

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/0uyCtHirizQ>

From Outer Abandonment to Inner Surrender

The **eighteenth chapter** of the *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* is - **Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yoga - The Yoga of Liberation and Renunciation**

Today's session began with auspicious invocations—prayer, lighting of the ceremonial lamp, chanting of the Hanuman Chalisa, and offering of Guru Vandana.

By the most benevolent grace of Śrī Bhagavān, we have been blessed with a rare and sacred opportunity—to make our lives meaningful and truly successful, to discover the real purpose of this human birth, and to direct our lives towards the highest goal. This opportunity has taken the form of immersing ourselves in the study and contemplation of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā—reciting it, understanding its meanings, internalizing its sutras, and striving to live its teachings.

Such a path is not stumbled upon by chance. It is surely the fruit of noble actions from past lives, or perhaps the blessings of saints, that has led us to this turning point. One must feel deeply that **we did not choose the Gītā—it chose us**. The stronger this conviction, the more we open ourselves to the infinite grace that flows from it.

Currently, we are reflecting on **Chapter 18**. Sant Dnyāneshwar Maharaj beautifully describes this chapter as the "*Ek Adhyayi Gītā*"—a single chapter that contains the essence of the entire Gītā. Even if one has not studied the other chapters, reading Chapter 18 alone can offer the distilled wisdom of the entire scripture.

This idea can be illustrated with a simple analogy: imagine someone who, because of a slow clock at home, arrives at the station just as the train is pulling away. In desperation, he runs and manages to grab onto the last coach. Although he missed the rest of the train, by boarding the final carriage, he reaches his destination. Similarly, even if someone has missed the discourses on earlier chapters, by joining the discussion on Chapter 18, one can still gain the full benefit of the Bhagavad Gītā's teachings.

The number **18** itself holds deep spiritual significance in the Hindu tradition. It is no coincidence that:

- There are 18 Purāṇas,

- The Mahābhārata comprises 18 Parvas (books),
- The Kurukṣetra war lasted 18 days,
- And the Gītā contains 18 chapters.

Moreover, the numbers **9** and **18** are considered auspicious and complete. For example, Śrī Śhkarācārya Maharaj is respectfully addressed as *Śrī Śrī 1008*, a number denoting perfection. In Sanātan Dharma, the number 9 symbolizes completeness, a quality beautifully reflected in its multiplication table:

- $9 \times 1 = 9$
- $9 \times 2 = 18$ ($1 + 8 = 9$)
- $9 \times 3 = 27$ ($2 + 7 = 9$)
- $9 \times 4 = 36$ ($3 + 6 = 9$)
- $9 \times 6 = 54$ ($5 + 4 = 9$)
- $9 \times 11 = 99$ ($9 + 9 = 18 \rightarrow 1 + 8 = 9$)
- $9 \times 12 = 108$ ($1 + 0 + 8 = 9$)

This sacred number appears repeatedly in dharmic thought—such as in the **Navagraha** (nine planets)—and Chapter 18 is rightly seen as the *Pūrṇa Adhyāya* (Complete Chapter) since it integrates all key paths: Karma Yoga, Jñāna Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Dhyāna Yoga.

The chapter opens with a deeply thoughtful question from Arjuna, one that echoes a similar inquiry posed in **Chapter 12**. There, Arjuna had asked which path of worship is superior: the **Saguna Sākāra** (worship of the Lord with attributes and form) or the **Nirguṇa Nirākāra** (worship of the formless Absolute). Śrī Bhagavān responded by explaining both, adding that peace follows renunciation:

त्यागाच्छान्तिरनंतरम्

"Peace follows renunciation."

Interestingly, when Arjuna had earlier expressed his desire not to fight, it was also a kind of *Tyāga* (renunciation). However, Bhagavān did not approve that form of escape. Throughout the Gītā, the terms **Tyāga** (renunciation) and **Sannyāsa** (renunciation of worldly action) appear **20** and **14 times** respectively, emphasizing their profound relevance.

From the beginning, Arjuna had leaned toward renouncing the war and adopting Sannyāsa, as seen in Chapters 1 and 2. Śrī Bhagavān, while praising both Tyāga and Sannyāsa, clarified their differences and implications, especially in Chapter 12, where He reiterated that peace naturally follows true renunciation.

Yet, for Arjuna—who had hoped to find peace by abandoning the battlefield—this raised a dilemma. Motivated by a sincere desire to implement Śrī Bhagavān’s teachings, Arjuna revisited this question in Chapter 18 to seek deeper clarity.

There are three types of questioners:

1. **To test** the speaker’s knowledge
2. **To increase** one’s own understanding
3. **To implement** the knowledge in life

All of Arjuna’s questions in the Gītā fall into the third and highest category. He was not merely curious—he was ready to act.

This spirit is evident from Chapter 2, where Arjuna declares:

शिष्यस्ते'हं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्

"I am your disciple; instruct me, for I have taken refuge in you."

Throughout the 45-minute battlefield dialogue, Arjuna continued to ask questions not for debate but for **implementation**. Recognizing the importance of this final inquiry, he approaches Śrī Bhagavān with great humility, reverence, and earnestness. Fully aware that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is none other than **Parabrahma Paramātmā**, Arjuna seeks to understand—once and for all—the true meaning of Tyāga and Sannyāsa.

18.1

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

Arjuna said:

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

Arjuna begins Chapter 18 with a deeply contemplative question. What makes it even more remarkable is how he addresses Śrī Bhagavān—not just with reverence but with recognition of His supreme powers. In this single verse, Arjuna uses three epithets that glorify Bhagavān's immense Śkti (power):

• mahābāho - "O mighty-armed one"

A direct reference to Kṛṣṇa's physical and divine strength. Arjuna invokes it to show his trust that only such a powerful being can resolve the subtle distinctions he is seeking.

• hṛṣīkeśa - "Lord of the senses"

This name goes deeper—it refers to Bhagavān's control not just over His own senses, but also over the senses and minds of all beings. It acknowledges His *Sarvavyāpi* (all-pervading) and *Sarvajña* (all-knowing) nature. Arjuna is essentially saying: "You are the one who governs even my own inner confusion. Help me discern."

• keśiniṣūdana - "Slayer of the demon Keśi"

Keśi, the demon, had taken the form of a powerful horse—an animal often associated with unmatched strength (as seen in the concept of 'horsepower'). Bhagavān slayed him effortlessly, symbolizing His capacity to destroy the most powerful negativities. By using this title, Arjuna implies that the confusion between Sannyāsa and Tyāga is a similarly strong force—and only Kṛṣṇa can dispel it.

Arjuna's question is noteworthy. While most people might consider Sannyāsa and Tyāga to be interchangeable, Arjuna, owing to his keen intellect and spiritual insight, sensed a fundamental difference between the two. He recalls how Bhagavān had mentioned both these concepts separately in Chapter 3, and now seeks a deeper philosophical clarification.

To understand this difference, we begin with the core definitions:

- **Tyāga** means *giving something up*.
- **Sannyāsa** is the *steady inner state* where the very urge to possess or engage with the object is absent.

One can say: *Tyāga* is the action of renunciation; *Sannyāsa* is the state of renunciation.

This distinction is deeply rooted in the Upaniṣadic tradition. Among the many Upaniṣads, 108 are considered Mukhya (principal). Out of these, the 10 Upaniṣads on which Ādi Śhṅkarācārya wrote commentaries are regarded as the most authoritative. The shortest among them is the Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad, and its very first verse conveys the essence of both Tyāga and Bhoga:

ॐ ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम्॥

All this—whatsoever moves on the earth—should be covered by the Lord.
Enjoy by renouncing it.
Do not covet anyone's wealth.

This verse holds profound meaning. The phrase

"तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा"

means "Enjoy through renunciation." At first, this may appear contradictory—how can one enjoy after renouncing? But it is this paradox that leads us to the essence of Tyāga and Sannyāsa.

A Deeper Analogy: The Vulture and the Vision

The word **gr̥dhaḥ** refers to a vulture. Though it soars high in the sky, its eyes are always fixed on dead flesh lying below. In the same way, a spiritual aspirant who seems to be walking a lofty path but remains inwardly attached to sensory pleasures is not truly renounced. He must rise above such *lower pulls of attraction*. A true seeker of **Paramātma** must leave behind even the memory of enjoyment.

Everyday Examples of Tyāga

We can see **Tyāga** in simple acts of self-restraint:

- Giving up tea or sweets for a period.
- Avoiding TV or entertainment as a vow.
- Offering one's seat to someone in a crowded bus.

In these acts, one **gives up something they like**, not because of dislike, but to develop **self-control**. The object still holds charm, but the person exercises restraint.

In contrast, a **Sannyāsī** is someone for whom **those very things no longer hold any attraction**. He does not renounce for a reason—he renounces because the desire has dissolved.

A Child's Toy: A Classic Metaphor

As children, we clung to toys with all our might. Losing a toy meant weeping, and sometimes we were even ready to give up everything for it. "Give me this toy, and I will never ask anything again," we would plead.

But as we grew up, those same toys lost all importance.

- We didn't *give them up* consciously.
- We simply *outgrew our interest* in them.

This is the difference:

- A **Tyāgī** gives up something he still desires.
- A **Sannyāsī** has no desire left for it—it no longer holds meaning.

Real-Life Example: Swami Govind Dev Giri Ji Maharaj

Such equanimity is seen in the lives of saints. Whether traveling by flight or on foot, eating exotic sweets or plain khichdi, **it makes no difference** to a realized soul. There is no *preference*, and more importantly—no memory of pleasure clinging to the mind.

- For an ordinary person, **these differences matter deeply**.
- For a Sannyāsī, **they do not even register as preferences**.

A Glimpse of True Renunciation

Once, Swami Ji was invited for a discourse. The organizers had booked his train ticket, but it remained unconfirmed. Rather than cancel or complain, Swami Ji chose to **sit near the toilet** on the train so he wouldn't miss the event. There was **no frustration**, no disturbance—only **calm joy** in fulfilling his duty.

This is **Sannyāsa** in action—not a renunciation of duty, but a renunciation of comfort, preference, and attachment.

The Final Distinction

- In **Tyāga**, the object is renounced outwardly, but desire may still be present internally.
- In **Sannyāsa**, there is no object, no desire, and not even memory of the pleasure. It is **inner freedom**.

Thus, **Bhoga** (enjoyment) is not inherently the problem.

It is **attachment to Bhoga** that binds.

A Tyāgī manages the attachment.

A Sannyāsī is free from it altogether.

18.2

śrībhagavān uvāca

**kāmyānām(ñ) karmaṇām(ñ) nyāsaṃ(m), sannyāsaṃ(ñ) kavayo viduḥ,
sarVākarmaphalatyāgaṃ(m), prāhustyāgaṃ(m) vicakṣaṇāḥ. 18.2**

Śrī Bhagavān said :

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

In response to Arjuna's inquiry, Śrī Bhagavān begins by presenting the prevailing interpretations of the terms *Sannyāsa* and *Tyāga* offered by sages and scholars. Instead of providing His definitive view immediately, He acknowledges these traditional perspectives, which are rooted in scriptural wisdom and philosophical discourse.

- **kāmyānām karmaṇām nyāsaṃ** - “The giving up of desire-motivated actions...”

According to some sages, *Sannyāsa* implies the abandonment of actions prompted by personal desire—those undertaken for material gain, pleasure, or recognition. These are termed *kāmya karmas* (such as rituals for acquiring wealth, progeny, or entry into heavenly realms). Since such actions are driven by ego and attachment, they are considered impediments to spiritual liberation.

- **sannyāsaṁ kavayo viduḥ** - “...is what the sages call Sannyāsa.”

The word *kavayaḥ* refers to the insightful and contemplative thinkers—those with refined scriptural understanding. They interpret *Sannyāsa* as complete withdrawal from all desire-based actions, advocating a path of renunciation to transcend the binding effects of karma.

- **sarvakarma-phala-tyāgaṁ** - “The renunciation of the fruits of all actions...”

On the other hand, other wise individuals (*vicakṣaṇāḥ*) emphasize not the renunciation of action itself but of its outcome. According to them, *Tyāga* involves performing even obligatory (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) duties, but without clinging to their results. Such actions are done in the spirit of *niṣkāma karma*—selfless and detached performance.

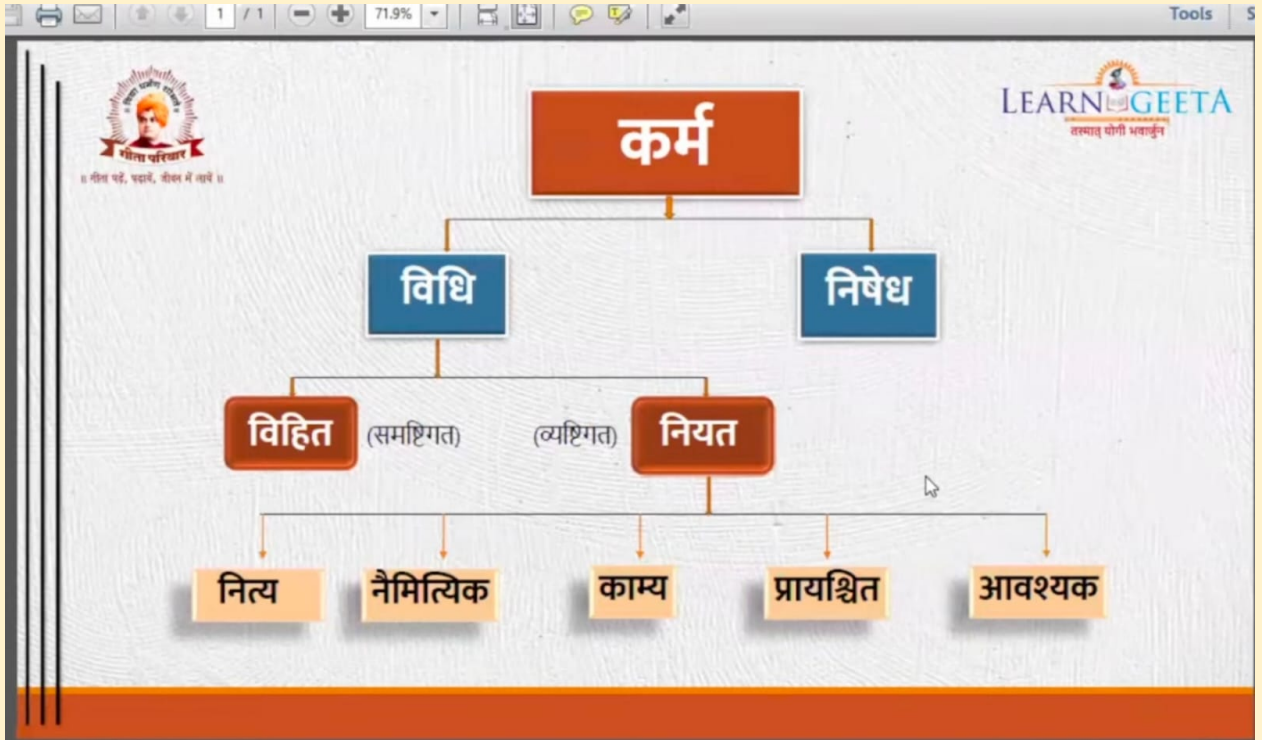
- **prāhus tyāgaṁ vicakṣaṇāḥ** - “...is what the wise declare to be Tyāga.”

Thus, *Tyāga* is not about abandoning action, but about renouncing attachment to its fruits. It is a transition from a transactional mindset to one rooted in devotion, surrender, and equanimity, where the focus is on the action itself as an offering, rather than its consequence.

The Broader Context: Understanding Karma Types

Primarily, karmas (actions) are classified into two broad categories:

1. **Vidhik Karma** (Prescribed Duties) - Actions that *should* be performed.
2. **Nishiddha Karma** (Prohibited Actions) - Actions that *should not* be performed.



Our focus here is on the *vidhik* karmas—those that are recommended or prescribed.

Types of Prescribed (Vidhik) Karma

Among the prescribed karmas, there are two further types:

- **Vihita Karma** – Collective or social obligations
- **Niyata Karma** – Personal or individual duties

Vihita Karma refers to duties expected at the societal or collective level. For example:

- A daughter-in-law should serve her parents-in-law.
- A son should obey his parents.

Niyata Karma refers to personal, self-accepted duties. For instance:

- "I will serve tea to my father-in-law at 6 AM every morning."

To illustrate:

- Planning an event is a **Vihita Karma** (a collective decision).
- The specific role I play in that event becomes my **Niyata Karma** (individual execution).

Five Types of Niyata Karma

These are:

1. **Nitya Karma** – Daily essential duties
2. **Naimittika Karma** – Occasional or situational duties
3. **Kāmya Karma** – Desire-driven actions
4. **Prāyaścitta Karma** – Acts of atonement
5. **Āvaśyaka Karma** – Urgent or indispensable actions

1. Nitya Karma (Daily Disciplines)

These are self-imposed disciplines aimed at self-upliftment. For example: "I will chant three rosaries (malās) every day."

Three key considerations while choosing *nitya karma*:

- It should be **time-appropriate**
- **Physically feasible**
- **Economically manageable**

One should avoid imposing practices that inconvenience others. For instance:

- Declaring, "I will blow the conch at 4 AM" or

- Practicing music loudly using a microphone at early hours

Such acts, while appearing disciplined, may disturb family and neighbors.

In our society, some individuals do a single rosary daily, while others maintain practices of chanting over 100,000 to 200,000 names daily for decades.

Important Guidance from Great Souls:

Great masters have advised that when you take up a discipline, choose something *lesser* than what you *think* you can do.

Why?

Because if you fail to observe your nitya karma, it leads to **prāyaścitta** (atonement). Failure to follow disciplines incurs spiritual demerit.

Thus, *nitya karmas* should be simple and consistent.

Examples:

- Offering the first roti to the cow, the last one to a dog
- Daily prayers to parents, husband, Guru
- Morning remembrance, reading the Bhagavad Gītā
- Any regular form of *sāadhanā* (spiritual practice)

In truth, **every spiritually inclined person** should have some regular discipline. You will not find a single great soul without some form of daily rule.

A Real-Life Example:

Param Shraddheya Brahmaṇīn Seth Jayadayal Goyenka ji, the founder of Gita Press, was a deeply revered and disciplined saint. He emphasised the importance of rules.

The speaker shares a personal story:

“I, too, have been devoted to rules. Once, my close friend brought me a book that had something printed about rules. He knew my inclination. He covered part of the sentence with his finger and showed me the first half:

‘A seeker should make small daily rules.’

I was overjoyed. ‘See! Sethji wrote exactly what I believe!’

Then my friend revealed the next part:

‘...and must protect those rules even at the cost of life.’

I trembled.

Sethji further wrote that if we cannot give our life for it, we should at least perform *prāyaścitta* (atonement) when we fail to keep the rule.”

Application in Seva (Service)

When Gītā Sevaks take up service, they fix a specific time to offer it consistently. To maintain this, they reorganise their entire daily routine.

This transforms their lives into disciplined and elevated ones.

Because **discipline refines life.**

The more refined one’s list of daily disciplines, the nobler the life becomes.

Examples:

- “I will wake up daily at a fixed hour.”
- “I will not eat before bathing and reciting the Bhagavad Gītā.”
- “I won’t enter the kitchen without bathing.”
- “I will help someone every day.”

An Inspiring Example from a Devotee

A revered motherly figure has been following a daily discipline of chanting **100,000 names** for many years.

At times, she even completes **200,000 names** in a day.

2. Naimittika Karma (Occasional Duties)

Karma performed in response to specific occasions falls under this category. These include rituals during weddings, festivals, childbirth, death, and other significant life events.

An exceptional example is found in the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*. When Śrī Rāma’s exile was announced, Lakṣmaṇa was enraged and insisted on protesting the decision. He said to Rāma, “This is unjust—we must oppose it.” But Rāma replied calmly, “One must never oppose the words of one’s father; we must obey.” Eventually, Lakṣmaṇa persuaded Śrī Rāma to let him accompany Him. Rāma tried to dissuade him, but Lakṣmaṇa persisted. Finally, Rāma said, “Take your mother’s permission first, then we shall leave.”

मागहु बिदा मातु सन जाई। आवहु बेगि चलहु बन भाई॥

Until this point, Lakṣmaṇa was furious and weeping. But when Rāma directed him to seek his mother’s consent, he became elated like a child.

मुदित भए सुनि रघुबर बानी। भयउ लाभ बडि गइ बडि हानी॥

He approached his mother joyfully:

हरषित हृदयँ मातु पहिँ आए। मनहुँ अंध फिरि लोचन पाए॥
जाइ जननि पग नायउ माथा। मनु रघुनन्दन जानकि साथ॥

Lakṣmaṇa bowed to his mother, Sumitrā.

पूँछे मातु मलिन मन देखी। लखन कही सब कथा बिसेषी॥

Seeing her disturbed, he narrated the entire situation. On hearing it, she trembled like a deer caught in a forest fire:

गई सहमि सुनि बचन कठोरा। मृगी देखि दव जनु चहु ओरा॥

Lakṣmaṇa thought to himself:

लखन लखेउ भा अनरथ आजू। एहिँ सनेह बस करब अकाजू॥
मागत बिदा सभय सकुचाहीं। जाइ संग बिधि कहिहि कि नाही॥

He feared: “If mother is already shaken, how can I ask her for permission? If she denies it, Rāma won’t take me along.” He became anxious.

But Sumitrā, regaining composure, spoke in sweet, composed tones:

धीरजु धरेउ कुअवसर जानी। सहज सुहृद बोली मृदु बानी॥
तात तुम्हारि मातु बैदेही। पिता रामु सब भाँति सनेही॥
अवध तहाँ जहाँ राम निवासू। तहाँई दिवसु जहाँ भानु प्रकासू॥

“Your mother is Sītā, your father is Rāma. Wherever Rāma lives, that is Ayodhyā. Just as wherever the sun shines, there is day.”

जौ पै सीय रामु बन जाहीं। अवध तुम्हार काजु कछु नाहि॥

“If Sītā and Rāma are not in Ayodhyā, what work do you have left here?”

गुर पितु मातु बंधु सुर साई। सेइअहि सकल प्रान की नाई॥
रामु प्रानप्रिय जीवन जी के। स्वारथ रहित सखा सबही कै॥

“Serve your Guru, father, mother, brother, and Deities with all your heart. Rāma is your very life, dearer than life itself. Serving Him is your highest fortune.”

पूजनीय प्रिय परम जहाँ तें। सब मानिअहि राम के नातें॥
अस जियँ जानि संग बन जाहू। लेहु तात जग जीवन लाहू॥

“Take this opportunity, Lakṣmaṇa. You are born to serve Śrī Rāma. Seize this fortune!”

पुत्रवती जुबती जग सोई। रघुपति भगतु जासु सुतु होई॥

“Blessed is the mother whose son is devoted to Rāma. I am fortunate beyond measure.”

तुम्हरेहिं भाग रामु बन जाहीं। दूसर हेतु तात कछु नाहीं॥

“It seems Rāma is going to the forest only because of your fortune, to grant you this blessed opportunity.”

सकल सुकृत कर बड़ फल एहू। राम सिय पद सहज सनेहू॥
रागु रोषु इरिषा मदु मोहू। जनि सपनेहुँ इन्ह के बस होहू॥
सकल प्रकार बिकार बिहाई। मन क्रम बचन करेहु सेवकाई॥

“Renounce lust, anger, envy, pride, and delusion—even in dreams. Serve Sītā and Rāma with thought, word, and deed.”

To send her son into exile for 14 years, not as a punishment but for the service of her elder son and daughter-in-law—this is *naimittika karma* in its noblest form. Sumitrā did not think, “How can a mother send her son away to the forest?” Instead, she elevated herself even above Lakṣmaṇa by placing righteousness above attachment. Truly blessed is Sumitrā!

Pujya Morari Bapu once narrated a beautiful discourse on Sumitrā’s character from the Rāmāyaṇa, highlighting her profound wisdom and devotion.

Another example: If we are on our way to a temple and find an injured person in need, *naimittika karma* dictates that we prioritize helping that person—even over regular spiritual duties. This is dharma in action.

3. Kāmya Karma (Desire-Driven Actions)

These are actions performed with a motive of personal gain—either to attain a desired outcome or to avert an undesirable one.

King Daśaratha performed such a karma:

एक बार भूपति मन माहीं। भै गलानि मोरें सुत नाहीं॥
गुरु गृह गयउ तुरत महिपाला। चरन लागि करि बिनय बिसाला॥

He approached Sage Vasiṣṭha and requested a yajña for progeny. Vasiṣṭha summoned Ṛṣi Śrīṅga:

सुंगी रिषिहि बसिष्ठ बोलावा। पुत्रकाम सुभ जग्य करावा॥

This *putrakāmeṣṭi yajña* was a classic example of *kāmya karma*—performed to fulfil a specific worldly desire.

All actions done with desire for benefit fall under this category.

4. Prāyaścitta Karma (Atonement)

This refers to acts done to atone for errors or sins. Though less practised today, it was common in earlier generations. Even minor incidents, like the accidental death of a pet, would be followed by donations or rituals to neutralise the karmic effect.

Common forms of *prāyaścitta* include:

- Silence
- Donations or yajñas
- Scripture recitation or japa
- Meditation
- Fasting
- Temporary renunciation of favourite items

A remarkable example: In 1932, Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the public to boycott foreign clothes. The movement was so strong that many burned all their foreign garments. Gandhi was later pained to see people without clothes and felt responsible. As lifelong *prāyaścitta*, he vowed to wear only a half-dhoti. In 1933, he went to London for the Round Table Conference in freezing weather, wearing the same. When asked by Tilak:

“How many people will get clothes if you give up yours?”

Gandhi replied:

“Not even one. But it will ease my conscience and reduce their sorrow caused by my call.”

This is *prāyaścitta karma*—owning responsibility and doing penance for any harm caused, even unintentionally.

Small acts of atonement may include:

- Skipping a meal
- Observing silence
- Temporarily giving up a comfort

Prāyaścitta karma helps cleanse the soul and uplift one’s character.

5. Āvaśyaka Karma (Essential Duties)

These are the daily, essential actions required for sustaining life: eating, sleeping, bathing, earning a livelihood, running a business, etc.

A story illustrates this:

A king invited a skilled architect from a neighbouring kingdom to build houses. The king was so pleased that he rewarded him generously. When the architect wanted to return, the king requested him to build

one last house near the royal garden, granting him full freedom. The man, eager to leave, constructed it hastily with inferior quality. When it was done, the king said, “Now live there with your family.”

The man was filled with regret—he had been given a golden chance to build something for himself and had wasted it.

Lesson: Our essential duties must be done with full dedication. The more sincerity we bring to them, the more elevated our life becomes.

Such a life becomes an example for others to follow.


**कर्म तेरा साथी है ये ही साथ जाता है।
जो भी पहले बोया है वो ही आज पाता है॥**

धोखा अगर तू देगा किसी को, बदले में तू भी धोखा ही पायेगा,
घर तू उजाड़ेगा जो किसी का भी बंदे, तेरा चमन फिर कैसे खिलेगा,
मालिक के पास सबका ही खाता है॥ 1॥


कर्मों के दुनिया में खेल हैं निराले, कर्मों के ही तो फल पाते सारे,
कर्मों के फल से बनते हैं राजा, कर्मों से बनते भिक्षुक बेचारे,
कर्मों के फल से ही सुख दुःख आता है॥ 2॥

निर्बल को गर तू देगा सहारा, तुझको भी मिलेगा तभी तो किनारा,
प्यासे को तू जो पानी पिलायेगा, तुझको मिलेगी अमृत की धारा,
काहे को तू यह सच बिसराता है॥ 3 ॥

कर्मों से मानव कर्मों से दानव, कर्मों से ही तो बनते हैं देवता,
करने से पहले खूब सोचो विचारो, फिर ना मिलेगी गलती की माफी,
बार बार तू क्यों गलती दोहराता है॥ 4॥



श्रीकृष्ण परिवार



18.3

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

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

Śrī Bhagavān continues His response to Arjuna’s query regarding *tyāga* (renunciation), highlighting the diverse views held by philosophers.

- **tyājyaṃ doṣavat iti eke** – “Some declare action to be worthy of renunciation due to its inherent flaws...”

A group of thinkers believe that all actions are accompanied by some imperfection (*doṣa*), such as attachment, ego, or the possibility of karmic bondage. Thus, they view renunciation of all actions as a means to avoid these defects.

- **karma prāhuḥ manīṣiṇaḥ** – “...so they consider all karma to be renounceable.”

These sages, in pursuit of spiritual purity, argue that action itself—even righteous or scripturally ordained action—has the potential to bind the soul, and thus recommend total renunciation.

- **yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma** - “Sacrifice, charity, and penance...”

However, there is another view held by other equally learned individuals who emphasize the indispensability of these three:

- *Yajña*: sacrificial rituals for divine connection and universal harmony
- *Dāna*: giving or charity for the welfare of others
- *Tapaḥ*: disciplined austerity or self-control for inner purification

- **na tyājyam iti ca apare** - “...should never be abandoned, say others.”

These actions are seen as essential for the upliftment of both the individual and society. Even in the path of renunciation, such duties help in cultivating purity, selflessness, and spiritual elevation.

Clarification through Four Categories (A, B, C, D):

Śrī Bhagavān is presenting multiple views, which can be understood in four categories:

A - *Renunciation of kāmya karmas* (desire-driven actions). This is termed **Sannyāsa**. A true renunciate (*sādhu*) never engages in action for personal gain.

B - *Renunciation of attachment to the fruits of all actions*. “I will perform my duties, but I relinquish all desire for outcomes.” This is **Tyāga**.

C - *Renunciation of actions considered to be tainted or inherently flawed*. This too aligns with **Sannyāsa**.

D - *Actions like yajña, dāna, and tapaḥ should never be renounced*. This is again emphasized as **Tyāga**, not abandonment, but selfless performance without attachment.

Thus, **A and C** reflect **Sannyāsa** (complete renunciation), while **B and D** reflect **Tyāga** (relinquishing attachment, not the action itself).

Key Insight:

This verse highlights the philosophical divergence on the nature of renunciation. While some stress that action inherently binds and should be given up, others clarify that *selfless* actions—especially sacrifice, charity, and penance—are sacred and should always be upheld.

Śrī Bhagavān will soon reconcile these views and guide us toward *sāttvika tyāga*, the ideal form of renunciation rooted in duty and detachment, not in abandonment.

18.4

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

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

Śrī Bhagavān now begins to give His own final and authoritative teaching on *tyāga*, synthesizing and resolving the earlier diverse opinions.

- **niścayaṁ śṛṇu me tatra** – “Now hear My decisive conclusion on this matter...”

Having presented multiple perspectives on renunciation, Śrī Bhagavān now shifts from reporting others’ views to delivering His **own firm conclusion**. This underscores the importance and clarity of what follows.

- **tyāge bharatasattama** – “...on the subject of *tyāga*, O best of the Bhāratas (Arjuna)”

Addressing Arjuna with respect as *Bharatasattama* (the noblest of the Bhārata lineage), He draws attention to the value of understanding *tyāga* correctly—not as mere abandonment, but in its nuanced form.

- **tyāgaḥ hi puruṣavyāghra** – “For *tyāga*, O tiger among men...”

The metaphor *puruṣavyāghra* (tiger among men) highlights Arjuna’s valor and readiness for deep insight. Śrī Bhagavān recognizes Arjuna’s capacity to grasp subtle spiritual truths.

- **trividhaḥ samprakīrtitaḥ** – “...is declared to be of three kinds.”

Now comes a key doctrinal point: *tyāga* is not one-dimensional. It manifests in three forms—*Sāttvika*, *Rājasika*, and *Tāmasika*—just as knowledge, action, performer, and intellect were previously classified.

Key Insight:

Not all renunciation is spiritually uplifting. Just as food or faith varies by *guṇa*, so too does renunciation. The **quality of intent and understanding** behind renunciation determines whether it is *Sāttvika* (pure), *Rājasika* (passionate/self-centered), or *Tāmasika* (ignorant/irresponsible).

This verse sets the stage for the next three verses (18.5–18.7), where Śrī Bhagavān will explain these three types of *tyāga* in detail.

18.5

yajñadānatapaḥkarma, na tyājyaṁ(ñ) kāryameva tat, yajño dānaṁ(n) tapaścaiva, pāvanāni manīṣiṇām. 18.5

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

Śrī Bhagavān now firmly affirms the essential nature of certain actions that must not be renounced, as He begins to define the *Sāttvika Tyāga* in contrast to misunderstood forms of renunciation.

- **yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma** – “Sacrifice, charity, and penance...”

These three represent *nitya dharma*—eternal duties prescribed by scriptures for inner purification and social welfare.

- **na tyājyaṃ kāryam eva tat** – “...must never be given up; they are to be performed.”

These are not optional or dispensable even for seekers on the path of renunciation. They must be carried out with sincerity and without expectation. Their performance purifies the heart and aligns the individual with Dharma.

- **yajñah, dānaṃ, tapaḥ ca eva** – “Indeed, sacrifice, charity, and penance...”
Each of these has its own transformative role:

- *Yajña* (sacrifice): Cultivates devotion and a sense of surrender to the divine.
- *Dāna* (charity): Reduces selfishness and promotes compassion.
- *Tapaḥ* (austerity): Disciplines the senses and mind, enabling spiritual clarity.

- **pāvanāni manīṣiṇām** – “...are purifiers even for the wise.”

Even *manīṣiṇah*—the thoughtful and spiritually advanced—benefit from these practices. They are not mere rituals but powerful means to cleanse the inner self of subtle impurities like ego, desire, and pride.

Illustrative Reflection:

A person once visited a doctor and noticed another patient in more serious condition. Recognizing the urgency, he voluntarily offered his turn, saying, “Please let them go first.” Renouncing one’s rightful place—this is *yajña* in action.

At a spiritual discourse, some individuals purposefully choose seats knowing that if an elderly person arrives, they will vacate their place for them. This quiet intention, born of respect and readiness to sacrifice, is a noble form of *yajña*.

At home, giving two extra mangoes to a younger brother’s child and gently saying, “Don’t tell anyone”—this too is *yajña*. When such small sacrifices become a habit, renunciation becomes a natural trait.

True discipline is in protecting others’ rights and letting go of one’s own—yet many do the opposite. Most conflicts arise from this reversal.

Guru Nānak Dev Ji beautifully cautions:

**तीरथ जप और दान करे, मन में करे गुमान।
नानक निष्फल जात है, जो कुंजर स्नान॥**

"Kuñjar" means elephant. An elephant bathes for a long time, but once it comes out, it throws dust over its own body. In the same way, one who performs pilgrimages, chanting, and charity, yet harbors pride in the mind, renders their spiritual practice fruitless.

Key Insight:

True *tyāga* is not the abandonment of dharmic action, but the relinquishment of ego and attachment in action. Even for a *jñānī* (knower of Truth), regular performance of *yajña*, *dāna*, and *tapaḥ* is *pāvanam*—a

source of sanctity and continued refinement.

Śrī Bhagavān never dismisses others' views harshly; instead, He teaches through emphasis and gentle persuasion. As a masterful speaker, He often answers the questions that the listener has not yet even asked.

This verse emphasizes that selfless action, grounded in duty and devotion, is inseparable from the spiritual path.

18.6

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

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

Śrī Bhagavān now delivers His conclusive instruction on how all actions—including the sacred ones like sacrifice, charity, and penance—must be approached by the seeker.

- **etāni api tu karmāṇi** - “Even these actions...”
This refers back to the previously mentioned sacred acts: *yajña*, *dāna*, and *tapaḥ*. Despite their spiritual significance, the manner of their performance is crucial.
- **saṅgaṃ tyaktvā phalāni ca** - “...should be performed without attachment and without desire for fruits.”
The essence of **Sāttvika Tyāga** is not the renunciation of action itself, but the **renunciation of attachment** (*saṅga*) and **clinging to outcomes** (*phala*). One must act with purity of intent, without ego, possessiveness, or expectation of reward.
- **kartavyāni iti me pārtha** - “They should be done as one’s duty, O Pārtha (Arjuna)”
These actions are to be undertaken as sacred obligations—not for personal gain, recognition, or out of fear—but because they are intrinsically the right thing to do.
- **niścitaṃ matam uttamam** - “This is My firm and highest conclusion.”
Śrī Bhagavān emphatically states that this balanced, detached engagement in duty is **His well-considered, final, and supreme teaching** on the subject of *tyāga*.

Illustrative Reflection:

A profound real-life example of this spirit comes from **Seth Jayadayal Goyandka ji**, the revered founder of Gita Press. He was known for his deep humility and complete absence of ego. Once, a devotee asked him, “When devotees praise your eloquent speeches, do you not feel pride?”

Seth ji replied, “No, I don’t feel pride. Rather, I feel that the listener must be of noble disposition. Even if I speak in an ordinary way, they respond by saying, ‘You spoke wonderfully today.’ That’s a mark of their greatness, not mine.”

This response exemplifies **true detachment from praise and result**—living proof of *tyāga* in its highest *sāttvika* sense.

Key Insight:

Spiritual evolution does not lie in escapism or the physical renunciation of responsibilities. It lies in performing all actions—whether sacred or secular—with a **pure heart, without selfish motives**, and **with detachment from results**. This is the essence of the *Gītā's Karma Yoga* and the hallmark of *Sāttvika Tyāga*.

This verse completes the philosophical clarification of what true renunciation (*tyāga*) means. Śrī Bhagavān now transitions from definitions to classifications in the next verses.

With this, the session concluded with the chanting of *Harināma Sankīrtana*, and the remaining spiritual queries of the seekers were addressed with clarity and reverence

Question And Answer Session

Archana Garg Ji

Q: Whenever the *Gītā* discusses qualities such as **Śraddhā** (faith), **Buddhi** (intellect), and **Dhṛti** (fortitude), it presents them in the order of **Sāttvika first**, followed by **Rājasika**, and finally **Tāmasika**. But in the case of **Tyāga** (renunciation), this sequence is reversed—beginning with **Tāmasika**, then **Rājasika**, and ending with **Sāttvika Tyāga**. Why does Śrī Bhagavān adopt this different order?

A: This is a profound and discerning question. To understand the rationale behind this shift in sequence, we must examine the **nature of the topic** and **intent of the teacher**.

In most discussions involving the **three guṇas**—as in the case of **Śraddhā**, **Buddhi**, and **Dhṛti**—the *Gītā* uses the **ascending sequence**:

Sāttvika → Rājasika → Tāmasika.

This is deliberate and logical because:

- These inner faculties are **meant to be cultivated**, refined, and aligned toward liberation.
- Presenting the **Sāttvika form first** sets a **clear standard**—an ideal to aspire to.
- Moving from Sattva to Rajas to Tamas helps the seeker identify **progressive deviations** from the ideal.
- Even if the order were reversed, it wouldn't cause confusion or harm; at most, it would delay one's recognition of the highest path.

Thus, for such qualities, **starting with the best** is a **pedagogical encouragement**, a method of **uplifting** the student by showing what is possible and noble.

However, in the case of **Tyāga**, the sequence is intentionally **reversed**:

Tāmasika → Rājasika → Sāttvika.

This reversal is **essential**, not accidental. Here's why:

- **Renunciation**, if misunderstood, can become spiritually dangerous. A person who, out of delusion, fear, or laziness, gives up their duties—thinking that this is spiritual renunciation—is actually engaging in **Tāmasika Tyāga**.

- Such abandonment leads to **spiritual regression**, guilt, stagnation, and even adharmā.
- Therefore, Bhagavān **first warns** the seeker by describing the **wrong kind of Tyāga**. Then He shows a more refined, yet still flawed, **Rājasika Tyāga**, where duties are performed but the attachment to pain or result remains.
- Only after **dispelling misconceptions** and eliminating the dangers does He present **Sāttvika Tyāga**, the true renunciation—where one performs duty **without attachment to the fruit**.

In this way, the reversed order in Tyāga serves a **protective and corrective function**:

“Let me first show you what not to do, so that you do not stray from the right path.”

So yes, **reversing the order in Tyāga is crucial**, while in the case of **Śraddhā, Buddhi, and Dhṛti**, the traditional upward order is both natural and pedagogically sound.

Palak Didi

Q: My mind often gets distracted and doesn't stay focused. What can I do to improve concentration?

A: This is a question every seeker faces—Arjuna himself asked the same in the Gītā.

The **restlessness of the mind** is due to the dominance of **Rajo-guṇa**, which fuels desire and constant motion. On the other hand, **Sattva-guṇa** calms the mind, creating clarity and steadiness.

To cultivate concentration:

- **Examine your daily routine:** How much of your time is spent in sāttvika activities (clean food, noble company, calm surroundings), versus rājasika or tāmasika ones?
- **Start your day** with silence, prayer, japa, or svādhyāya—this sets a sattvic foundation.
- Minimize overstimulation (e.g., noise, excess screen time), which triggers rajas.

Śrī Bhagavān teaches:

"असंशयं महाबाहो, मनो दुर्निग्रं चलम्। अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय, वैराग्येण च गृह्यते॥" (6.35)

O mighty-armed, the mind is difficult to restrain, but it can be controlled by sustained practice (abhyāsa) and detachment (vairāgya).

So the key tools are:

- **Abhyāsa:** Regular spiritual practice—even 10 minutes daily, done consistently, is powerful.
- **Vairāgya:** Letting go of attachments that scatter the mind.

This inner discipline, combined with a regulated lifestyle, steadily brings the mind under control.

Subhash Bhaiya

Q: We often hear that karma shapes our destiny. How then is our **lifespan** determined?

A: Indeed, **karma is the root determinant** of many aspects of our lives—including lifespan (**āyus**).

Vedic teachings speak of **four karmically governed outcomes**:

- **Āyus** – how long we live
- **Vidyā** – the degree of knowledge and learning we acquire

- **Bhoga** – the kind and amount of enjoyment or suffering we experience
- **Mokṣa** – the potential for liberation

Lifespan is primarily governed by **prārabdha karma**—the portion of past karma allotted to unfold in the present birth. However, living a *sāttvika* life (charity, non-violence, truthfulness, etc.) can **ease the karmic burden** and attract divine grace, which can uplift even *prārabdha*.

Meena Didi

Q: What should we do when negativity starts increasing in life?

A: Negativity often arises when **expectations grow** and **gratitude fades**. The more we **demand** from life, others, or ourselves, the more dissatisfied we become.

To reduce negativity:

- **Lower expectations**, especially from others.
- Practice **gratitude** for what *is*, rather than frustration over what *isn't*.
- **Satsanga**, devotional practices, and remembering Bhagavān's name all help **purify the mind**.

As positivity increases, the mind naturally regains its light and direction.

Neerja Didi

Q: What exactly is *Tattva-jñāna*—the knowledge of truth?

A: *Tattva-jñāna* means knowing the **essential reality** behind all appearances.

A beautiful analogy:

When you take various ornaments—rings, bangles, chains—to a goldsmith, he doesn't value their design. He weighs the **gold content**. All forms are different, but their **substance** is the same—gold.

In the same way, beneath names, forms, roles, and identities, the **same Supreme Consciousness (Brahman)** pervades all beings. Knowing this—not just intellectually but through direct inner realization—is *tattva-jñāna*.

It is the knowledge that:

“I am not the body, mind, or ego—I am that Self which is eternal, pure, and divine.”

Devyanti Didi

Q: How can I free myself from the memory of a loved one who has passed away?

A: Such memories arise from deep attachment, which is natural. But Bhagavān teaches **non-attachment**, not lovelessness.

- **Honor their memory** through occasional **pitṛ-tarpaṇa**, prayers, and good actions done in their name.
- Do not **dwell excessively** on the past. The more you **mentally engage**, the more they remain in your emotional space.

Remember the eternal truth of life:

"What is the greatest wonder?"

Yudhiṣṭhira answered:

Daily, countless beings die, yet those who remain live as though they are immortal. This illusion is the greatest wonder.

Let remembrance be sacred—not sorrowful. Move forward with **love, not longing**.



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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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