laziness. Adversities do not trouble him, nor does he concern himself with success or failure. He simply moves forward and focuses on completing the task at hand without thinking about consequences.

- **siddhyasiddhyornirvikārah**: Unaffected by success or failure.

His actions are free from attachment to results or any sense of ego. Remaining truly equanimous in all situations, without being affected by outcomes, is not entirely possible for most people. When we receive good results, it is natural to feel joy; likewise, when results are unfavourable, sadness is equally natural.

However, equanimity means that whether we experience happiness or sorrow, we must not lose ourselves in it. We should be able to rise above both joy and grief quickly, without allowing either to disturb our inner balance.

In the next verse Bhagavān described the Rājasik Kartā.

18.27

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

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

A **Rājasik** kartā is one who acts under the influence of Rajas, the mode of passion.

He is full of attachment (**rāgī**), craves the fruits of the work (**karmaphala**), is deeply affected by the outcomes of his actions (**prepsuḥ**), and often acts in ways that are harmful (**hiṃsātmakaḥ**) and selfish (**lubdhaḥ**). Actions of this type of doer are impure (**aśuciḥ**), and moved by joy and sorrow (**harṣaśokānvitaḥ**) based on success or failure.

The Rājasik doer is primarily driven by attachment and a strong desire for the fruits of their actions. His focus is on achieving rewards such as wealth, power, or recognition. This creates a restless and anxious mindset, as he is constantly chasing personal ambitions. His motivation lies in the outcome, not in the inherent value of the work itself.

- **Rāgī karmaphalaprepsuḥ : Attachment and Desire**

Such persons choose activities based on personal enjoyment, avoiding situations where they feel they may not have fun, often offering excuses to escape them. Their focus is on personal likes and preferences, rather than on what is truly important. They procrastinate and shy away from tasks that demand sustained effort or hard work.

They work primarily for fame, even if it means achieving it through unfair means. Purity of thought or action is not a priority for them. Greedy for name and recognition, they may even be willing to take credit for the efforts of others. This constant craving for “more” keeps them perpetually dissatisfied and unable to find contentment with what they already have.

- **lubdhaḥ : Greed and Selfishness**

Goswami Ji wrote

जिम्मे प्रति लाभ लोभ अधिकाई ॥

The more one gains, the more he desires. Such a person becomes greedy for more and more. It is often observed that 25 - 30 years ago, when a person's financial condition was not as sound as it is today, he was still able to go out of his way to help others. If he had ₹1,000, he would not hesitate to part with ₹100.

Today, if the same person possesses one crore, he may still be unwilling to help another with even ₹1,000. He can spend lavishly on himself, but not on others. A poor person, on the other hand, may often be more willing to donate generously from what little he has.

Wealth tends to increase greed. Therefore, we were advised to cultivate generosity and give with an open heart. After all, money will not accompany us to the next world, but our puṇya (meritorious deeds) will.

• *hiṃsātmakaḥ* : Oppressive and Harmful

Excessive attachment, desire for results, and greed together make a person *hiṃsātmakaḥ* - oppressive and even violent by nature. Such individuals cannot accept failure.

Once, there was a wealthy Sethji who had a very hardworking and sincere servant. One day, while serving tea, the servant accidentally slipped and broke an expensive cup. The Sethji became upset and scolded him, insisting that he would have to pay for the damage.

Every day, after work, the Sethji visited the temple, and the servant would accompany him. That day too, they went together. As the Sethji was about to begin his worship, the servant suddenly laughed. Surprised, the Sethji asked why. The servant replied, "Every day you ask the Supreme to forgive your sins and wrongdoings, many of which you commit knowingly. Yet you cannot forgive me for accidentally breaking a cup."

Such behaviour is commonly seen in many households. Desires and greed cloud the *sattva* within us, prompting us to act just like the Sethji.

• *aśuciḥ* : Impurity in Conduct

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

• *harṣāsokānvītaḥ* : Emotional Instability

One of the hallmark traits of the Rājasik doer is his emotional instability. He experiences swings between joy and sorrow based on the success or failure of their efforts. When he succeeds, he feels excessive joy, and when he fails, experiences deep sorrow. This emotional fluctuation is a direct result of their attachment to the outcomes, making him vulnerable to the ups and downs of life.

ayuktaḥ(kh) prākṛtaḥ(s) stabdhaḥ(ś), śaṭho naiṣkṛtika'lasaḥ, viṣādī dīrghasūtrī ca, kartā tāmāsa ucyaṭe. 18.28

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

Śrī Bhagavān told Arjuna that a Tāmasik Kartā is one who is undisciplined (**ayuktaḥ**), vulgar (**prākṛitaḥ**), stubborn (**stabdhaḥ**), deceitful or cunning (**śhaṭhaḥ**), dishonest (**naiṣkṛtikah**), slothful (**alasaḥ**), unhappy and morose (**viṣādī**), and a procrastinator (**dīrgha-sūtrī**).

• **Ayuktaḥ : Undisciplined**

A Tāmasik kartā has no discipline in eating, sleeping, or working. His routine is completely opposite to healthy and appropriate timings.

• **Prākṛitaḥ : vulgar, uneducated**

We call ourselves Indians. But who are "Indians," really?

Up to the 16th century, Britain sent large numbers of violent criminals and prisoners to America. These white prisoners referred to the native tribal inhabitants, dark-skinned and largely uneducated as "Red Indians."

Later, when Columbus arrived in Bhārat (mistakenly believing he had reached the Indies), he called the inhabitants "Indians." The irony is striking - we, the land that gave the world the wisdom of the Vedas, were labeled with the same term once used for those considered uncivilised by European settlers. We are the descendants of king Bharat, hence should feel proud to be called 'Bharatiya'

• **stabdhaḥ : Stubborn**

He remains unresponsive or evasive, avoiding direct answers; also denotes a stubborn or obstinate nature.

• **śhaṭhaḥ : deceitful**

He knowingly engages in wrongful deeds, is dishonest, and deliberately causes harm to others.

• **Naiṣkṛtikah :**

Interestingly, this trait has been explained differently by two great masters from Gītā Press - Gorakhpur Swami Ram Sukhdas Ji and Jayadayal Goenka Ji.

Swami Ji described it as **Naiṣkṛtikah** - one who deliberately takes over another person's work or position. Jayadayal Goenka Ji, on the other hand, described it as **Anaiṣkṛtikah** - one who is ungrateful. Both are tāmasik traits. In essence, both convey the attitude of insulting or failing to appreciate the favours done for them.

In the Mahābhārata, when Yaksha asked Yudhishtira, "What is the heaviest burden (*bhāra*) on Earth?" Yudhishtira replied that a person who is ungrateful (*akṛtaghna*) is the true burden on the Earth. It is interesting to note that he did not label a sinner as burden on earth.

One should never forget the help or guidance received from another. To the one who has ever helped you or guided you to attain something, you should remain indebted and grateful for life.

- **viṣhādī** : Always unhappy and morose

Such people are incapable of doing good for others, and they cannot appreciate the goodness in others either. They are always finding faults in others' work, constantly demanding proof of what has been done. If proof is provided, they question why it was given in the first place. An ex-Chief Minister is an example of such a doer.

- **alasaḥ** : lazy

He is lazy and does not accomplish any work.

- **dīrgha-sūtrī** : procrastinator

Such a person keeps postponing work to another day. He may plan large tasks, but due to procrastination and shortage of time, they remain pending, and he ends up accomplishing very little. He always has numerous excuses for not completing the task.

18.29

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

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

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān asked Arjuna to listen attentively while HE explained in detail how **Buddhi** (understanding) and **Dhṛti** (firmness or resolve) are influenced by the three Guṇas - Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance).

Just as actions, desires, and knowledge are influenced by Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, so too are one's ability to discern (*Buddhi*) and remain firm in purpose (*Dhṛti*).

Buddhi is the most important faculty governing the senses, including hearing. While going to the office, a person may see many things along the way. However, if he happens to like papayas and notices a fruit vendor selling very fresh ones, the memory of those papayas may linger in his mind until night, while many of the other things he saw on the way go completely unnoticed.

This happens because the *buddhi* becomes caught by something one likes. It is a very natural tendency.

Bhagavān has described *Buddhi* and *Dhṛti* together in three different occasions in the Bhagavadgītā.

In the 6th chapter HE said

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ 25॥

Slowly and steadily, with conviction in the intellect, the mind will become fixed in God alone, and will think of nothing else.

In Chapter 18, Bhagavān again speaks of both *buddhi* and *dhṛti* first in this verse, and again in the 51st shloka.

Buddhi and *dhṛti* were explained through the analogy of a TV set: the *buddhi* is like the TV itself, while *dhṛti* is the channel you choose to watch. This was further illustrated with the following story:

Two friends were on their way to school when they found out that it was closed for the day due to mourning. Although the reason was sad, both felt a surge of excitement at the unexpected holiday.

One of them proposed that they should head straight to the stadium because there was a cricket match that day and he had not planned on attending school anyway. The other, however, hesitated, explaining that he had a routine of visiting Hanuman Ji's temple every Tuesday. The first reminded him that it was Wednesday, but the second clarified that he had missed his visit the previous day due to illness and had planned to go after school. Now that they were free, he wanted to go to the temple first, as he would not feel right otherwise.

The first friend tried to persuade him by saying that Kohli's innings could end at any moment, whereas Hanuman Ji would always be there. He suggested visiting the temple later. Despite the insistence, the second friend remained firm in his decision to go to the temple first.

Eventually, they went their separate ways - one toward the stadium and the other toward the temple.

The next day, when they met again, each asked the other where they had been. The first explained that he had gone to the stadium but felt guilty for stopping his friend from visiting the temple. This guilt led him to change course and go to the temple to wait for him, after which he no longer felt like watching the match. The second said that he had started toward the temple but halfway there felt bad for arguing. He had turned towards the stadium to find his friend, but the friend was not there either.

In the end, both had ended up in the place they had initially resisted, demonstrating how easily association could influence one's thinking and determination. The friend who had originally wished to visit the temple displayed a Sāttvik *buddhi*, while the other possessed a Rājasik *buddhi*. Yet, through their conversation, the *dhṛiti* of the Sāttvik *buddhi* shifted into Rājasik *dhṛiti*, and the *dhṛiti* of the Rājasik *buddhi* came to embody the Sāttvik *buddhi*.

This clearly illustrates the importance of being mindful of the company one keeps. Satsang can dispel doubts and elevate one to the highest state.

As Garuda Ji said to Kakabhashundi ji :

तबहिं होइ सब संसय भंगा, जब बहु काल करिअ सतसंगा

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

One should embody **dhairya** (patience) along with **dhāraṇā** (focused concentration). In *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*, *dhāraṇā* is a prerequisite for **dhyaṇa** (meditation); without *dhāraṇā*, true meditation is not possible. Patience, focus, firmness, and unwavering thought are all essential characteristics of **dhṛti** (steadfast determination).

18.30

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

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

In this verse Bhagavān highlighted the characteristics of Sāttvik *Buddhi*.

HE said that the intellect is said to be in the nature of goodness (Sattva), when it understands which activity is proper action (**pravṛttiṃ**) and which is improper action (**nivṛttiṃ**) and thus should be renounced. What is duty (**kārya**) and non-duty (**akārye**), what is to be feared (**bhayā**) and what is

not to be feared (**abhaye**), what is binding (**bandham**) and what is liberating (**mokṣham**).

- **pravṛttim - nivṛttim:**

One who has clarity about what should be done and what should not be done is on the path of *pravṛtti* (active engagement in duties). Such a person remains absorbed in their set of responsibilities. In contrast, a *nivṛtti*-oriented person seeks to withdraw from action, perhaps choosing to spend a Sunday in leisure, renouncing all tasks for the day.

However, one with a sāttvik *pravṛtti* neither renounces work nor procrastinates. They complete all their tasks efficiently, never sitting idle, and always finding meaningful activities that benefit others.

Swami Vivekananda, in his early days, was inclined toward the path of *nivṛtti*. But his guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, guided him toward *pravṛtti*, urging him to strive for the upliftment of society, rather than limiting himself to meditation and personal spiritual gain.

Importantly, **pravṛtti devoid of desires transforms into nivṛtti, and the reverse is also true**. Both paths, in their purest form, lead to the same spiritual culmination.

This discernment - knowing when to engage and when to renounce is essential for making wise decisions in life. One must be able to recognise when active participation is necessary and when restraint is more appropriate.

To illustrate this, there is a story of four friends who went to visit another friend. During their visit, they were served four laddoos. However, when it was time to leave, none of them had eaten the sweets. Once outside, they began asking one another the reason.

The first friend explained that he had not eaten because he was simply not hungry. The second said that the laddoos were merely placed before them and no one had invited them to eat, so he refrained. The third confessed that because they had been served only one laddoo each, he felt insulted and refused to eat. The fourth friend, however, said he had just finished lunch before coming, so he had no need to eat.

From this, it could be seen that the first three friends were on the *pravṛtti mārga*. Their reasons were rooted in personal preferences, social expectations, or emotions. Only the fourth friend reflected the spirit of *nivṛtti mārga*, where renunciation came naturally from contentment and lack of need.

A shining example of this balance is Adi Shankaracharya Bhagavān, who, despite being a proponent of the *Nivṛtti Mārga* (the path of renunciation), actively engaged in worldly activities (*Pravṛtti*). His legacy has left a lasting imprint on India's spiritual, cultural, and social landscape. Jagadguru Shankaracharya established four mathas (spiritual monasteries) in the four cardinal directions of India to preserve and promote Vedic teachings. He also revived and standardised temple rituals and worship practices that had faded in some regions, ensuring that core Vedic traditions remained vibrant for future generations.

Thus mere external renunciation does not make one *nivṛtti*; the inner *drṣṭi* - the vision and intent behind the act is equally important.

- **kāryākārye:**

The Sāttvika intellect has the ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, what should be done (*kārya*) and what should be avoided (*akārya*). This clarity is guided by a strong sense of duty that aligns with dharma (righteousness).

- **bhayābhaye:**

The constant fear of losing a dear one or being forced into something disliked is called **samsāric bhaya**. The fear of doing something prohibited by the *śāstras* is called **adhyātmik bhaya**. The latter is considered higher, as it arises from surrender to the Supreme.

हमारे साथ श्री रघुनाथ तो किस बात की चिंता;
शरण में रख दिया जब माथ तो किस बात की चिंता।

होइहि सोइ जो राम रचि राखा ।
को करि तर्क बढ़ावै साखा ॥

Only that will happen which Shri Ram has already ordained; what is the use of arguments and branching debates?

Parashuram Ji tried his best to scare Śrī Rama and Laxman when Śrī Rama broke the Shiva Bow into pieces. However, both Rama and Laxman did not flinch. Astonished, Parashuram Ji asked why they were not afraid of him. Rama Ji replied:

विप्र वंश की आस प्रभुताई।
अभय होइ जो तुम्हहि डराई॥

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

- **bandham mokṣham:**

We all aspire to the four goals of life: **Dharma** (righteousness), **Artha** (wealth), **Kāma** (pleasures), and **Mokṣa** (liberation). Yet, many wish for *Mokṣa* without letting go of their attachment to the first three. A **Sāttvika** intellect, grounded in wisdom and clarity, can distinguish between what binds and what frees. It guides one to act in harmony with eternal truths, rather than being carried away by temporary desires or emotions.

18.31

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

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

Bhagavān further said that the intellect is considered Rajasik or in the mode of passion, when it is confused (**ayathāvat**) between righteousness (**dharmam**) and unrighteousness (**adharmam**), and cannot distinguish (**prajānāti**) between right conduct (**kāryam**) and wrong conduct (**akāryam**).

The Rājasika intellect is clouded by desire, ambition, and ego, resulting in a distorted understanding of what is right (*Dharma*) and wrong (*Adharma*). Such an intellect struggles to make clear distinctions between proper and improper actions, often leading to confusion and misguided choices.

18.32

adharmam(n) dharmamiti yā, manyate tamasāvṛtā, sarvārthānviparītāṃśca, buddhiḥ(s) sā pārtha tāmasī. 18.32

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

Herein Bhagavān explained the Tāmasik intellect. HE said that intellect which is shrouded in darkness (**tamasāvṛitā**), imagining irreligion (**adharmam**) to be religion (**dharmam**), and perceiving untruth to be the truth (**sarvārthān viparītān**), is said to be tāmasīk.

In today's world, we often meet individuals who neither engage in meaningful spiritual practices nor respect those who do. They mock temple-goers and dismiss sacred disciplines like meditation or chanting, branding them as unproductive or outdated. They enthusiastically burst crackers on New Year's Eve, yet call them polluting and wasteful during Diwali. Lavish electricity displays and decorative water fountains in malls are admired, but offering water to Śiva is criticised as wasteful. Indulgences like alcohol consumption or cigarette smoking are justified in the name of modernity, while age-old traditions are ridiculed.

Such people have lost the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and are said to possess Tāmasik intellect.

18.33

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

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

Hereon HE explained *Dhṛiti* (determination), which is the inner strength of our mind and intellect to persevere on our path despite difficulties and obstacles.

Bhagavān said the steadfast willpower (**āvyabhichāriṇyā**) that is developed through Yoga (**yogena**), and which sustains (**dhārayate**) the activities (**kriyāḥ**) of the mind (**manaḥ**), the life-airs (**prāṇa**), and the senses (**indriya**), is said to be *Sāttvik Dhṛiti* (determination in the mode of goodness).

Avyabhichāriṇyā dhṛti is that steadfastness which remains unwavering because it is anchored in truth, duty, and ultimate welfare. However, when one's so-called steadfastness is aimed merely at satisfying the urge for novelty, such as desiring new clothes, new foods, a new car, or even reading a new scripture for the sake of variety; it is not *āvyabhichāriṇyā dhṛti*.

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

As Patanjali Muni declared:

योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः

Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind.

The practice of **Yama** (restraints), **Niyama** (personal observances), and **Asana** (physical postures) forms

the foundation of internal discipline. **Prāṇayama** (breath control) is vital for calming the nervous system and gaining mastery over the mind. Through **Pratyahara** (withdrawal of the senses), one detaches from external stimuli and brings the senses under control. This prepares the practitioner for **Dharana** (focused concentration), **Dhyana** (continuous meditation), and ultimately **Samādhi** (complete absorption or enlightenment).

18.34

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

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

The steadfast willpower (**dhṛityā**) by which one holds on (**dhārayate**) to duty (**dharma**), pleasures (**kāma**), and wealth (**arthān**), out of attachment (**prasaṅgena**) and desire for rewards (**phalākāṅkṣī**), is **rājasī dhṛtiḥ** (determination in the mode of passion).

Such people lack firm resolve, as their goals keep shifting from day to day. As a student, they desire good grades; later, they seek a well-paying job, then a good spouse. Next, they wish for obedient children. Each time, a new desire takes the place of the old one, creating an endless cycle with no true fulfilment.

Rājasik perseverance is fuelled by a desire for worldly success, pleasures, and attachment to the outcomes of one's actions.

18.35

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

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

Bhagavān further stated that unintelligent resolve (**durmedhā dhṛtiḥ**) is said to be determination in the mode of ignorance (**tāmasī**), in which one does not give up (**vimuñchati**) dreaming (**svapnaṃ**), fearing (**bhayaṃ**), grieving (**śokaṃ**), despair (**viṣādaṃ**), and conceit (**madam**).

A person with *tāmasik dhṛti* is perpetually unhappy. He remains tense or depressed, caught in a cycle of pride, anger, and sorrow. No one can change his mindset. He is indifferent to both his own losses and the losses of others.

Thus Tāmasik perseverance is engulfed in ignorance, inertia, and attachment to suffering.

Today's session concluded here with Hari Naam Sankirtan.

Question & Answer Session

Dr. Sudha Ji

Question: Is chanting or remembering the name of God while lying on the bed before sleeping considered a sinful act?

Answer: If chanting is done in a state of silence (without speaking), there is no fault. However, when chanting aloud, it should be done with purity and devotion. Also, if your chanting is done with a selfless attitude (*nishkama bhavana*), then there will be no fault.

Surendra Ji

Question: What do the terms *Guhya*, *Guhyatar*, and *Guhyatam* mean?

Answer: *Guhya* means secret or mystery. *Guhyatar* means a longer or deeper secret. *Guhyatam* means the most profound or long-lasting secret. For example, something that is simply hidden is *Guhya*, something hidden for a longer time is *Guhyatar*, and something hidden for an extremely long time is *Guhyatam*. These examples do not refer to spiritual secrets. When HE reveals spiritual matters, HE unfolds these mysteries.

Palak Ji

Question: Please explain *Pravritti* and *Nivritti* in more detail.

Answer: The desire to do certain actions and performing those actions is called *Pravritti* (engagement). Not doing those actions is called *Nivritti* (renunciation). However, one must remember that even not doing certain actions is itself an action and therefore a form of *Pravritti*. Such *Pravritti* is the quality of Sattvika nature. Actions done without personal interest but with a sense of duty also belong to Sattvika *Pravritti*.

Shashi ji

Question: Is it necessary to perform *Nyasa* (ritualistic placing of hands) while reading the Gītā or Ramayana?

Answer: There is no requirement to perform *Nyasa* while reading the Gita. However, if one wishes to concentrate better, *Nyasa* can be helpful to improve focus.

Satya Ji

Question: What is the difference between *Prāṇaśakti* (life force) and *Shvās* (breath)?

Answer: Life force (*Prāṇaśakti*) is generated by breathing (*Shvās*). Just as a bulb lights up when electric current flows, similarly, after breathing, *Prāṇaśakti* is energised. Both

Prāṇa and *Shvās* complement each other.

Anant Ji

Question: What are *Dhyāna* and *Dhāraṇā* ?

Answer: It is important to decide why one is meditating, as *Dhāraṇā* (concentration) depends on this purpose. One may meditate for mantra chanting, for *Prāṇāyama*, or as a part of worship rituals. *Prāṇāyama*, *Yama*, *Niyama*, and *Āsana* support the practice of meditation and concentration. Step by step, one can reach *Dhāraṇā*, *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of senses), and *Samādhi* (absorption). Completing these steps, enables one to meditate and concentrate.

Devyanti Ji

Question: What should one do if the *Kuldevatā* (family deity) is displeased?

Answer: First, understand that *Kuldevatā* or any deity never becomes truly angry with devotees. If during auspicious occasions the worship was not performed correctly, it may seem as if the deity is displeased. In such cases, one should seek the deity's darshan, worship, and devotion. Any misfortunes are not due to the deity's anger but are the results of one's own karma. Deities are extremely compassionate and merciful. For example, if one drives recklessly and has an accident, it is not because the family deity is angry.



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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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