



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADĠĪĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/B4AlbDLkCw>

Act Without Acting: The Gītā's Revelation of Detached Engagement

Chapter 18 of Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā – **Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga: The Path of Liberation through Renunciation**

The 18th chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, titled *Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga—The Yoga of Liberation through Renunciation*—guides us towards the highest spiritual freedom. It offers a deep and nuanced understanding of renunciation (*sannyāsa*) and relinquishment (*tyāga*), leading us to the essence of true liberation.

The session commenced with the **auspicious lighting of the traditional lamp**, symbolizing the steady flame of *Dharma*. Just as this sacred light dispels outer darkness, it also signifies the **inner awakening**—cleansing the *Antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument of mind, intellect, memory, and ego) and illuminating our spiritual path with the radiance of *jñāna* (wisdom).

This was followed by **salutations to Bhagavān and the Guru**, invoking their divine grace to guide us through this sacred study.

It is no ordinary fortune that brings us to the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Perhaps it is due to the merit of our **past lives**, or more directly, the **grace of saints**, that we have been chosen for this path. Indeed, we must remember—**we did not choose the Gītā; the Gītā chose us.**

The deeper our faith in this truth, the more abundantly divine grace will flow into our lives.

We are currently studying **Chapter 18**. It begins with **Arjuna's question about Sannyāsa and Tyāga**—which is superior, and what exactly distinguishes them. As discussed earlier, the difference is subtle, often leading to their interchangeable use.

- **Tyāga** generally refers to the **relinquishment of objects** or **material things**,

- **Sannyāsa** is understood as the **renunciation of actions**.

However, the *Bhagavad Gītā* harmonizes the two, emphasizing not the abandonment of action, but the **renunciation of desire for the fruit of action**.

True renunciation lies not in giving up action, but in giving up the attachment and doership tied to its results.

Common Misconceptions and the Importance of Integrated Dharma

In today's world—particularly on social media—we often encounter questions rooted in **half-knowledge**:

- *Is it better to visit a temple or help a patient get to a hospital?*
- *Should milk be offered to Śiva or given to the poor?*

Such questions, while appearing thoughtful, reflect **incomplete understanding** of *Dharma*.

Bhagavān never asks us to abandon *puja* (worship) for social service, nor to prioritize one at the cost of the other. Instead, He emphasizes that **both are essential**:

- **Kārya** (duty)
- **Upāsana** (devotion)

These go hand in hand. One without the other creates imbalance.

The one who truly sees **Śiva in a stone image** will also see Śiva in all beings.

Those who offer milk at a temple are often the same ones who help the poor.

In contrast, **those who avoid temple worship usually don't serve others either**.

These duties are interconnected—not mutually exclusive.

Excuses and Misinterpretations: The Ravidas Example

Often, people avoid **Niyat Karma** (prescribed duties) using convenient excuses:

- “Bhagavān doesn't care if I take a bath.”
- “Ringing a bell in the temple has no meaning for me.”
- “I believe in Karma Yoga—I don't believe in rituals.”

Even *japa* (chanting) is seen as a burden. And then, they quote:

"मन चंगा तो कठौती में गंगा"

If the mind is pure, the Ganges flows even in a bowl.

But one must ask—**when did the mind become pure?**

A mind clouded with desire, deception, and distraction is far from pure.

This proverb is **often misquoted and misused**. It originates from the life of **Saint Ravidas**, a cobbler-saint and spiritual master of **Mirabai**.

The Story Behind the Proverb

One day, a man in a hurry to bathe in the Ganges visited Ravidas, who was mending shoes. The saint humbly asked the man to offer a coin in the river on his behalf.

The man agreed. When he offered the coin, a miraculous **divine hand rose from the Ganges**, accepted the offering, and gave back a **celestial bracelet** meant for Ravidas.

Astonished, the man presented the bracelet to the king. The king desired a second bracelet to form a pair. The man returned to Ravidas and narrated the story.

Ravidas calmly said:

“If my mind is pure, the Ganges will appear in this bowl.”

And to everyone’s amazement, **a hand emerged from the wooden bowl**, offering another divine bracelet.

The Real Moral

Such miracles occur only for **pure-hearted saints**, like Saint Ravidas or Swami Govind Giri Ji Maharaj. For ordinary people, the **Ganges does not flow into bowls** by merely quoting verses.

We must continue our prescribed *karma*—with sincerity, humility, and faith.

Śrī Bhagavān's Teaching

Śrī Bhagavān emphatically declares:

- One must **not engage in Nishiddha Karma** (forbidden actions),
- One must **let go of Kāmyakarma** (desire-motivated actions),
- But one must **never abandon Niyat Karma** (prescribed duty).

Renunciation is not the **rejection of work**, but the **relinquishment of ego, desire, and ownership** tied to it.

This is the true message of *Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga*.

18.7

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

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

Having introduced the concepts of *Sannyāsa* and *Tyāga*, Śrī Bhagavān now proceeds to categorize *Tyāga* based on the three **Guṇas**—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. This verse highlights the **Tāmasika** type of renunciation, which is the lowest form and is rooted in ignorance and delusion.

- **niyatasya karmaṇaḥ sannyāsaḥ na upapadyate**

- The renunciation (*sannyāsa*) of **prescribed or obligatory duties** (*niyata karma*)—such as one's responsibilities toward family, society, or spiritual practice—is **not proper** or justifiable.

- **mohāt tasya parityāgaḥ**

- When someone gives up such duties out of *moha*—delusion, confusion, or lack of proper discrimination—it reflects a mistaken notion of renunciation.

- **tāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ**

- Such renunciation is declared to be *Tāmasika*—arising from the Guṇa of **Tamas**, associated with darkness, inertia, ignorance, and escapism.

In the last session, **Archana Garg Ji** raised a thoughtful and pertinent question:

“In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, whenever various traits and practices are classified according to the three *Guṇas*—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas—the sequence always follows this ascending order. But in this verse (18.7), the order is reversed. Why is *Tamas* mentioned first?”

Upon deeper reflection and contemplation, we arrive at the following rationale:

In all other contexts—like diet (*āhāra*), sacrifice (*yajña*), austerity (*tapah*)—the discussion is about **what we should adopt or cultivate**. Naturally, when something is to be adopted, the priority is to begin with the **Sāttvika** form, the purest and most beneficial. Hence, *Sattva-Rajas-Tamas* is the consistent sequence for aspirational practices.

However, **in this section, Bhagavān is addressing what must be given up**—the nature of *Tyāga* (renunciation). When it comes to renunciation, the sequence is logically reversed:

- First, we must give up *Tāmasika* tendencies (born of ignorance and inertia),
- Then *Rājasa* tendencies (born of desire and attachment),
- And finally, we can transcend even *Sāttvika* attachment to action itself.

Thus, this reversal reflects the **progressive purification** of renunciation, starting from the most deluded and harmful.

Swami Ji beautifully illustrates this with a common query:

“*Bhaiyya, can we do mānasika (mental) pūjā?*”

To this, Swami Ji replies,

“*The day you can do mānasika (mental) eating, you may begin mānasika pūjā.*”

This humorous yet profound response underscores a vital point: **internalisation comes only after discipline in external practice**. Just as eating is a non-negotiable *niyata karma* (prescribed daily duty), so too is **japa (mantra repetition)** or **pūjā (worship)**. These should not be abandoned under the guise of detachment or convenience.

Unfortunately, what we often observe is selective sincerity:

- *Sleep* and *meals* are rarely missed,
- But *pūjā*, *japa*, and *spiritual disciplines* are easily postponed or skipped.

This reveals a deeper truth: **we abandon prescribed duties not out of true renunciation, but out of laziness, distraction, or misprioritization**. Such abandonment—motivated by delusion or negligence—is exactly what this verse identifies as *Tāmasika Tyāga*.

A relevant example is the observance of **Śrāddha Pakṣa**—the fortnight for ancestral offerings. Performing rituals for ancestors during this period is a **niyata karma**. Skipping it out of modern rationalism, busyness, or convenience is not *Tyāga*, but a subtle form of *Tāmasika escape*.

Key Insight:

This verse is a clear warning against **abandoning responsibility under the guise of detachment**. Renunciation is not about giving up duties but about giving up **attachment** and **ego** behind actions. Walking away from responsibilities due to laziness, fear, or confusion is not spiritual progress—it is *Tamas*.

True renunciation comes from clarity (*viveka*), not from delusion (*moha*).

18.8

duḥkhamityeva yatkarma, kāyakleśabhayāttijet, sa kṛtvā rājasam(n) tyāgam(n), naiva tyāgaphalam(m) labhet. 18.8

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

Following the description of *Tāmasika Tyāga* in the previous verse, Śrī Bhagavān now describes *Rājasika Tyāga*—a form of renunciation rooted in fear, discomfort, and attachment to bodily ease.

- **duḥkham iti eva yat karma**
- Refers to actions perceived as troublesome, strenuous, or physically demanding.
- **kāya-kleśa-bhayāt tyajet**
- When such duties are abandoned out of fear of bodily strain or fatigue, due to an attachment to physical comfort (*kāyakleśa-bhaya*).
- **sa kṛtvā rājasam tyāgam**
- This constitutes *Rājasika Tyāga*—a renunciation driven by passion (*rajas*), self-interest, or discomfort.
- **na eva tyāga-phalam labhet**
- Such a person does not attain the true fruit or benefit of renunciation, because the spirit of *tyāga* is missing.

The inclination to avoid discomfort—termed *Kāyakleśa* or *Kāya Prem* (attachment to bodily comfort)—manifests when individuals prioritise physical ease over their spiritual or social obligations. For instance, during a *havan* (sacrificial fire ritual), some people may request the priest to rush the ceremony because the smoke irritates their eyes. Others may dismiss a venue as unsuitable for a satsang or function simply because it lacks air conditioning or other luxuries. These examples reflect a *Rājasika* mindset, where bodily comfort is valued above inner growth.

Such attitudes hold people back from genuine spiritual commitment. The craving for comfort keeps them bound to the body and prevents the rise of higher awareness. This is precisely what Bhagavān warns against in this verse—**the kind of renunciation that is not grounded in wisdom or duty, but in aversion to physical hardship.**

In contrast, we find inspiration in lives like that of **Professor Shivnarayan Ji from Kanpur**, a devoted follower of Mahatma Gandhi Ji. He was known for his extreme discipline and adherence to Gandhian values. Once, when his students made mistakes, he would introspect so deeply that he punished himself with a stick, believing their error was his own failure.

Even more remarkable was his vow of **Aswad (Taste Renunciation)**—a principle followed by *Param Śraddhye Sethji Jaydayal Goyanka Ji* and *Mahatma Gandhi Ji*. According to this vow, if one especially enjoyed a dish, one would not eat it again—thus ensuring that food served the body alone and not the tongue. It is a highly challenging practice, especially when compared to our habits of indulging in favourite

dishes even after meals.

Renunciation of action solely to avoid bodily discomfort is precisely what Śrī Bhagavān classifies as Rājoguni Tyāga.

He emphasizes that giving up *niyata karma* (prescribed duty) to preserve comfort or avoid fatigue is **not** true *tyāga*. True renunciation lies in rising above bodily concerns and performing one's duties with resolve, even amidst hardship. Only such commitment leads to the *phala* (fruit) of real *tyāga*.

Key Insight:

Renunciation is not an escape from responsibility but a transcendence of selfishness. When action is avoided because it is uncomfortable or inconvenient, the ego still dominates. **True tyāga is action performed without craving or aversion—driven neither by pain nor pleasure, but by duty.** That alone brings inner freedom and spiritual merit.

18.9

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

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

After outlining *Tāmasika* and *Rājasa* forms of *tyāga*, Śrī Bhagavān now describes the ideal form—**Sāttvika Tyāga**, the purest and highest expression of renunciation.

- **kāryam iti eva yat karma niyatam kriyate**
- When a prescribed duty (*niyata karma*) is performed with a firm inner conviction—"this must be done"—as a matter of principle, not preference.
- **saṅgaṃ tyaktvā phalaṃ ca eva**
- Renouncing both **attachment** (to the action or identity of being the doer) and **expectation of fruits** (success, gain, recognition).
- **sa tyāgaḥ sāttvikaḥ mataḥ**
- Such *tyāga* is recognized as *Sāttvika*, marked by clarity, duty, and inner freedom.

Flow and Contextual Integration:

To practice true renunciation, one must take **pleasure in performing their obligatory duties (niyat karma)** without tying their happiness to the result. A simple self-check is to ask: *Am I enjoying doing the duty itself, or only its outcomes?* If one's satisfaction lies in the result, that's a mark of **Rājasic** tendency. However, if joy is found in the **action itself**, regardless of praise, success, or reward, it reveals a **Sāttvika** mindset.

A profound example comes from the *Mahābhārata*. When Draupadi questioned Yudhiṣṭhira, he replied, "Draupadi, one must follow *Dharma* not to seek joy or escape pain, but because it is *Dharma*. That alone makes it worth doing." Actions will bring fruits—favourable or not—but the essence of **true tyāga** is in renouncing expectation. Even noble acts like serving the poor or donating may be contaminated by **ego** if driven by pride or desire for recognition.

Bhagavān Rām exemplifies *Sāttvika Tyāga* by accepting 14 years of forest exile on the very day of his coronation, upholding his father's promise without hesitation or blame. He gave up the luxury of the palace and embraced the hardship of *Vanvas* out of pure duty.

Lakṣmaṇa, too, embodied *Sāttvika Tyāga*. He was not obligated by any vow but chose to accompany Bhagavān Rām, giving up all comforts and even forsaking sleep for 14 years to serve and protect Rām and Sītā. His *seva* was self-imposed, unasked, and unwavering—free from recognition or desire.

A **Sāttvika person** does not abandon duties because they are difficult. Instead, they willingly let go of comfort (*sukhābuddhi*) to uphold Dharma. They perform acts like *Annadāna* (food charity), not with any desire for merit, but out of pure intention. They do not expect thanks or results.

The **test of Sāttvika Karma** lies in the aftermath—*Does regret follow the action?* If so, it was likely **Rājasic**. If one can say, “I would do this again, regardless of the outcome,” the action was truly *Sāttvika*.

Bhagavān's message here is not to give up action, but to purify intention. This is the essence of *Karma Yoga*—to act with sincerity and detachment. By cultivating this mindset, one rises above pleasure and pain, success and failure, and moves steadily towards *Mokṣa*.

Even **charity or service** may look noble outwardly, but the inner motive determines its *Guṇa*. For instance, one may distribute blankets in winter out of compassion. But if fame follows and that fame becomes the motivation for repeating the act, the action turns *Rājasic*. It's subtle—but this distinction is key to understanding *Sāttvika Tyāga*.

Another example: A person serves elderly relatives who are often ungrateful or critical. If he continues the service, unaffected by praise or insult, this is *Sāttvika Seva*—done as a sacred duty, not for appreciation.

Yudhiṣṭhira's choice to accept the dice game invitation—despite knowing the deceit—was rooted in Dharma. As a junior, he accepted his elder Dhṛtarāṣṭra's call as a matter of duty. Though it appears foolish by worldly standards, it is the **highest example of Dharma-abidance**, which earned him the title **Dharmarāja**.

A well-known bhajan beautifully echoes the spirit of *Sāttvika Tyāga*:

सीता राम सीता राम, सीताराम कहिये।
जाहि विधि राखे राम, ताहि विधि रहिये॥

Sītā Rām, Sītā Rām—chant the names of the Divine. However Rām chooses to keep us, we must accept it with grace.

Key Insight:

Give your best in performing your niyat karma. Do it without slacking, without ego, and without expecting applause. Yet if a time comes when rest is needed or you're pulled away from duty, accept even that as the will of Bhagavān. This balance—between sincere effort and serene surrender—is the essence of *Sāttvika Tyāga*.

In the next verse, Śrī Bhagavān will guide us further—toward transcending even the three *guṇas* themselves.

na dveṣṭyakuśalaṃ(ñ) karma, kuśale nānuṣajjate, tyāgī sattvasamāviṣṭo, medhāvī chinna-saṃśayaḥ. 18.10

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

This verse beautifully concludes the description of the **Sāttvika Tyāgī**, the ideal renunciant. Śrī Bhagavān outlines the **mental and emotional qualities** of a person established in true renunciation.

- **na dveṣṭi akuśalaṃ karma**
- The renunciant **does not develop hatred** or aversion even for actions that are *akuśala*—difficult, unpleasant, or painful. He accepts duties involving hardship with equanimity.
- **kuśale na anuṣajjate**
- Nor does he develop **attachment** (*anuṣakti*) to actions that are *kuśala*—easy, pleasant, or rewarding. He performs them with the same detachment, without longing.
- **tyāgī sattvasamāviṣṭaḥ**
- Such a renouncer is **suffused with sattva**, the quality of purity, balance, and clarity. His mind is serene and steady, free from emotional turmoil.
- **medhāvī chinna-saṃśayaḥ**
- He is **wise (medhāvī)** and **free from all doubts (chinna-saṃśayaḥ)**. His understanding is clear, firm, and rooted in scriptural insight and direct experience.

Contextual Reflection:

In Chapter 14, Śrī Bhagavān had said:

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्, प्रकाश उपजायते।
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्, विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ 14.11 ॥

“When the light of knowledge radiates through all the doors of the body, then it should be known that Sattva has increased greatly.”

Śrī Bhagavān conveys the same essence here, but in a different way.

Maharāj Yudhiṣṭhira displayed this quality perfectly. He did not harbour hatred (*dveṣa*) even toward the action of playing dice, which was clearly *akuśala karma*. Nor was he attached (*rāga*) to *kuśala karma*. He remained unattached and equipoised. Such a person—free from inner clinging and repulsion—is truly one established in pure *Sattva*, and is described as **chinna-saṃśayaḥ** (free from all doubts).

Revered saints like **Pujya Swamiji** exemplify this too. Whenever a question is asked, they respond instantly with clarity and insight. The more Sattva increases in a person, the more luminous their intellect becomes, illuminating the mind with wisdom.

Key Insight:

This verse presents a portrait of the **ideal karma-yogī**—the one who has risen above both **likes and dislikes** in action. He does not abandon duties because they are hard (*Tāmasika Tyāga*), nor does he cling

to duties that are pleasant (*Rājasa Tyāga*). His actions are not determined by comfort, mood, or personal preference—but by clarity of purpose and alignment with Dharma.

Such a person acts without inner conflict. **Doubts are dissolved**, because he no longer vacillates between “*Should I do this?*”, “*Will I benefit?*”, or “*What will others think?*” He is anchored in the wisdom of the Gītā—*Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi*, and performs his duties with **mental equipoise**.

18.11

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

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

After describing the types of *Tyāga* (renunciation) based on the three *Guṇas*, Śrī Bhagavān now clarifies a key philosophical truth about *karma* and *tyāga*.

- **na hi dehabhṛtā śakyaṃ tyaktuṃ karmāṇi aśeṣataḥ**
- For anyone possessing a body (*dehabhṛt*), it is **not possible to abandon all actions** completely. Life itself is a continuous flow of activity—**breathing, sleeping, blinking, thinking, digesting—all are involuntary karmas**. Total renunciation of all karma is impractical.
- **yastu karmaphala-tyāgī**
- He who gives up the **attachment to the fruits of actions**, not the actions themselves—
- **sa tyāgī iti abhidhīyate**
- **He alone is truly called a tyāgī**. Renunciation is defined not by abandonment of duties, but by relinquishing ownership and expectation of reward.

Śrī Bhagavān teaches that those who wish to become *tyāgīs* by giving up karma—saying, “I won’t perform *pūjā*,” or “I will abandon all other prescribed duties”—are misunderstanding the path. One **must continue to perform all *niyata karma* (prescribed duties)** and only give up the desire for fruits. Karma does not mean only external work like getting up and doing something. **Sitting, lying down, breathing, even blinking—these are all karmas**. These bodily karmas cannot be renounced.

Sannyāsa is not non-doing. It is non-owning.

This is the spirit of **sarvārambha-parityāgī**—one who gives up all sense of “*I am the doer*” in every activity.

A beautiful illustration of this mindset comes from the **Kishkindha Kāṇḍa** of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. When all the *vānaras* were deliberating who could cross the ocean to reach *Laṅkā*:

Aṅgada says, “I can go, but I am not sure I will be able to return.”
Others give their own limitations.

Jambavan then acknowledged Hanuman Ji’s unique qualifications: “You are all capable and worthy, but Hanuman is the best candidate for this task, as he is a true leader and servant of Lord Ram.”

Jambavan, seeing Hanuman Ji's quiet demeanor, approached him and said:

कहइ रीछपति सुनु हनुमाना। का चुप साधि रहेहु बलवाना ॥
पवन तनय बल पवन समाना। बुधि बिबेक बिग्यान निधाना ॥

"Listen, Hanuman! Why are you sitting quietly, O mighty one? You are the son of the wind god, and your strength equals that of the wind. You are a treasure of wisdom, intellect, and knowledge."

He continued:

कवन सो काज कठिन जग माहीं। जो नहिं होइ तात तुम्ह पाहीं ॥

"What task is there in this world, O dear one, that cannot be accomplished by you?"

On hearing this, Hanuman Ji, who had quietly refrained from boasting, finally revealed his immense power when needed:

राम काज लागि तव अवतारा। सुनतहिं भयउ पर्वताकारा ॥

"You have incarnated to fulfill the tasks of Shri Ram." Hearing these words, Hanuman assumed a massive form, ready for action:

कनक बर्ण तन तेज बिराजा। मानहुँ अपर गिरिन्ह कर राजा ॥
सिंहनाद करि बारहिं बारा। लघु रूप धरि सागर पारा ॥

His body shone with a golden hue, resembling a king of mountains. Roaring like a lion, he assumed a small form and leapt across the ocean.

Once reminded, Hanumān Ji leaps to Laṅkā, meets Mother Sītā, delivers Śrī Rām's message, and returns. When Sugrīva narrates the message to Śrī Rām, Rām ji expresses His desire to meet Hanumān. When Hanumān appears, he only narrates what happened **after Śrī Rām asks**—never before. **Never once in the entire Rāmāyaṇa does Hanumān Ji glorify his own actions.**

This is *true karma yoga*: **doing one's duty without expectation, without ego, and without self-praise.**

A Parable: Understanding Karma with Discrimination

Once, a Guru wanted to select his successor. He gave two disciples ₹3 each and said: "Return within one hour. Don't ask questions. Spend ₹1 *here*, ₹1 *there*, and the remaining ₹1 *neither here nor there*."

The first disciple returned:

He ate fritters with ₹1 and arranged for a full month's meals in advance.

Donated ₹1 to monks.

Returned ₹1 to the Guru.

He explained:

- The ₹1 returned is 'here',
- The ₹1 given to monks is 'there',
- The ₹1 used to pre-arrange meals is 'neither here nor there'.

The second disciple said:

- He too ate fritters and made arrangements.
- Fed fritters worth ₹1 to monks.
- Threw the remaining ₹1 into the river.

He explained:

- What I consumed is 'here',
- What I donated is 'there',
- What I threw in the river is 'neither here nor there'.

The Guru remarked: *"To distinguish between 'here' and 'there' is subtle wisdom. One took 'here' to mean the āśrama, the other saw it as the world. One saw 'there' as the world beyond."*

Thus, understanding karma and how to perform it properly requires intelligence (*buddhi*) and deep discrimination (*viveka*).

The second disciple was chosen by the Guru to be his successor.

Key Insight:

Renunciation is not the withdrawal from life, but the purification of our relationship to it. So long as one breathes, karma is inevitable. But if one acts without seeking credit or reward, dedicating all outcomes to the Divine, then **even intense activity becomes the highest renunciation**.

Such a person is truly the **tyāgī** in the eyes of Śrī Bhagavān.

18.12

**aniṣṭamiṣṭam(m) miśram(ñ) ca, trividham(ñ) karmaṇaḥ(ph) phalam,
bhavatyatyāginām(m) pretya, na tu sannyāsinām(ñ) kvacit. 18.12**

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

This verse draws a sharp distinction between the **renouncer (sannyāsī or tyāgī)** and the **non-renouncer (atyāgī)** with regard to **karma-phala (fruits of action)**—particularly in the post-death context.

- **aniṣṭam** - Unpleasant, painful, or undesirable results of action (e.g., suffering, rebirth in lower realms).
- **iṣṭam** - Pleasant, desirable results (e.g., heavenly enjoyments, favorable rebirth).
- **miśram** - Mixed results, a combination of pleasure and pain, common in most human experiences.

These **threefold results of karma** are experienced by **atyāgins**—those who act with attachment, desire for fruit, and egoistic motives.

- **pretya** - *After death*, the soul carries impressions (*saṃskāras*) and the fruits of action into future embodiments, where these results are manifested.
- **na tu sannyāsinām kvacit** - But for the one who has **renounced the fruits of all actions**, such karmic results **do not bind**. The *sannyāsī* or true *tyāgī* acts **without doership and expectation**, and hence **no karma adheres to him**.

Key Insight:

The true renouncer is not judged by what he gives up externally, but by **what he renounces internally—the sense of doership and ownership of results**. Such a person becomes **karma-free**, not because he stops acting, but because he acts in **complete surrender**, letting go of “I did,” “I want,” and “I deserve.”

He lives in the world, performs all duties, but remains untouched by their outcomes—**like a lotus in water**.

18.13

pañcāitāni mahābāho, kāraṇāni nibodha me, sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni, siddhaye sarvākarmaṇām. 18.13

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

After discussing renunciation and the non-binding nature of karma for the wise, Śrī Bhagavān now shifts to explain **how actions truly come to fruition**. He highlights that **no action is accomplished by the doer alone**—there are **five essential factors** involved in the accomplishment (*siddhi*) of any karma.

This teaching is rooted in the **Sāṅkhya** philosophy, which forms one of the six systems of Indian thought and deals with the analysis of cause and effect and the role of nature (*Prakṛti*) and consciousness (*Puruṣa*).

- **pañca etāni kāraṇāni** – These five are the **causes or instruments** by which action is accomplished.
- **mahābāho** – Addressing Arjuna as “O mighty-armed,” Śrī Bhagavān reminds him of his potential to understand and act upon this deeper knowledge.
- **sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni** – These causes are described in *Sāṅkhya*, the branch of philosophy that deals with ultimate causes and the resolution (*kṛtānta*) of action, i.e., liberation through right understanding.
- **siddhaye sarva-karmaṇām** – These five causes are the **foundation for the accomplishment of all actions**, from the simplest to the most complex.

This verse sets the stage for the **next verse (18.14)**, where Bhagavān will enumerate the five causes.

Key Insight:

This verse emphasizes a **shift in perspective**: from seeing oneself as the sole doer to understanding the **broader framework of action**. It is not the ego that accomplishes action. Instead, multiple forces—internal and external—contribute.

By recognizing these five causes, the seeker develops:

- **Humility**, as he sees that success is never due to himself alone.
- **Detachment**, knowing that results depend on factors beyond his control.
- **Clarity**, in distinguishing between his role and the role of the Divine and nature.

18.14

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

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

Following the introduction of the five causes in Verse 18.13, Śrī Bhagavān now **enumerates them** clearly. These five are essential for the completion (*siddhi*) of any karma, and understanding them helps dissolve the false notion of “*I alone am the doer.*”

This teaching is rooted in the **Sāṅkhya** philosophy, which forms one of the six systems of Indian thought and deals with the analysis of cause and effect and the role of nature (*Prakṛti*) and consciousness (*Puruṣa*).

1. **Adhiṣṭhāna (The Base or Seat):**

- Refers to the **body-mind complex**, the field (*kṣetra*) in which actions take place. Without a physical form, action is not possible.
- Includes the location, environment, and structural support for action.

2. **Kartā (The Doer):**

- The conscious agent or individual who initiates action, often wrongly identified as the sole doer due to ego.
- However, Bhagavān shows that the *kartā* is only one of five contributing factors.

3. **Karaṇam (The Instruments):**

- The **senses and organs** of action and perception (*indriyas*), the **mind, intellect**, and other faculties.
- These tools make the execution of any action possible.

4. **Ceṣṭāḥ (Efforts):**

- The **variety of motions or functions** involved in carrying out the action—physical, verbal,

mental.

- These are the expressions of will and energy applied by the *kartā*.

5. **Daivam (The Divine Factor):**

- The **unseen factor**—destiny, providence, fate, or the accumulated **karmic impressions** (*saṃskāras*) from past actions.
- This includes the influence of **time, circumstances, and grace**, which are not under individual control.

Key Insight:

This verse **dissects the myth of personal doership**. What we normally attribute to “I did” is actually the result of **multiple interdependent causes**. Recognizing this leads to humility, equanimity, and spiritual maturity.

Especially important is the **fifth factor—Daivam**, which reminds us that **not everything is in our hands**, despite sincere effort. Outcomes often depend on factors invisible to the human eye.

In **Ayurveda**, it is traditionally prohibited to mix **honey with hot water** for consumption, as it disrupts the balance of bodily energies and leads to the degradation of vital essences. However, in **modern medicinal practices**, the combination of honey and hot water is often prescribed for **weight loss**, especially in cases where excess body weight contributes to health issues.

Thus, what Ayurveda treats as **Niṣiddha Karma** (prohibited action), other systems regard as **Vihita Karma** (prescribed action), based on different **contexts and objectives**.

This demonstrates that **discrimination (viveka)** is essential in determining the appropriateness of action. **What is prohibited in one scenario may become beneficial in another.**

Poetic Reflection: Wisdom from Sant Kabīrdās Ji

साधो सहज समाधि भली

साईं ते मिलन भयो जा दिन ते सुरत न अंत चली

आँख न मूँदूँ कान न रूँधूँ काया कष्ट न धारूँ
खुले नैन मैं हँस-हँस देखूँ सुंदर रूप निहारूँ ॥1॥ साधो

कहूँ सो नाम, सुनूँ सो सुमिरन, जो कछु करूँ सो पूजा
गृह उद्यान एक सम देखूँ भाव मिटाऊँ दूजा ॥2॥ साधो

जहँ-जहँ जाऊँ सोई परिक्रमा जो कछु करूँ सो सेवा
जब सोऊँ तब करूँ दण्डवत, पूजूँ और न देवा ॥3॥ साधो

शब्द निरंतर मनुआ राता, मलिन बचन का त्यागी
बैठत-उठत कबहूँ न बिसरे, ऐसी तारी लगी ॥4॥ साधो

कहै 'कबीर' यह उनमुनि रहनी सो परगट कर गाई
सुख-दुख के इक परे परम सुख, तेहि में रहा समाई ॥5॥ साधो



LEARN THE GEETA
अमृत पीने भक्तों के



Sant Kabīr's divine composition invites us into the depth of such sahaja (spontaneous) spiritual insight:

साधो सहज समाधि भली।

गुर परताप जा दिन से जागी, दिन दिन अधिक चली॥

O seekers! Spontaneous absorption in the Divine is most beautiful. Since the day I awakened by the Guru's grace, that state has deepened day by day.

जहँ जहँ डोलौं सो परिकरमा, जो कछु करौं सो सेवा।

जब सोवौं तब करौं दंडवत, पूजौ और न देवा॥

Wherever I go, it feels like I am circumambulating the Divine. Whatever I do becomes His service. When I lie down to sleep, that too becomes my prostration; I worship no other deity.

कहौं सो नाम सुनौं सो सुमिरन, खँव पियाँ सो पूजा।

गिरह उजाड़ एक सम लेखौं, भाव मिटावौं दूजा॥

Whatever I speak becomes the Lord's name, whatever I hear becomes remembrance. Eating and drinking are acts of worship. I see a palace and a hut as one and the same, dissolving all duality of feeling.

आँख न मूँदौ कान न रूँधौ, तनिक कष्ट नहिं धारौं।

खुले नैन पहिचानौं हँसि हँसि, सुन्दर रूप निहारौं॥

I do not close my eyes or ears, nor take on any austerity. With open eyes, I recognize Him and smilingly behold His beautiful form everywhere.

सबद निरन्तर से मन लागा, मलिन बासना त्यागी।

ऊठत बैठत कबहूँ न छूटै, ऐसी तारी लगी॥

My mind is ever absorbed in the Divine Word, having renounced impure desires. Whether rising or sitting, the connection never breaks—such is this deep, unbroken communion.

कहै कबीर यह उनमनि रहनी, सो परगट कर गाई।

दुख सुख से जोड़ परे परम पद, तेहि पद रहा समाई॥

Kabīr says: I have sung aloud this inner state of silent absorption. One who transcends joy and sorrow enters the supreme state and remains established in it.

Essence and Reflection

Whatever action we perform, let it be done with **awareness of right and wrong**, and most importantly, with the **attitude of devotion and service**.

Even the most mundane acts can be transformed into divine worship if performed with the sentiment: **"I am serving Śrī Bhagavān through this."**

This outlook transforms karma into **karma yoga**, and living into **living worship**.

Session Conclusion

After this elevated reflection, the session naturally progressed to the **Hari Sharaṇam Sankīrtan**, followed by a thoughtful and engaging **Q&A session**.

Question and Answer Session

Devayani Didi

Q: I do not know the proper method of chanting on a rosary (mālā), but I keep reciting "Hare Rām Hare Rām, Rām Rām Hare Hare" throughout the day. What is the correct way to chant using a mālā?

Answer: It is wonderful that you chant all day long. However, if you sit in front of Śrī Bhagavān and chant even one round on the mālā with focus, the impact will be a thousand times greater. Sit with discipline and purity, close your eyes, meditate on Śrī Bhagavān, and chant using a mālā. Use a 108-bead tulsi mālā, and touch each bead one by one as you chant "Hare Rām Hare Rām, Rām Rām Hare Hare." Once you complete a round of 108 beads, turn the mālā around **without crossing the guru bead** and begin again. The guru bead is considered the representation of the Guru and must not be crossed. If you intend to chant three rounds, start with the vow of doing at least one consistently.

Urmila Goyal Didi

Q: During the *Pitṛpakṣa* (ancestral fortnight), should we perform *śrāddha* rituals at home or serve food to the elderly or needy in ashrams or orphanages?

Answer: Serving *Pitṛpakṣa* food in old age homes or orphanages is considered a grave error. Even the receivers of such food incur fault. You may serve food there on any other day of the year, but **not during śrāddha period**. First, follow proper ritual procedures and feed a *Brāhmaṇa-devatā* (learned Brahmin as the divine representative). Only then may you offer food to others. Your ancestors will only receive the offering that you make to the *Brāhmaṇa*.

Asha Purohit Didi

Q: Should we recite the Bhagavad Gītā on the day after *Ekādaśī*?

Answer: The Bhagavad Gītā should be recited every day.

Q: At the beginning of the Bhagavad Gītā, the *Gītā Māhātmya* (glory of the Gītā) is mentioned. Is it necessary to read it?

Answer: Reading the *Gītā Māhātmya* is **not mandatory**. It is generally recited during *sākāma* (desire-oriented) spiritual practices. You may read it if you wish, or you may skip it if you prefer.

Dr. Sudha Rastogi Didi

Q: I want to know—does the life we are currently living depend on our **destiny (prārabdha)** or our **present actions**?

Answer: Our life is a combination of both. **Destiny provides opportunities**, and whether or not we **utilize those opportunities** is determined by our **free will (puruṣārtha)** and present actions. For example, receiving the link to the Gītā class may have been due to *prārabdha*, but choosing to use that link and attend is your present action. In our lives, **present actions play a greater role**, while *prārabdha* contributes a smaller portion.

Sarita Srivastava Didi

Q: When should one take **guru-dīkṣā (initiation by a Guru)**?

Answer: Whenever you find a **true Guru** and he is willing to accept you as a disciple—that is the **auspicious moment (amṛta kāla)** for you. You should receive **guru-dīkṣā** at that time itself.

Dr. Mangalgaori Didi

Q: Everyone tried to stop Yudhiṣṭhira from going to the gambling match, yet he still went—even though he knew it was wrong. I feel that this was the cause of the Mahābhārata war. Is this correct?

Answer: No, that is not correct. **Duryodhana had tried to kill the Pāṇḍavas multiple times since childhood**. He put them in the *Lākṣāgrha* (house of lac), poisoned Bhīma and threw him into a river. Even if Yudhiṣṭhira had not gone to the gambling match, **Duryodhana would have devised another plan**. Yudhiṣṭhira never abandoned **Dharma**. He went because **Dhṛtarāṣṭra (uncle) had sent a message commanding him to attend**, and he could not disobey an elder's order. One who follows Dharma never perishes—and **Yudhiṣṭhira was never destroyed**.



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Thank you-For reading the summary

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

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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