

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/c8SXjeH-U1Q>

## Sāttvika, Rājasika, Tāmasika: The Inner Dispositions of the Doer, Intellect, Fortitude, and Joy

**Chapter 18** of Srimad Bhagavad Gītā : **Mokṣha Sanyās Yog - The Yog of renunciation and surrender.**

The session begins with prayer.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः।

गुरुः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः॥

कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय हरये परमात्मने ।

प्रणतः क्लेशनाशाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः॥

रत्नाकराधौतपदां हिमालय किरीटिनीम्।

ब्रह्मराजर्षिरत्नाढ्यां वन्दे भारतमातरम् ॥

नमामि सद्गुरुं शान्तं सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहम् ।

पूर्णब्रह्मपरानन्दम् ईशमाळन्दिवल्लभम् ॥

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।

अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीम्- अष्टादशाध्यायिनीम् अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्- गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

नमोस्तुते व्यास विशाल बुद्धे, फुल्लारविन्दायत पत्र नेत्र।

येन त्वया भारत तैलपूर्णः प्रज्वलितो ज्ञानमय प्रदीपः॥

Salutations were offered at the lotus feet of Param Pujya Sadguru Swami Govind Dev Giri Ji Maharaj and extend heartfelt greetings to all seekers and lovers of the Bhagavad Gītā.

At present, we are reflecting upon the final and most profound chapter of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, the 18th chapter. Saint Jñāneśwar Mahārāj reverentially referred to this chapter as the "**Kalasha Adhyāya**", the crowning conclusion of the Gītā.

Just as in a temple, if one is unable to behold the full deity (Vigraha), even a glimpse of the temple's Kalasha (the auspicious finial atop the sanctum) is believed to confer the same merit and in a similar way, this 18th chapter is the very essence and culmination of the entire Bhagavad Gītā.

To study and reflect upon this chapter brings immense spiritual joy, for it encapsulates the core message of all preceding teachings.

Let us continue this journey together with devotion and sincerity.

In the 18th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa reveals the deeper principles that lie behind every action. He explains that behind every karma — every action performed — there are three essential components: **jñāna (knowledge), jñeya or jñātā (the knower), and the process of knowing or the means (jñānamata)**. These three together constitute what is called karma-codanā — the inner impulse or motivation for action.

Further, He says that every action involves three things:

- **The act itself (karma kriyā)**
- **The means or instrument of the action (karaṇa)**
- **The doer or agent (kartā)**

These three together lead to the execution of any karma.

Bhagavān then brings our attention to a fundamental truth: that the entire play of the world — the drama of life and nature we see all around us — is a result of the interplay of the three Guṇas: **Sattva (purity), Rajas (activity), and Tamas (inertia)**. These are not just qualities — they are the threads of Prakṛti itself. The entire phenomenal world that we perceive and interact with is shaped by these three Guṇas. Apart from them, **what truly exists is the Ātma-tattva — the Self — which is Guṇātīta, beyond the Guṇas**.

This Self, though subtle and invisible, pervades all of nature, both sentient and insentient. However, because the play of the Guṇas is so dominant and outwardly manifest, it hides this subtle Self from our perception. And so, Bhagavān proceeds to explain how these Guṇas operate, how they influence our actions, and how they shape different human tendencies and inclinations.

First, He describes the three types of Jñāna (knowledge):

- **Sāttvika Jñāna** is that pure knowledge through which one sees the undivided Self in all beings, despite the external diversity. That is: "Avibhaktaṁ vibhakteṣu" — the one indivisible Self appearing in diverse forms.
- **Rājasa Jñāna** sees the world as fragmented and disconnected, dwelling in the perception of multiplicity alone.
- **Tāmasa Jñāna**, which Bhagavān doesn't even honor with the word 'jñāna', is really ajñāna — ignorance. It is the kind of knowledge where a person is confined to the ego of "I" and "my body" alone. This darkness — tamas — is nothing but the absence of light, the absence of true knowledge.

Therefore, Bhagavān doesn't call it "Tāmasika Jñāna" — He simply calls it Tāmasa — to emphasize that it's a state of ignorance, not knowledge.

In the same manner, Bhagavān goes on to describe the threefold nature of karma (action) — sātत्वika, rājasa, and tāmasa based on the intention, attachment, and outcome involved in performing it.

Then, He shifts focus to a very significant teaching, the nature of the doer (kartā). Among the many important verses in this chapter, verse 26 stands out as extremely vital. Here, Bhagavān explains the qualities of a sātत्वika kartā — the ideal doer — a central teaching for all sādhakas seeking to perform karma in alignment with dharma and with inner freedom.

This careful categorization of knowledge, action, and the doer — and their alignment with the Guṇas — helps the seeker understand the inner mechanics of karma and progress toward becoming guṇātīta — transcending the guṇas and abiding in the Self..

## 18.26

### **muktasaṅgo'naḥamvādī, dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ, siddhyasiddhyornirvikāraḥ(kh), kartā sātत्वika 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 Sātत्वika.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains in the 18th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā that the kartā — the doer or agent of action — too is of three kinds: Sātत्वika, Rājasa, and Tāmasa.

Now, who is the Sātत्वika kartā, and why should every human being strive to become one?

Even though Sattva Guṇa too ultimately binds the soul, it is the doorway to liberation. One cannot transcend all bondage without first rising to Sattva by freeing oneself from the binding influences of Rajas and Tamas. Therefore, every seeker must first strive to become a Sātत्वika kartā.

Bhagavān outlines four main qualities of a Sātत्वika kartā in Gītā 18.26:

- **Muktasaṅgaḥ** – Free from attachment
- **Anaḥamvādī** – Free from ego, without pride in speech or thought
- **Dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ** – Endowed with both perseverance (dhṛti) and enthusiasm (utsāha)
- **Siddhi-asiddhyoḥ nirvikāraḥ** – Unperturbed by success or failure

These are the characteristics every doer must cultivate to become Sātत्वika.

### **Utsāha and Dhṛti — A Divine Combination**

Among these qualities, Bhagavān highlights a most crucial pairing — enthusiasm (utsāha) and patience/perseverance (dhṛti). Generally, enthusiasm is found without patience. A person may become excited to act, but quickly lose heart when results don't come swiftly.

But Bhagavān says — a true doer must have both:

- The zeal to act, and
- The steadfastness to wait, to endure, to persevere.

This fusion is rare and powerful.

## Historical Example - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

A brilliant example of this harmony of courage and composure is Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

When the brutal commander Afzal Khan advanced with a massive army, elephants, horses, and weapons — threatening to destroy Shivaji and all that he stood for — the people expected immediate retaliation. Temples were desecrated, villages looted, women dishonored. People wondered why Shivaji Maharaj was not retaliating.

Was he afraid? Had he hidden away?

No — he was exercising **ḍṛti** — profound strategic patience. Shivaji Maharaj waited at Pratapgad Fort, fully aware of the right moment to strike. When Afzal Khan desecrated the temple of Tulja Bhavani, Shivaji simply said, “Now Afzal Khan will not return alive.”

He didn’t act impulsively. He used strategy, composure, and inner strength to plan. Disguised as a humble seeker of peace, he invited Afzal Khan to a meeting — and then, with precision and bravery, ended the threat.

This is true Sāttvika kartṛtva — marked by self-restraint, enthusiasm, devotion to dharma, and lack of selfish motive.

## Muktasaṅgaḥ - Free from Attachment

Such a doer acts not out of personal desire, but as an instrument of Divine Will.

Shivaji Maharaj never sought kingship for his own pleasure. “This is not my desire,” he would say. “This is Bhagavān’s mission — the establishment of Swarajya is a divine responsibility entrusted to me.”

Even when the coronation was being planned, it was not his idea. It was the people who insisted. This is **muktasaṅgatā** — detachment from personal ambition.

## Anahamvādī - Free from Ego

His words, his conduct, his decisions — all were humble. There was no trace of arrogance. Even in speech, anahamvādī — no “I” at the center.

## Siddhi-asiddhyoḥ Nirvikāraḥ - Unshaken in Success or Failure

Sometimes we succeed and get overjoyed. Other times, even a small failure makes us fall into despair. But the Sāttvika kartā remains equanimous.

A modern example is the Chandrayaan mission. When India’s first moon mission partially failed, the team did not break down. They stayed steady — and later achieved success in Chandrayaan-3. This is nirvikāratā — inner steadiness regardless of outcome.

Such a doer is never discouraged, never abandons the path. Even when the road is filled with thorns, stones, or obstacles, they keep walking.

As a beautiful poem says:

**"cala cala purato nidhehi caraṇam|  
sadaiva purato nidhehi caraṇam||  
giriśikhare nanu nijaniketanam|**

***vinaiva yānaṃ nagārohaṇam||***"

– March on, O seeker, keep moving forward with steadfast feet.

Even when there is no clear path, no vehicle, no support — what becomes the vehicle?

**Ātmabalam kevalam sādhanam** – Only inner strength is the means.

That is the path of the Sāttvika 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.

### **The Nature of the Rājasa Kartā (Doer)**

After describing the Sāttvika kartā, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa moves on to describe the Rājasa kartā — the doer driven by passion, attachment, and ego.

#### **1. Rāgī - Deeply Attached**

The Rājasa doer is rāgī, meaning steeped in attachment (saṅga). This attachment is of many kinds:

- Attachment to action (karma)
- Attachment to results (phala)
- Attachment to self-interest, recognition, reward

This kind of person does not act for dharma or service, but only because they are attached — to outcomes, to positions, to results.

Bhagavān does not merely say "**karmaphala-icchuk**" (one who desires the result), but uses the word "**karmaphala-prepsu**" — one who has an intense craving for the fruit of action.

It's not a mild desire — it's a strong obsession: "I must get the result now. I must get recognition. The reward must come to me first — even before the act is completed."

Example:

- Someone may say, "I did the pūjā, where's the prasād?" even before the āratī ends.
- A political worker might say, "The party didn't give me a ticket — I'm leaving."
- A volunteer may say, "I didn't get credit for this event, so I won't work next time."

Such a doer is caught in the web of desire and recognition, not niṣkāma karma.

#### **Example of Detachment - Kevat (the Boatman)**

To contrast the Rājasa doer, consider the story of Kevat, the boatman who helped Śrī Rāma cross the river.

After crossing, Bhagavān Rāma offered him a gold coin in gratitude. Kevat replied, "No, I won't accept anything now. When You return, then I'll take my reward."

This was no ordinary statement — it was filled with devotion and detachment. He wasn't in a rush for

reward. He left the timing to Bhagavān. And what did he get?

While the whole world remembers Rāma, Bhagavān remembered Kevat for 14 years, saying,

तुम्ह मम सखा भरत सम भ्राता। सदा रहेहु पुर आवत जाता॥

बचन सुनत उपजा सुख भारी। परेउ चरन भरि लोचन बारी॥

You are my friend and a brother like Bharat. Always keep coming and going to Ayodhya. On hearing these words, he felt very happy. His eyes filled with tears (of joy and love) and he fell at my feet.

This is the reward of selfless service, unlike the Rajasic doer who wants instant results and cannot wait.

## 2. Lubhda - Greedy

The Rājasa doer is greedy — lubhdaḥ. Everything is done with an eye on personal gain.

“What will I get out of this?” is the constant question.

Even if someone else is harmed in the process, they don't mind — as long as their benefit is ensured.

Even if unethical means are required, they will not hesitate.

They might justify their actions: “What’s wrong in taking a bribe? Everyone does it.”

There is no sense of purity or righteousness in their actions.

## 3. Hiṁsātmakaḥ - Harming Others

If required, they will hurt others — emotionally, financially, physically — to reach their own goal. Compassion is absent; competition and dominance define their conduct.

## 4. Harṣa-śokānvitaḥ - Swayed by Joy and Sorrow

A Rājasa kartā is emotionally unstable:

- A little success, and they become euphoric, arrogant.
- A little failure, and they plunge into grief, self-pity, and blame.

Their mood and motivation fluctuate wildly based on external outcomes.

## 5. Ego-Centric - “I, Me, Mine”

Such a person operates from the standpoint of ego and isolation:

- “My work is mine — don’t interfere.”
- “I won’t help you with your work, and don’t ask me for support.”
- “If I don’t get recognition or position, I’ll resign.”

Their mindset is “Me and my success.”

Teamwork, humility, shared responsibility — these are alien concepts to them.

18.28

**ayuktaḥ(kh) prākṛtaḥ(s) stabdhaḥ(ś), śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko’lasaḥ,  
viṣādī dīrghasūtrī ca, kartā tāmasa ucyate. 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.

Bhagavān describes the **tāmasika kartā**—the doer of action governed by darkness—as one who is ayukta, disconnected from their purpose. Such a person has no reflection on their dharma (duty). They are undisciplined, distracted, and disinterested in any righteous goal. Bhagavān uses the term

prākṛta, which means “unrefined” or “uncultured”—the opposite of saṁskṛta, which means “refined” or “cultured”. The prākṛta person acts impulsively, without method, without rules, without any inner order.

They carry out actions in a mechanical or reckless way—there is no consideration of timing, propriety, or consequences. Such a person may appear stunned or indifferent while working, but still carry arrogance within. They may act shrewdly, appearing clever on the outside, pretending to work without actually doing anything meaningful. Their intention is often to merely appear industrious, not to actually be so.

This tāmasika doer also harbors malice (kṛtaghna)—their mind dwells not on benefiting themselves, but on harming others. Even if their own gain is not assured, they find satisfaction in the destruction of others. Terrorists, for instance, do act—they also engage in karma—but their actions are not kārya (appropriate or meaningful work). They act solely for destruction, not for upliftment. Such actions are driven by deep ignorance and emotional disturbance, and thus these individuals remain drowned in sorrow and lethargy.

If they act, it’s the wrong action. If they don’t act, they lie in inertia. They never engage in righteous or noble tasks.

Such people are also **dirgha-sūtrī**—procrastinators. They postpone what needs to be done now, saying, “We’ll see... maybe later... why the hurry?” Their inner motto becomes the reverse of the wise saying:

आज करे सो कल कर, कल करे सो परसों।  
इतनी भी क्या जल्दी है, जब जीना है बरसों॥

*“What is meant to be done tomorrow, do today; what is meant to be done today, do now.”*

*Instead, they live by:*

*“What is meant for today, do tomorrow; what is meant for tomorrow, do the day after—what’s the rush?”*

This is a hallmark of the tāmasika mindset: pushing responsibility away, avoiding effort, and delaying what is right. When such a thought arises—“I’ll do it later”—one must become alert. That is the tāmasika kartā within us awakening, obstructing us from doing what needs to be done. When temptation arises to take shortcuts or indulge in laziness, know that rajas is at work—trying to lure us onto the wrong path.

The Bhagavad Gītā constantly reminds us: don’t look outward to blame others. Look inward. The scripture is a mirror to our own inner tendencies.

Bhagavān further says: just as action (karma) is of three types—**sāttvika, rājasika, and tāmasika**—so too is buddhi (intellect) and **dhṛti** (fortitude or perseverance). We often think intellect is always good. But even buddhi can become tāmasika or rājasika. It too can fall prey to delusion or desire. How does that happen? That’s what Bhagavān goes on to explain.

**18.29**

**buddherbhedaṁ(n) dhṛteścaiva, guṇatastrividhaṁ(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.

Bhagavān now explains that intellect (buddhi) and fortitude (dhṛti) too are subject to the influence of the three guṇas—sattva, rajas, and tamas. O Dhanañjaya (Arjuna), due to these guṇas, even our inner faculties like buddhi and dhṛti get classified into three distinct types. Bhagavān says, “I shall now describe to you the differences born of these guṇas.”

He emphasizes:

The intellect (buddhi) is not defined merely by cleverness or intelligence. Just because one is sharp or knowledgeable doesn't mean their intellect is sāttvika.

In the same way, fortitude (dhṛti)—or perseverance—is not to be judged by its outer strength alone. One must assess whether that perseverance is born of sattva, rajas, or tamas. The same applies to intellect.

We must introspect and ask:

- Is my intellect grounded in truth and clarity (sāttvika)?
- Or is it driven by passion and desire (rājasa)?
- Or is it clouded by delusion and inertia (tāmasa)?

Does my intellect lead me to right discernment, or does it justify wrong paths with clever reasoning?  
Does my fortitude help me stay steady in righteous effort, or is it obstinacy in the wrong direction?

To help us understand this, Bhagavān first begins by describing the nature of sāttvika buddhi—the purest form of discernment.

### 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.

Bhagavān explains to Arjuna the nature of sāttvika buddhi—pure, discerning intellect:

*“That intellect, O Pārtha, which clearly knows the paths of pravṛtti (engagement in action) and nivṛtti (withdrawal from action), what is to be done (kārya) and what is not to be done (akārya), what is to be feared (bhaya) and what is not (abhaya), what binds (bandha) and what leads to liberation (mokṣa)—that intellect is sāttvika.”*

### Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti: Two Paths of Life

There are two fundamental spiritual paths:

- **Pravṛtti-mārga** – The path of active engagement. Performing one's duties with a spirit of dedication and surrender to Bhagavān, as in karma-yoga. One acts, but not out of selfish desire; the action is offered as worship.
- **Nivṛtti-mārga** – The path of renunciation. The way of jñāna-yoga, marked by inner withdrawal, renunciation of desires, and transcendence of action. This is the life of a contemplative renunciate, focused solely on realisation of the Self.



A sāttvika buddhi understands which path is suitable for whom, and when. It doesn't confuse the two.

### **What to Do and What Not to Do - Kārya and Akārya**

A sāttvika intellect discerns:

- What actions are right and worthy (kārya) — actions aligned with dharma.
- What actions are unworthy or harmful (akārya) — those that disturb one's progress or violate dharma.

Just as "a drinkable liquid" is called peya, an action that is appropriate and beneficial is kārya. The opposite—harmful or unnecessary—is akārya.

### **Fear and Fearlessness - Bhaya and Abhaya**

True fearlessness doesn't mean reckless courage. A refined intellect knows:

- What ought to be feared (e.g., dangers, immoral paths, self-destruction).
- What is not to be feared (e.g., standing up for righteousness, speaking truth, facing worldly loss for higher gain).

It is foolish, not brave, to touch a live electrical wire or leap into deep water without skill. Sāttvika buddhi knows its limits, and chooses wisely.

### **Bondage and Liberation - Bandha and Mokṣa**

This intellect knows:

- What binds the soul to suffering and cycles of birth.
- What leads to true freedom and eternal peace.

It recognises attachment, craving, and ego as bondage—and selfless devotion, wisdom, and renunciation as the way to liberation.

### **A Real-Life Contrast: Duryodhana vs. Arjuna**

Although both Arjuna and Duryodhana studied under the same guru (Droṇācārya), their choices diverged. Why?

Duryodhana himself admits:

जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिर्जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः।  
केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यथा नियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि॥

*"I know what dharma is, but I do not incline toward it.*

*I know what adharma is, but I cannot refrain from it.*

*There is something within me that forces me toward wrong action."*

This "something" is kāma, **lobha**—desire and greed. Though his intellect knew right from wrong, it lacked the clarity and strength of a sāttvika buddhi.

Thus, true wisdom is not just knowledge—it is right decision-making.

The sāttvika buddhi leads one toward dharma, with clarity, restraint, and courage.

## **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.

### **What is Rājasa Buddhi?**

"Yayā" — the kind of buddhi by which...

A rājasa buddhi is the intellect that:

- Fails to clearly discern what is dharma (righteous) and adharma (unrighteous).
- Cannot accurately judge what is kārya (worth doing) and akārya (unworthy).
- Knows neither what is beneficial nor what is harmful, due to internal bias, attachment, and personal motives.
- Is swayed by desires, ambitions, emotions, and ego.
- Sometimes gives the right decision, sometimes wrong—but is never reliable.

Such an intellect is unsteady, inconsistent, and distorted by personal gain.

You can't trust a rājasa buddhi—it may justify adharma as dharma, and mask selfish action as noble duty.

This is the reason behind many moral confusions in life: a person might have intelligence, but if it is coloured by rāga (attachment, passion), their choices will be distorted.

## **18.32**

## **adharmaṃ(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.

### **What Is Tāmasī Buddhi?**

Tāmasī buddhi is the intellect that gives completely opposite, perverse decisions—clouded by darkness, ignorance, and delusion. It:

- Mistakes adharma (unrighteousness) for dharma (righteousness).
- Justifies and even glorifies what is unethical, harmful, or destructive.
- Encourages doing what should not be done, thinking it is right.

For example:

- It says: "Stealing is smart," "Corruption is necessary," "Cutthroat business is success."
- It supports self-destructive or socially harmful actions as if they were beneficial.
- It argues: "If you want to rise in business, you have to do shady deals," and believes that honesty is weakness.

This is the buddhi lost in darkness (tamas). There is no light of clarity. No discrimination. No higher values. Only confusion and reversal of truth.

### **Tāmasī Buddhi in Real Life**

Bhagavān warns: this is not simply ignorance. It is a kind of twisted conviction.

It does not merely misunderstand—it teaches the opposite:

- Encourages intoxicants: “Alcohol is healthy, it relaxes you.”
- Justifies the eating of prohibited foods: “They give protein, so why not?”
- Rejects all moral caution: “Fear is weakness,” even when it’s wise to be cautious.

Such an intellect is blinded by its own delusions, and leads not just itself, but others astray.

### **The Foundation of All Right Action: Dharma Comes First**

Our scriptures speak of four Puruṣārthas: Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa.

- **Artha** (wealth) and **Kāma** (desires) are valid pursuits only when guided by Dharma.
- **Dharma** is the foundation. Without it, the other goals collapse into chaos.

A tāmāsī buddhi ignores this order. It teaches:

- “Only money matters, no matter how it’s earned.”
- “What’s the harm if the world is doing it?”

It gives perverse logic. It rationalizes wrong as right.

### **A Personal Example from the Speakers Life:**

Once, when he began a business, a friend said,

*“You’re getting into business? Then of course you’ll have to do some dishonest things— no one runs a business straight anymore.”*

But the speaker questioned: *Where is this written?*

On the contrary, the most reputed businesses are those built on honesty and simplicity.

What is built on adharma never lasts.

The one who gave this advice? That was a tāmāsī buddhi speaking—completely misguiding, justifying wrong as right.

### **Sattva, Rajas, Tamas - They Never Fully Leave Us**

These three guṇas—sattva, rajas, and tamas—remain with us as long as we live.

But their influence varies at different times.

- We must become witnesses to ourselves, observing:
- What kind of thoughts arise?
- What dominates—sattva (clarity), rajas (passion), or tamas (darkness)?
- What kind of intellect is active in me right now?

This is what the Gītā trains us to do—to see ourselves clearly.

### **Know Thyself Through the Gītā**

Bhagavad Gītā gives us the deepest gift: self-awareness.

It reveals:

- Who am I?
- Why have I taken this human birth?
- What is my nature?
- Which guṇa predominates in me?

These verses help us observe ourselves with honesty.

Just as Intellect (**Buddhi**) Varies in Three Ways, So Does Fortitude (**Dhṛti**)  
As buddhi is threefold—sāttvikī, rājasī, and tāmasī—so too is dhṛti (fortitude, perseverance).

And just like guṇas influence our decisions, they also shape our ability to hold on, endure, and stay on the path.

**18.33**

**dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate, manaḥprāṇendriyakriyāḥ,  
yogenāvvyabhicāriṇyā, 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.

### **Sāttvik Dhṛti - The Pure Fortitude That Holds You Steady**

The word dhṛti comes from the root dhṛ—meaning to hold, to sustain, to endure, to restrain. It refers to inner fortitude, mental steadfastness, and the power to hold oneself back from impulsive action, and instead move in alignment with dharma.

Bhagavān explains that the sāttvik dhṛti is:

- The ability to restrain the mind, the prāṇas (life forces), and the senses.
- The strength to hold onto long-term commitments, and not waver.
- The power to endure tapas (austerity), vrata (vows), and prāṇāyāma (breath control) to master oneself.

In short, it is the quiet, luminous force within us that says:  
*"Even if the path is long, I will not give up."*

### **Control Over Body, Mind, Senses, and Prāṇa**

- True dhṛti is not just about mental willpower. It includes:
- Mastery over the five prāṇas: prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, udāna, samāna.
- These vital forces govern everything from breathing and digestion to thought and energy movement in the body.
- Practices like prāṇāyāma, yogāsana, and vows of self-restraint build sāttvik dhṛti.

This is not repression. It is awareness and intentional self-mastery.

### **The Example of Arjuna's Fortitude**

A brilliant illustration of sāttvik dhṛti is seen in Arjuna's life.

When Arjuna went to the celestial realms to learn divine weapons from Indra, he encountered the apsarā Urvashi, who was enamoured by his beauty and valor. She approached him with desire, hoping he would reciprocate.

But Arjuna, in that moment of great temptation, did not waver. He respectfully addressed her as "Mother", reminding her that she belonged to his ancestral lineage, and declined her approach.

Arjuna did not go there for pleasure—he had gone to acquire spiritual and martial knowledge. He remembered his purpose and held firm to his self-control.

Such self-restraint in the face of desire is not easy. But this is the hallmark of sāttvik dhṛti—to remain

true to one's goal, regardless of distractions.

### **In Our Lives Too...**

- To study the Gītā regularly requires dhṛti.
- To chant, memorize, or reflect deeply on its meaning demands consistent effort.
- When only a few stay till the end, when most have dropped off, it takes inner strength to keep going.

Even the ability to sit still and focus deeply for 2 hours without moving—that seated steadiness is called “baithak” in traditional learning, and it is a form of sāttvik dhṛti.

Without this fortitude, we cannot:

- Master a discipline,
- Transform a habit,
- Or reach a noble goal.

### **Sāttvik Dhṛti Is the Root of Inner Transformation**

Whether in japa, sādhanā, meditation, or even in living a moral life amid an immoral society—sāttvik dhṛti holds us upright like the spine.

It whispers:

- “Slowly, but surely, I will move toward the goal.”
- “One verse today, two tomorrow—I will persist.”
- “This is difficult now, but I am becoming stronger.”

### **And Now, What About Rājasic Dhṛti?**

Rājasic dhṛti is also a form of fortitude—but it has a different motivation.

While sāttvik dhṛti is steady and rooted in inner discipline and higher goals, rājasic dhṛti is driven by attachment to results, restlessness, and external achievements. It will be the next contrast Bhagavān makes.

### **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.

### **Sāttvik vs Rājasic Dhṛti — A Tale of Two Students**

Bhagavān speaks of three kinds of dhṛti—inner fortitude or resolve—according to the guṇas: sattva, rajas, and tamas. Let us understand the contrast through a beautiful everyday example.

#### **The First Student — Sāttvik Dhṛti**

A child understands:

“I am a student. My duty is to study at the time of study, and to play at the time of play.”

With this clarity of purpose, the child studies—not for reward, but because it is the right thing to do.

This is sāttvik dhṛti—the steadiness rooted in dharma, in duty, in clarity of purpose.

Such a student does not need any external motivation. The joy of doing what is right is enough.

### The Second Student — Rājasic Dhṛti

Another child is distracted, constantly absorbed in television or games. The mother pleads, "Please sit down to study."

He resists—until the mother offers a bribe: "If you study for one hour, I'll give you ice cream!"

Now he sits still, studies with focus—for a full hour. But why?

Not because it's right, but because something is to be gained.

This is **rājasic dhṛti**—fortitude that arises only when there is a desire for result (phala-akāṅkṣā). It is effort driven by strong attachment to outcome.

### What Is "Prasaṅga" in This Context?

Here, you beautifully explain that prasaṅga does not just mean "incident" or "situation" (as commonly understood), but in deeper usage:

- **Prasaṅga** = **prakṛṣṭa saṅga**, i.e. intense attachment or obsessive clinging to something.
- The rājasic person does karma (action), pursues dharma, artha, kāma—not for their own sake, but for the fruits that come from them.
- This fruit-driven attachment is what defines the rājasic inner attitude.

### An Example from Veer Savarkar's Life

Even a great like Swatantrya Veer Savarkar studied law and became a barrister. From the outside, it may seem like he pursued a career—but his dhṛti was sāttvik.

He studied law not to earn money, but to serve Bhārat Mātā, to free the motherland.

His clarity of goal and selflessness behind the pursuit—made his fortitude sāttvik.

In contrast, a person may pursue medicine or law solely with the motive of profit. Even at the cost of ethics:

- A doctor may harm patients for money.
- A lawyer may use tricks and deceit to win cases for personal gain.

This is rājasic dhṛti—strong determination fueled by greed, recognition, and worldly rewards.

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.

### The Mind of a "Durmedhā" — Corrupted Intellect

Some people, may be of a certain kind:

Their mind constantly entertains malicious or negative thoughts.

They keep thinking,

- "How can I harm someone?"
- "How can I manipulate this situation to my selfish advantage?"

Such people are referred to as **durmedhā**—those with a corrupted or perverted intellect.

Their fortitude is not grounded in clarity or purpose, but in negativity and dark inertia.

## What Do They Hold On To?

They hold on, with effort, to:

- **Svapna (Sleep)** – Not just physical rest, but excessive escapism and laziness.
  - Some spend the whole day in bed, drowning in inertia. Even this requires a strange kind of strength—to do nothing all day.
- **Bhaya (Fear)** – Constant anxiety and fear, because they may be engaged in wrong actions.
  - “What if the police come? What if I get caught?”
- **Śoka (Sorrow) and Viṣāda (Depression)** – Always grieving, always gloomy.
  - A mental fog that they do not try to break.
- **Mada (Arrogance/Delusion) – A false sense of superiority:**
  - “I will do whatever I want. Who can stop me?”

This kind of person uses their dhṛti—their inner holding power—not to rise, but to cling to tamas, to darkness.

## Tāmasic Dhṛti in Action

Yes, even a thief needs patience!

To sneak into someone’s home at midnight, to lie in wait, to plan, to execute—it takes a kind of “discipline.”

But is this discipline noble? No.

It is used for adharmic ends—thus it becomes tāmasic dhṛti.

The power to hold on, when directed towards evil, delusion, or destruction, is called tāmasic.

## Transition: As the Guṇas of Buddhi and Dhṛti, So the Nature of Sukha (Joy)

Now Bhagavān prepares to take us deeper.

He says: just as buddhi (intellect) is of three kinds (sāttvik, rājasik, tāmasik), just as dhṛti (fortitude) is of three kinds, so too is sukha—the very joy we all seek—divided into three categories.

And understanding these types of sukha is absolutely crucial, because...

- We spend our whole lives chasing joy.
- But what kind of joy are we chasing?
- Is it true happiness or fleeting indulgence?
- Is it uplifting or degrading?
- What is real joy?
- Which joy leads to peace?
- Which joy leads to addiction and sorrow?

Bhagavān now beautifully explains the types of joy (sukha) that arise from each guṇa.

## 18.36

**sukhaṃ(n) tvidānīṃ(n) trividhaṃ(m), śṛṇu me bharatarṣabha,  
abhyāsādRāmate yatra, duḥkhāntaṃ(ñ) ca nigacchati. 18.36**

Now hear from Me the threefold joy too. That in which the striver finds enjoyment through practice of



adoration, meditation and service to God etc., and whereby he reaches the end of sorrow—such a joy,

### **Sāttvika Sukha — The Joy Born of Purity and Discipline**

Bhagavān begins:

*"Now, I shall tell you about sukha—the joy that every living being seeks.  
Listen carefully, O Arjuna."*

He speaks of three types of sukha, based on the three guṇas.

The first, and highest, is sāttvika sukha—joy that arises from:

- **Abhyāsa** - Steady, consistent effort.
- **Dhṛti** - Inner fortitude and perseverance.

Such joy comes from sticking to the path, from devotion, from disciplined study, from living with dharma.

### **How It Feels at First**

Bhagavān does not deny that this path can feel hard at first.

- Waking up early to meditate.
- Studying the Bhagavad Gītā daily.
- Living a life of self-restraint.
- Saying no to indulgence.
- Facing the restlessness of the mind.

Initially, this might feel like effort. It may feel like a burden to the senses.

But over time, something beautiful happens.

One begins to relish the practice.

The mind finds joy in **śravaṇa, svādhyāya, seva, and sāttvika** living.

This is **abhyāsa-ramamāṇa** — becoming absorbed in noble habits.

### **This Joy Ends Sorrow**

Unlike the temporary highs of sensual indulgence, this sattvic joy:

- Brings lasting peace.
- Ends sorrow at the root.
- Uplifts the soul toward mokṣa.

Bhagavān says:

**"duḥkhāntaṁ ca nigacchati"** — it leads one to the end of sorrow.

This is not the "numbing" of sorrow like alcohol gives.

It is the transcendence of sorrow — a transformation of one's inner being.

### **The True Taste Comes Later**

This kind of joy may seem tasteless or even difficult at first, but as Bhagavān will say in the next verse:

**"yat tad agre viṣam iva parināme 'mṛtopamam"**

"That which feels like poison at first, but becomes like nectar in the end" — that is sāttvika sukha.

Because it is born of a pure mind, of self-mastery, and of union with the Self (ātman).

18.37

**yattadagre viṣamiva, pariṇāme'mṛtopamam,  
tatsukhaṁ(m) sāttvikaṁ(m) proktam, ātmabuddhiprasādam. 18.37**

though appearing as poison in the beginning, tastes like nectar in the end; hence that joy, born as it is of the placidity of mind brought about by meditation on God, has been declared as Sāttvika.

#### **Initial Difficulty, Lasting Bliss**

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains that sāttvika sukha—the purest form of joy—is not always delightful at the outset.

**“Agre viṣam iva”** – In the beginning, it feels like poison.  
Discipline, austerity, restraint – none of this feels easy.

Take the example of studying the Bhagavad Gītā:

- Someone may say, “This is in Sanskrit, how will I understand it?”
- “It's too philosophical,” they might complain.
- The mind looks for comfort and resists effort.

Or, consider waking up before sunrise for yoga:

- It means sacrificing the comfort of sleep.
- One must bathe, prepare, and sit for practice—all of which demand effort.

Indeed, the sādḥaka (seeker) initially faces resistance. The sāttvika path demands discipline.

But Bhagavān says: **Try it. Even if it feels bitter at first—taste it.**  
Slowly, you'll realize: this is nectar.

#### **"Parināme amṛtopamam" - The Nectar in the End**

Those who consistently practice—even when it feels hard at first—soon experience:

- A calm mind
- Clarity in thinking
- Joy that doesn't depend on external situations

This is the inner reward – a taste of the divine, the bliss of the Self (ātma-ananda).  
This is not momentary pleasure but deep inner fulfillment.

- **tat sukhaṁ sāttvikaṁ proktam** – That joy is said to be sāttvika.
- **ātma-buddhi-prasāda-jam-** It arises from the purity of intellect and harmony within.

#### **Try the "Poison" - You'll Discover the Nectar**

This verse invites us to go beyond short-term comfort. Don't dismiss something just because it's hard at first.

- Like the taste of medicine that heals,
- Like the sweat of disciplined training that transforms the body,

So too, the sāttvika path may begin with effort but ends in bliss.

## What About Other Types of Pleasure?

Bhagavān will next describe:

- **Rājasa sukha** – which feels sweet at first but leads to bitterness.
- **Tāmasa sukha** – which deludes and degrades.

But sāttvika sukha alone:

- Uplifts the soul,
- Leads to liberation,
- And transforms poison into nectar.

## 18.38

**viṣayendriyaśaṃyogād, yattadagre'mṛtopamam,  
pariṇāme viṣamiva, tatsukhaṃ(m) rājasaṃ(m) smṛtam. 18.38**

The delight which ensues from the contact of the senses with their objects is eventually poisonlike, though appearing at first as nectar; hence it has been spoken of as Rājasika.

### Pleasure That Begins Sweet, But Ends in Suffering

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks of a category of happiness that is extremely common in human life: the joy that comes from sensory indulgence – seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling.

You gave some beautiful examples:

#### 1. Watching a Movie

Eyes (indriya) meet the object (the visuals, story) – and it feels like pleasure.

During the experience: "It was so enjoyable!"

But afterward? "Three hours just vanished. I feel empty."

The joy was momentary, but the loss was real – time, energy, inner stillness.

#### 2. Eating Junk Food

While eating: "Delicious! Feels like nectar."

Next day: Stomach upset, heaviness, guilt.

**"Pariṇāme viṣam iva"** – the result is like poison.

Such pleasures are rājasic:

Born from **viṣaya-indriya saṃyoga** – the contact of the senses with their objects.

They appear joyful in the beginning but bring suffering later.

### The Nature of Rājasic Pleasure

Rājasic pleasures are:

- Dependent – they rely on external objects.
- Temporary – they fade with time.
- Addictive – they create craving.
- Deceptive – they promise bliss but leave restlessness.

Even physical pleasures—food, sound, sight—are only enjoyable as long as the senses and objects are in contact.

Once the contact ends, the pleasure ends.

"सयोग के बाद वियोग निश्चित है " —

Wherever there is union, separation is inevitable.  
And with separation comes duḥkha (sorrow).

For example:

- Teeth are strong—eating is a joy. Teeth weaken—same food now causes pain.
- Eyes are clear—watching is fun. Eyes grow dim—now it's strain.

This is the trap of rājasic pleasure: what starts as nectar ends as poison.

### A Question Worth Asking:

Is there any material pleasure that stays with us forever?

Bhagavān seems to challenge us to think:

- If it depends on a limited sense, and a limited object, how can it be unlimited joy?
- If it disappears when the object is lost, was it ever real happiness?

Linking to Food (Chapter 17 Parallel)

You rightly connected this to Chapter 17, where āhāra (food) is also categorized as:

- **Sāttvika** – nourishing, light, health-giving.
- **Rājasa** – spicy, oily, exciting but disturbing.
- **Tāmasa** – stale, impure, harmful.

Just as there are foods that seem good but harm us, so too are there pleasures that seem sweet but wound us.

What About Tāmasic Pleasure?

Bhagavān will now describe an even lower form of pleasure – that which dulls the mind, causes confusion, or comes from ignorance, delusion, or destruction.

## 18.39

**yadagre cānubandhe ca, sukhaṁ(m) mohanamātmanah,  
nidrālasyapramādottham(n), tattāmasamudāhṛtam. 18.39**

That which stupefies the Self during its enjoyment as well as in the end-derived from sleep, indolence and obstinate error, such delight has been called Tāmasika.

### 1. Pleasure That Deludes From Beginning to End

This is the most dangerous kind of so-called pleasure. Bhagavān says it begins in delusion and ends in delusion.

There is no clarity at any point—neither at the start, nor in the outcome.

You gave a vivid and disturbing example:

A man drinks alcohol, falls into the gutter, and still imagines,  
*"No one is as happy and royal as I am! I'm enjoying life!"*

He is completely mohit—deluded, hypnotized, unaware of the reality of his suffering.

Even though he is in the mud, he feels he is in heaven.

This is *tāmasic sukha*—a fake pleasure that keeps the soul in bondage.

## 2. Sleep, Laziness, and Negligence

You spoke about *nidrā* (excessive sleep) beautifully:

- Sleep is needed, but beyond balance, it becomes a trap.
- The more one sleeps, the more *tamas* (inertia, dullness) increases.
- One wakes up with no energy, no desire to act.
- People who wake early, before sunrise, feel light and inspired.
- But those who sleep late, rise with sluggishness and dependence (“I can’t wake up without tea!”).

This is a cycle of dullness:

***Sleep → Lethargy → Error (pramāda) → More suffering → More dullness.***

And in youth today:

Drugs, alcohol, screen addiction—these are all *tāmasic* forms of pleasure.

They don’t lead to joy, they lead to self-destruction.

## 3. Is This Even “Pleasure”?

Bhagavān questions—can this truly be called *sukha*?

- It dulls your soul.
- It binds you in inertia.
- It steals your clarity.
- It ruins your health, your enthusiasm, your inner power.
- This is not pleasure, it is darkness disguised as joy.
- It is pleasure in name only, but a cover of ignorance and downfall in truth.

## Final Reflection: Threefold Sukha and Spiritual Clarity

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in His compassion, categorizes even *sukha*—happiness itself—into:

- **Sāttvika Sukha** – Begins as bitter, ends as nectar. Arises from knowledge, discipline, and self-effort.
- **Rājasa Sukha** – Begins as nectar, ends as poison. Arises from sense indulgence and craving.
- **Tāmasa Sukha** – Begins and ends in delusion. Arises from sleep, lethargy, intoxication, and ignorance.

The discourse ended with great reverence, offering everything to Bhagavān, and acknowledging how this teaching of karma, jñāna, sannyāsa, and bhakti leads us to ***mukti (freedom) and parama śānti (supreme peace)***.

***"Om Tat Sat - Śrī Kṛṣṇārpaṇam Astu"***

All this is offered at the holy feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Kiran ji**

**Q: How many times can we do Japa Mala?**

**Ans:** There is no restriction or upper limit for chanting the divine name (Nāma-japa). The more we chant, the better it is because the more we engage in the remembrance of the name, the more we remember Bhagavān Himself. And remembrance of Bhagavān is the highest form of remembrance.

Bhagavān Himself has declared this as **Japa-Yajña**—a sacred sacrifice of chanting. The primary guideline is simple: chant as much as you can, according to your strength and capacity.

It is good to set a personal minimum such as at least one round, two rounds, or five rounds a day, and follow that consistently. Beyond that, there is absolutely no limit. Chanting can be done anytime, as much as one wishes.

**Ashwinee ji**

**Q: Since the liberation (mukti) of Tamasic, Rajasic, and Sattvic individuals is said to be different, and so are the approaches or paths they follow, how can one transform from Tamasic to Rajasic, and then from Rajasic to Sattvic?**

**Ans:** To rise from tamas to sattva, a person must first consciously move out of tamas using the energy of rajas, and then refine rajas into sattva.

Example:

If someone is stuck in tamas—lethargy, laziness, lack of willpower—the first step is to take action, even if driven by desire. For instance, committing to wake up early and do vigorous exercise like running or gym workouts (which are rajasic) just to become fit is fine. This breaks inertia.

Once energy builds through such rajasic activity, it should be gradually redirected toward sattvic actions—calm, mindful, and uplifting ones like yoga, Prāṇayama, and selfless service.

Yoga is one of the best tools for this transformation. Asanas and Prāṇayama help destroy tamas, calm rajas, and increase sattva. Even among exercises, some are more rajasic (like weightlifting), while others like Sūrya Namaskāra are more sattvic.

In short, the journey is gradual—not overnight. Start with any reason that helps you shake off laziness (even meeting friends in the morning!). Once the habit of rising early is formed, the sattvic environment of the morning naturally uplifts the mind.

So begin now—no need to wait for June 21 (International Yoga Day). Start today.

The session concluded with prayers offered at the lotus feet of **Śrī Hari**, followed by the recitation of **Hanumān Cālīsā**.



We are sure you enjoyed reading the Vivechan write-up. Please invest three minutes of your time to

provide us your feedback. Use the link below:

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

**Thank you-For reading the summary**

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

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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