

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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Interpreter: SENIOR TRAINER ŚRĪ VIKAS JI VAIDYA

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/NezOk3iQC3I>

Buddhi, Dhṛti & Sukha are of three kinds in conformity with Tri Gunas

The 18th chapter of Bhagavad Gītā is **Moksa-SaṁnyāsaYoga - Yoga through the perfection of renunciation and surrender.**

The third session on the chapter began with the lighting of the the traditional lamp and prayers to Paramātmā and Gurus.

The chapter started with Arjuna requesting Sri Krishna to educate him on renunciation and explain the difference between a sanyasi and a tyagi; as both come from the root words meaning 'to abandon'. A sanyasi is one who has renounced family and social life to practice Sādhana. A tyagi is one who acts without selfish desire for the rewards of his actions. However, Sri Krishna recommends another type of renunciation. HE declares that one should never renounce the prescribed acts of duty, sacrifice, charity, penance as these aid in the purification of even the wisest souls. One should undertake actions only as matter of duty without attachment to their fruits. HE gives Arjuna a detailed analysis of the five factors that contribute to action, the three constituents of action, and the three factors that inspire action. HE describes each of these factors in relation to the three gunas.

Sri Krishna declares that those who see themselves as the cause of their works are ignorant. However, due to their purified intellect, the enlightened do not perceive themselves to be neither the doer nor the enjoyer of their actions. They are ever detached from the results, thus, free from the karmic reactions of their actions. HE then explains the reasons for the difference in the motives and actions of individuals. HE describes the kinds of knowledge, types of actions, and categories of performers based on the three gunas. HE gives a similar analysis for the intellect, resolve or steadfast will and happiness.

muktasaṅgo'naḥaṃvādī, dhṛtyutsāhaṣamanvitaḥ, siddhyasiddhyornirvikāraḥ(kh), kartā sāttvika ucyaṭe. 18.26

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

The performer (**karta**) is said to be in the mode of goodness - that is sattvic when he/she is:

- free from ego
- free from attachment (**muktasaṅgo'naḥaṃvādī**)
- endowed with enthusiasm
- endowed with determination (**dhṛtyutsāhaṣamanvitaḥ**)
- equipoised in success and failure (**siddhyasiddhyornirvikāraḥ**)

In the previous shlokas, Sri Krishna, explained about the different kinds of knowledge (*jnana*) and types of action (*karmas*). Now, HE explains the different categories of performers of actions - the kartas. HE clarifies that those situated in mode of goodness are not inactive, rather they work with enthusiasm and determination. The difference is that their work is performed in proper consciousness. They do not cling to the material things and believe that the worldly things cannot bestow them satisfaction. Hence, the sattvic kartas work with noble motives.

Since their intentions are pure, they are filled with **utsah** (zeal) and **dhṛti** (strong resolve and determination) in their endeavors. Their mental attitude results in the least dissipation of energy while working. As they are focused on the tasks, they are able to work tirelessly to fulfill their sublime motives. Though they may achieve great things, they are **anahamvadi** - free from ego and give all credit of their success to God.

A sattvic person is in control of his inner self and not bothered about external world. He performs all actions with a detached mind and as a part of duty (**nishkama karma**). All his actions are performed with detached mind and in conformity with God's will. Failures neither discourage his determination nor does the success inflate his enthusiasm (**siddhyasiddhyornirvikarah**), so, he is always above ego-consciousness. Some people are seen turning their rosary beads (japa mala) sitting in a comfortable chair. These people claim to be of sattvic disposition as they are always doing japa. But in actuality, they are camouflaging their inertia, laziness and are avoiding doing karma. On the contrary, a sattvic person is full of enthusiasm coupled with patience, courage and determination. This wonderful combination of devotion, enthusiasm, patience, courage and determination is adequate to attain Paramātmā.

The King and the saint:

One day, the King was strolling on the terrace of the palace and watching the happenings at the marketplace below. He happened to notice a saint who was walking around oblivious to his surroundings. He noticed that the saint, though lost in his thoughts, was blissful and enjoying in his own way. The saint seemed so blissful that there was no anger or hatred on his face for anyone. The king was so pleased with this ease and joy of saint that he wanted to meet him immediately. The king was worried that the saint would walk off and would miss him if he took time coming down from the terrace of the palace. So, he ordered his guards to bring the saint to him immediately. The guards captured the saint with a rope, and dragged him up to the terrace, and presented him before the king. The saint was bewildered as to what was happening to him. The king apologized to the saint for being brought up this way by the guards. The saint forgave him and asked what was the haste in bringing him up this way. The king replied that he was restless to find an answer to his question that he did not want to lose sight of him, so he used this unusual method to bring him.

The saint smiled and said that the question must be a rare and deep question to cause such anxiousness. The saint then asked the king what was the question he had in his mind. The king said the question is 'how to find God?' and "how to find Him soon?" The king felt only the saint could give him satisfying answers. The king asked the saint for guidance. The saint replied that the king already knew the answer to it. The saint told him to widen his perspective and think big and he will get his answers. The king expressed his confusion, anxiety and inability to arrive at the answers. The king asked the saint to explain as he knew all about the right path.

After keeping quiet for some time, the saint decided to answer the king's question. The saint said that if he had a thought of meeting the king, then there would be many obstacles and it would have taken a long time. He said he would have to rely on courtiers to relay the message, see if the king was free and willing for the meeting. But still there would be uncertainty if the meeting would actually take place. But the moment the thought of the meeting came to king's mind, he ensured that it happened immediately. The saint continued and said that similarly, if God is anxious to find someone, then HE will immediately appear before him.

The king was curious as to why and how God would want to appear before anyone. The saint asked the king how he got the idea of meeting him. The king replied that he was deeply impressed when he saw how the saint was walking to his own tune and not paying any attention to the surrounding, noise, market, crowd, houses, shops, humans. This deep impression made him want to meet the saint. So, the saint said that the only way to attain God was to align oneself to God. This should be the sole objective of life. If one cannot live without HIM, He will also become anxious to meet the person immediately. Thus, the saint explained in a simple way to the king that if the only desire in life was to find God, it will bring HIM to the person.

Sri Krishna says that one who is free from attachment, ego, full of rectitude and enthusiasm, actions happen through them effortlessly. All efforts of a sattvic person may not be successful at all times, but when faced with failures such a person is not dejected. So success does not make him jump in joy, nor failure makes him dejected. Such a karta, who is equipoised in success or failure, is a sattvic karta in the mode of goodness.

18.27

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

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

A performer is rajasic when he/she is:

- desirous of results of action
- desirous of the fruit of action (**karmaphalaprepsuh**)
- motivated by attraction or repulsion
- greedy (**lubdho**)
- in the habit of causing pain to others (**himsatmako**)
- of impure nature (**asucih**)
- affected by happiness and grief (**harsasokanvitah**)

Attachment to the material propensity is the hallmark of a rajasic person. He is always busy piling assets after assets and fueling his material prosperity, for example: getting a second house, then a farmhouse or getting a Maruti car, then BMW, then Jaguar. **Jealousy, flamboyance, false pride**

and tendency to inflict pain on others marks the nature of a rajasic person. His mind is not steady because of selfishness; such a mind cannot be pure. Concepts of fairness, self-improvement and refinement is not known to a rajasic person. Gains makes him jubilant, while losses push him into deep depression.

Two women met up after a long time and were enquiring about each other's families. On enquiring about her sick brother, one friend started crying loudly on the loss of her brother. After consoling her, the friend enquired about her husband. Immediately, like magic her expressions changed to a wide beaming smile, and she replied that he was doing very well. She said with great joy that he was recently promoted and that things could not be better for him. A person who was desolate a moment ago was beaming with joy the next moment. Rajasic people are known for such melodrama. Such is the mind of a rajasic person.

A young man's uncle was visiting from the United States. The uncle informed his nephew that he was bringing the latest laptops, gadgets, robots, designer clothes and an expensive watch. The young man's joy knew no bounds. He could barely contain his excitement and invited his uncle warmly. The uncle arrived finally with the promised gifts. The young man welcomed his uncle with gusto and enthusiasm. But soon the uncle declared that he would return to USA after a year and that he would stay with him for a year. The nephew's whole world crashed hearing that his uncle would stay for a year. In a flash, intense joy changed into intense grief. This is a sign of rajoguna.

Rajoguni is always a carrier of greed and cannot stay still when consumed by greed. He is restless and hankers after material things. Instead of having what is in one's plate, a rajoguni will eye what is in other's plate and wanting what others have. This usually happens in the restaurant when we see different food on another table and desire it. This is a rajoguni thought.

A sattvic person/karta is motivated by the desire of spiritual growth while a rajasic karta is deeply ambitious for materialistic enhancements. They do not realize that everything is temporary and has to be left behind one day. Irritated by immoderate attachment (**anurag**) to mind and senses, they lack purity of intention. They are convinced of seeking pleasure in worldly things and are not satisfied with what comes their way and are greedy for more (**lubdho**). When they see others succeeding or enjoying more than them, they become **himstmakah** (bent on injuring). To fulfill their ends, they sacrifice morality and become impure (**asucih**). When desires are fulfilled, they become elated and when unsuccessful they get dejected. In this manner, their lives become **harsasokanvītaḥ** (mixture of delight and sorrow).

18.28

**ayuktaḥ(kh) prākṛtaḥ(s) stabdhaḥ(ś), śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko'lasaḥ,
viṣādī dīrghasūtrī ca, kartā tāmāsa 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.

Sri Krishna now describes tamasic karta. HE says, a performer/karta in the mode of ignorance or darkness is:

- **whimsical**
- **unrefined**
- **arrogant**
- **deceitful**
- **insolent**

- **lethargic**
- **depressed**
- **lazy**

Their mind is blotted with negative obsessions because their mind is undisciplined (**ayuktah**). The scriptures give conjunctions on what is proper and what is improper, what is *kartavya karma* and prohibited karma. But tamasic karta are obstinate (**stabdhah**) on their views and do not understand what is proper and improper because they have closed their ears and mind to reasoning. They are also cunning (**sasta**). They are dishonest (**naiskrito**) and vile in their ways. They are vulgar (**prakrtah**) as they do not believe in controlling their animal instincts.

Though they have duties to perform, they see the efforts in performing their duties as laborious and painful. Hence they are lazy (**alasa**). They are procrastinators (**dirghasutri**), prolonging a short task and make it complicated for no reason. Their ignorant and baseless thoughts impact them more than anyone else. They realize that they are lagging behind a lot. But instead of increasing their pace, they become unhappy and morose (**vishadi**). They keep dilly-dallying and take an inordinately long time to accomplish any action. The same task will be carried out prudently and dextrously by a sattvaguni person. A rajoguni person will perform the task in haste and sometimes carelessly too. But a tamoguni person, being lazy will keep putting off the task and will do it at a very slow pace.

The motto of a tamasic person is ***aaj kare so kal kar, kal kare so parso, itni bhi kya hai jaldi jeena hai barso.***

Thus, a tamasic mind is indolent, insolent, greedy, lustful and listless. Such a person builds castles in air but does nothing in practical terms. He indulges in cheating and lies. A tamasic person is self-destructive and a threat to others.

Srimad Bhagavat also describes types of performers of action:

sattvikah kargo sanghi rangando rajaspataha tamasapatih vibranshto nirguno apashrayah

A worker who is detached is sattvic in nature; one who is excessively attached to action and its results is rajasic in nature; one who is devoid of discrimination is tamasic in nature.

A karta who has surrendered to HIM is transcendental of all the three modes, and becomes a **gunatitah**. When one looks for excuses to be unhappy, morose or miserable, it's a sign of excessive tamasic guna at that moment. It does not mean that a tamasic being will be tamasic for whole of their life. Tamoguna, like the sattvaguna and rajoguna keeps fluctuating, but he who is prone to excessive tamoguna is said to be a tamoguni.

18.29

**buddherbhedam(n) dhṛteścaiva, guṇatastrividham(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.

Sri Krishna proceeds to explain in detail (**procyamanmasesena**) the distinction of intellect (**buddhi**) and determination/resolve (**dhṛti**) according to the three modes of prakṛti. **Buddhi** and **dhṛti** impact the quantity and quality of work we perform in our life. They not only propel karma, but control and direct it.

- **Buddhi** is the faculty of discrimination - **viveka**, that distinguishes between right and wrong.
- **Dhrti** is the inner determination to persist in accomplishing the karma undertaken, despite hardships and obstacles on the way.

Intellect is the main power at the disposal of every human being. That is a main asset given to us by Bhagavān and it guides us on the proper path. To follow it till it meets ultimate objective is the rule of **dhrti** (resolve/determination). Human mind oscillates but a firm intellect which has **dhrti** and **buddhi** is useful for success in spiritual life.

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.

The intellect is said to be in the mode of goodness or sattvic, when it understands what is:

- proper action and renunciation (**pravṛttiṃ ca nivṛttiṃ ca**)
- duty and non-duty (**kāryākārye**)
- to be feared and not to be feared (**bhayābhaye**)
- binding (**bandhaṃ**) and liberating (**mokṣaṃ**)

We constantly exercise our free will to make choices in our life; our cumulative choices determine where we reach in life. Since childhood we make different choices for different things in life and where we reach at the end of life depends on choices made throughout life.

Robert Frost has described this in his poem:

"The road not taken".

***I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.***

This poem explains that the road we take determines where we reach. The choices we make determines where we reach. In order to make right choices we need to have a developed faculty of discrimination (**viveka buddhi**).

The Bhagavad Gītā, itself, was spoken to Arjuna to equip him with the power of discrimination of what is right and what is wrong. At the outset, Arjuna was confused about his duty. His inordinate attachment to his relatives had clouded his judgement regarding proper and improper action. He thought that he would incur a sin by killing them, when in reality the reverse was true. Besides, running away from battlefield would be a sinful act. Feeling weak and fearful, in utter confusion, Arjuna had surrendered to Sri Krishna and asked HIM to enlighten him about this duty.

Through the divine song of wisdom, the Bhagavad Gītā, Sri Krishna helped Arjuna develop the power of discrimination, and concluded thus:

**iti te jnanamakhyatam, guhyadguhyataram maya|
vimrsyaitadasesena, yatheccchasi tatha kuru || 18.63 ||**

Thus, I have explained to you this knowledge that is more secret than all secrets. Ponder over it deeply, and then do as you wish.

After revealing Gītā, Paramātmā tells Arjuna that the freedom to act was his choice.

The mode of goodness illuminates the intellect with the light of knowledge, thereby refining its ability to discriminate between right and wrong of things, right and wrong of actions and right and wrong of sentiments. The sattvic intellect enables us to know which actions are proper and which actions are to be avoided. It also lets us know what to fear and what to ignore. It explains to us the reasons for the shortcomings in our personality and also reveals the solution for them.

The sattvic buddhi follows the path of **nivṛtti** i.e., the path of creative and spiritual orientation and actions. On the other hand, **pravṛtti** is the path of material enjoyment and material progress. **A sattvic person withdraws from this pravṛtti and gets engaged in nivṛtti.**

Fear and blurred judgement are the marks of a selfish mind because such a mind is motivated and apprehensively calculative. Sattvic intelligence being sharp, shining and knowledge-based, is bold and faultless, always aiming at good and creative things. People having this discriminating power are successful in everyday life. A person with sattvic intelligence makes quicker progress on the spiritual path as well. Right action is that which is in accordance of scriptures, in accordance with Bhagavad Gītā and in accordance with guru upadesha. Wrong actions are those opposed to this principle.

18.31

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

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

The intellect is considered in the mode of passion or rajasic when it is:

- confused between righteousness (**dharmā**) and unrighteousness (**adharma**)
- cannot distinguish between worthy actions (**kāryaṃ**) and unworthy actions(**akāryaṃ**)

Dharma is the path that conforms to the elite scriptures and our *shrutis*, while adharma is opposed to the *shrutis*. *Shrutis* are based on truth, fairness and principle of equanimity for the highest good of all. The so-called better placed people believe that they act in accordance with dharma, perform all acts and think that material well-being or material prosperity as proof of their conviction. They misunderstand that acquiring material wealth is proof that they are dharmic. Such people are often unaware of sattvic principle, which has very little to do with the material measures of worldly well being. The Kauravas too believed that they were performing a worthy act of fighting the war against the Pāṇḍavas. They believed that it was in confirmation with the diktats of the dharma, as their father Dhritarashtra was not given the throne in the first place and at the right time.

The material ego fails to grasp the subtlety of Sattvic dharma. The rajasic mind is always based on ambition and desire, which is in contrast with sattvic dharma. Doing duty honestly is right while dodging duty or doing it dishonestly is wrong. Rajasic approach is always aimed at personal gain and personal glory. Rajasic intellect becomes mixed due to personal attachments. It can sometimes see clearly what is right and what is wrong, but when self interest comes into play, it becomes tainted and confused. Such

people ignore what is right and wrong, when self interest is in play. There are some people who are very competent professionally, but very immature when it comes to family relationships. They succeed on career front but fail miserably on the personal front because of attachment to their career. This attachment prevents proper perception and proper conduct.

The rajasic intellect colored by attachment and aversions, likes and dislikes is unable to make out proper course of action. It becomes confused between the important and trivial things, permanent and transient things, and valuable and worthless things.

18.32

**adharmaṃ(n) dharmamiti yā, manyate tamasāvṛtā,
sarvārthānviparītāṃśca, buddhiḥ(s) sā pārtha tāmāsī. 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.

The intellect which is in the mode of ignorance or tamasic is:

- shrouded in darkness
- imagining irreligion (**adharma**) to be religion (**dharmā**)
- perceiving truth to be untruth

Tamasic intellect is without the illumination of sublime knowledge (**ajñāna**), is ignorant and hence misconstrues adharma to be dharmā. For example, a drunkard is attached to the intoxication that alcohol provides. His poor intellect, covered with fog of darkness and ajñāna, cannot even perceive the sheer ruin he is bringing upon himself from this action. So much so that he does not mind selling his valuables for alcohol. In the tamasic intellect, the faculty of judgement and ability for logical reasoning are lost. The tamasic psychology is rooted in wrong and perverted ways. A tamasic person indulges in actions which causes pain and grief to others as well as to himself. He misunderstands truth to be false and vice-versa. His approach to life is based on falsehood which lands him in a vicious cycle of self-destruction.

18.33

**dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate, manaḥprāṇendriyakriyāḥ,
yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā, 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.

Determination (**dhṛti**) is the inner strength of the mind and intellect to move on the path with tenacity, strong resolve despite difficulties and obstacles. *Dhṛti* is what keeps our vision focused towards our objective/goal and mobilizes latent hidden power we have in our body, mind, senses and intellect to overcome, apparently the insurmountable impasses in the journey to get the objective of life. Without *dhṛti* it is not possible to cross the obstacles. Sri Krishna moves on to describe three kinds of *dhṛti*.

That steadfast will-power, strong resolve that is developed through yoga and which sustains the activities of mind, life air (**Prāṇa**) and the senses, is said to be the determination in the mode of goodness or sattvic *dhṛti*. It develops when one learns to subdue the senses, discipline the *Prāṇa*, and control the mind. Through practice of yoga, the mind becomes disciplined and develops capacity to rule over the senses and

body.

Yoga is extremely important as it leads to equanimity of mind - **samatvam yoga uchyate**, as stated by Sri Krishna in the second chapter. Equanimity of mind is a master achievement. One who has followed this principle is a yogi himself. There may be many techniques of yoga but the most effective is **Prāṇayam**. **Prāṇayam** purifies mind and body. It a wonderful and simple technique, which when done correctly can control and regulate the mind and senses as well.

For ideal culturing of intellect, cultivation through firmness is necessary. Hence, *buddhi* has to be paired with *dhṛti* for any meaningful karma to be done. It is in the state of such firmness that intellect becomes sattvic. To make intellect sattvic, one will need the assistance of sattvic dhṛti. Various other forms of Sādhana also help in achieving this objective of attaining sattvic dhṛti.

18.34

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

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

The steadfast will-power by which one holds on to his duty, pleasures and wealth out of attachment, desire for rewards, is the determination in the mode of passion or rajasic dhṛti.

Rajasic dhṛti is devoid of desire for *moksa*, and always glued to the causes of material prosperity, worldly recognition and ego inflated publicity. The people of rajasic firmness hold worldly gains and possessions, undertake religious and social programs and ceremonies, seeking personal glorification and enjoyment. They are staunchly fanned by their desire to delight in the fruits of their efforts. They are focused on enjoying their sensual pleasures, acquiring wealth and accumulating other materialistic rewards. Since money is the means for acquiring this, such people cling to money all through their life.

Sri Krishna says that determination fueled by desire for enjoying rewards, is in the mode of passion.

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 unintelligent resolve is said to be in the mode of ignorance. A person with unintelligent resolve will not give up:

- dreaming (**svapnaṃ**)
- fearing (**bhayaṃ**)
- grieving (**śokaṃ**)
- despair (**viṣādaṃ**)
- conceit (**madam**)

Determination is seen in unintelligent and ignorant people also. But their determination is

stubbornness that arises from fear, despair, and from false pride.

For example, some people are victims of fear complex and it's interesting to note that they hold on to this complex with great tenacity and make it an inseparable part of their personality. There are others who make their life a living hell because of some past disappointment and refuse to let it go, in spite of knowing the ruinous effect on their life. Some insist on quarreling with all who hurt their ego and have misconception of themselves.

Sri Krishna states that determination based on such stubborn clinging to the unproductive thoughts is in the mode of ignorance.

18.36

**sukhaṃ(n) tvidānīm(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,

The ultimate motive behind people's action is the search for happiness (**sukha**). Everyone desires to be happy and through their actions seek fulfillment, peace and satisfaction. Sri Krishna explains that happiness too is of three types (**sukham tvidanim trividham**), and that true happiness acquired from persistent spiritual practice gives deep joy and entails end of sorrows.

Since everyone's action differs in the constituent factors, the kinds of happiness they derive out of their work is also different. In life everyone experiences momentary happiness. This type of happiness is instantaneous. Any pleasant experience causes this feeling and any unpleasant experience causes revulsion or unhappiness. But lasting happiness which also entails loss of sorrows and grief is altogether different experience. Lasting happiness is a great feeling indeed and comes through long spiritual practice. It is a great treasure of unique happiness, very different from usual feelings of daily life which worldly incidents and events can cause. Worldly happiness is transient but the happiness earned through spiritual Sādhana is permanent.

HE explains this in the three facets of sattvic, rajasic and tamasic gunas.

18.37

**yattadagre viṣamiva, pariṇāme'mṛtopamam,
tatsukhaṃ(m) sātṭvikaṃ(m) proktam, ātmabuddhiprasādajam. 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 Sātṭvika.

Sukh which appears like poison at first (**yattadagre viṣamiva**) but tastes like nectar in the end (**parinamemrtopamam**), is said to be in the mode of goodness. It is generated by pure intellect that is situated in self knowledge (**atma jnana**).

There is a popular saying -

amle ka khaya aur badon ka kaha baad mein pata chalta hai.

The benefits of eating amla (indian gooseberry) and advice of the elders are experienced at a later stage.

Although amla is rich in vitamin C and is said to be a super food, people tend to avoid for its bitter taste. Interestingly, after eating amla, in just a couple of minutes, the bitterness disappears and it starts tasting sweet. The long term benefits of consuming vitamin C are undoubtedly numerous.

Happiness in the mode of goodness or sattvic **sukh** is of the same nature as amla. It seems bitter in the short term but tastes like nectar in the end. The vedas refer to the happiness in the mode of goodness as '**shreya**', which is unpleasant initially but ultimately beneficial, in contrast to '**preya**' which is pleasant in the beginning but ultimately harmful. Upanishads say that '**shreya**' and '**preya**' are the two paths where one is beneficial and other pleasant. These lead to different ends. The pleasant is enjoyable in the beginning but ends in pain. The ignorant are trapped in the pleasant and ultimately perish. But the intelligent are not deceived by their attractions, choose the beneficial and finally attain the ultimate happiness.

The sattvic happiness appears like poison in the beginning because of the rigor and hard efforts involved in attaining the spiritual realization. When one started attending Gītā classes, initially it seemed difficult when their friends were enjoying a nap or walk or watching TV when they were in class. But later, one realizes the ultimate happiness obtained by studying the Gītā. This **sukh** which seemed like poison initially because of the hard work involved, ultimately is like nectar. Once this sattvic **sukh** is attained, it is an investment lasting beyond death because it is not subject to time frame; it is **kalatith**. This lasting and unique happiness is the reward of spiritual efforts which involves cultivation and elevation of *Prāṇa*, mind and senses to the spiritual level. The concept of true happiness has been touched upon in other chapters of Gītā. For eg.,

In chapter 2, Sri Krishna says,

**ragadvesaviyuktaistu, visayanindriyaiscaran|
atmavasyairvidheyatma, prasadamadhigacchati || 2.64 ||**

But one who controls the mind, and is free from attachment and aversion, even while using the objects of the senses, attains the grace of God

In chapter 5, Sri Krishna says,

**bahyasparsesvasaktatma, vindatyatmani yatsukham|
sa Brahmāyogayuktatma, sukhamaksayamasnute || 5.21 ||**

Those who are not attached to external sense pleasures realize divine bliss in the self. Being united with God through yoga, they experience unending happiness.

In this chapter, Sri Krishna summarizes all that HE has taught in other chapters.

18.38

**viṣayendriyaśaṃyogād, yattadagre'mṛtopamam,
pariṇāme viṣamiva, tatsukhaṃ(m) rājaśaṃ(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.

Happiness is said to be in the mode of passion(**rajasic sukha**), when it is derived from contact of senses with sense objects like **spars**, **shabd**, **roop**, **ras**, and **gandh**. The happiness derived when sense organs meet the sense objects is rajasic sukha. This happiness is like nectar in the beginning but poison in the end. It is opposite of sattvic happiness.

Rajasic happiness is experienced as a thrill that arises from contact between sense and sense objects. But ultimately it will not be good. The joy is as short lived as the contact itself. It is not permanent and leaves in its wake greed, anxiety, guilt and thickening of material illusion. For meaningful accomplishment even in the material world, it is necessary to reject rajasic happiness as a reminder to steer one away from immediate but misleading joys. One has to avoid temporary joys even in material world.

One of our prime ministers used to keep these lines on the desk from the poem "Stopping my boot by the woods on a Snowy evening". The lines of the poem are:

***The woods are lovely, dark and deep
But i have promises to keep
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep***

The path to lasting and divine bliss lies not in indulgence but in renunciation, in austerities and in discipline. We must know that all forms of happiness which is based on senses, are of temporary nature. After first immediate contact between sense and respective sense objects, the result may cause happiness but afterwards may cause pain and sorrow. Young people may not agree easily with this conclusion because they have vigor of youth and secondly they're ignorant of the spirit generated or soul caused happiness. They have not tasted the real nectar and do not know it. They think getting involved in material enjoyment is the real nectar.

In chapter 5, Paramātmā has said:

***ye hi samsparsaja bhoga, dukhayonaya eva te|
adyantavantah kaunteya, na tesu ramate budhah || 5.22 ||***

The pleasures that arise from contact with sense objects, though appearing as enjoyable to worldly-minded people, are verily a source of misery. O son of Kunti, such pleasures have a beginning and an end, so wise do not delight in them.

Even in Chapter 14, Sri Krishna has said,

***karmanah sukrtasyahuh sattvikam nirmalam phalam|
rajasastu phalam dukham ajnanam tamasah phalam || 14.16 ||***

It is said that the fruit of actions performed in the mode of goodness bestows pure results. Actions done in the mode of passion results in pain, while those performed in the mode of ignorance results in darkness.

18.39

**yadagre cānubandhe ca, sukhaṁ(m) mohanamātmanah,
nidrālasyapramādotthaṁ(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.

Tamasic sukh is that happiness which is in the mode of ignorance. It throws a veil on the nature of Self from beginning to the end, and is derived from sleep (**nidra**), laziness (**alasya**) and negligence (**ajnana**). Such a person does not want to get bothered about the soul. As the saying goes '**ignorance is bliss**', such people are actually happy in ignorance. But this bliss is tamasic sukh.

Tamasic sukh is of the lowest kind and is foolishness from start to end. It throws the soul in the darkness of ignorance but since there is a tiny element of pleasure in it, people get addicted to it. That is why cigarette smokers find it difficult to break their habit as they think it is their happiness. They are aware that it is harmful for them and can cause cancer also, but even then they do not want to leave the habit. Same is the case with drug addicts. They are unable to reject the temporary happiness they get from the addiction. What happens in sleep, or alcohol, or drug induced unconsciousness is that the person forgets himself. In this drug induced stupor he is unaware of himself and also forgets his senses of self that is linked to body, mind and intellect and becomes unaware of his existence. He derives great pleasure in doing so, such that he is willing to commit any immoral or evil act to procure the drugs or alcohol.

Tamasic pleasure is such that it makes a person forget himself, both during sensory interaction and also in the aftermath of the interaction. His **antakarnah** and karmas are tamasic. Sri Krishna states that such pleasures derived from sleep, laziness and negligence are in the mode of ignorance.

18.40

**na tadasti pṛthivyām(m) vā, divi deveṣu vā punaḥ,
sattvaṁ(m) prakṛtijairmuktaṁ(m), yadebhiḥ(s) syātribhīrguṇaiḥ. 18.40**

There is no being on earth, or in the middle region or even among the gods or anywhere else, who is free from these three Guṇas, born of Prakṛti.

Paramātmā says that these three gunas dictate the behavior of humans and that the scope is not limited only to earth. The beings in highest celestial abodes are also not free from the influence of these three modes of nature. The three gunas of nature are all pervasive and universal and cover every living being on the earth and the devatas in heaven too. The three gunas - sattvic, rajasic and tamasic and can only be overcome by successfully realizing the soul.

To become **gunatith**, one has to have atma jnana to successfully realize the soul; short of that no being can hope to be free from the shackles of these three gunas of Prakṛti. These three gunas are present in all of us like butter in milk, or fire in the wood, or breath in all beings. There is no escape from them as the entire nature is made of these gunas only. Whether we walk on earth or are in heaven, only nishkama karma performed through sattvic intellect acquired through sattvic dhṛti leads a being to the state of **nirguna**. The objective of our life should be to become **nirguna**.

Even sattvic guna can put under bondage as discussed in the 14th chapter. **The objective of reading Bhagavad Gītā is to become nirguna and become gunatith.** Upanishad states that material energy maya is also three colored- white, red and black. It has three modes and is the motherlike womb of innumerable living beings within the universe. It is brought into existence and supported by the unborn Paramātmā who is full of knowledge but does not get entangled with the material energy and independently enjoys the pleasures of transcendental pastimes. But the living entity enjoys the material world and thus become bonded.

Maya's domain extends from patala loka to the celestial abode of Brahmā. Since the three modes of nature are inherent attributes of Maya, they exist in all material abodes of existence of Maya. The residents of patala loka have predominance of tamoguna; the residents of earth have predominance of rajoguna; and residents of celestial abodes have predominance of sattvaguna.

The three gunas are present in everyone. For example, a person enjoying sleep on a cold winter night is suddenly woken up by the alarm to take bath and sit for spiritual Sādhana. The person dislikes it

but he has to overcome inertia, shrug off his laziness and not give in to the temptation of sleep. Likewise, the tongue also is always seeking it's favourite delicacy. For example, the host is serving favourite food but one realizes that they are fasting on that day. This leads to a dilemma where the tongue wants the food and intellect says no. The person reaches a compromise where he asks the host to pack the food to enjoy it the next day. But if the quantum of rajoguna has increased too much, then he will mentally bargain with God, and justify his actions by saying he does not want to hurt the sentiment of the host and that this food is sent by God Himself and does not want to insult it. He will use any logic to eat the food.

Sri Krishna says no one can escape the influence of these three gunas but they can be kept in balance by the individual. How will tamoguna prone individual born in tamasic environment, to tamasic parents be exposed to virtues of sattvaguna? But some children born to tamasic parents grow up with virtuous attributes. Bhakta Prahalad is one such example. Gunas cannot exploit a man of wisdom, rather it is he who utilizes the three gunas very astutely. Kabir ji has said that Maya that eludes the entire world, lies in the service of jnani/sage. The sage is able to make most of the maya and utilizes maya prudently to his advantage. **Hence, if we acquire atma jnana, maya can do no harm to us, and all our sukha, karma, buddhi, and dhrti can become sattvic.**

Questions & Answers session

Bhupender ji Gupta

Ques: Whether the Karmas will affect Jīvātmā born by cloning or will it be different ?

Ans: Even if it is a clone, it has a Jiva (life) in it ,moving his hands and legs. Jiva has entered into the clone because of its past Karmas. It's Karmas has not allowed him to take a original body and has forced him to take a duplicated body. This is because of its past karma.

Abhay ji Desai

Ques: Are the 3 Gunas we inherit are hereditary?

Ans: Yes , of course. We are what our parents have in gene and that gene definitely controls our behavior but at the same time , our past karmas also pile up and those Sanskaras will influence our Gunas. A rajasic or tamasic person will attend the Gītā classes for a day or two and then give up and leave it. Some consistently attend the classes because of his past Sanskar and teaching of our parents. We have to inculcate noble sanskars in the next generation to do good for them.

Ques: For example, two brothers of the same parent become Rajasic and Tamasic. Due to what reason this deviation happens?

Ans: They certainly have the gene of the parents but the Gunas coming from the past sanskaras will affect them. Even if they are brothers, in the past life, they might have been born in different families and different circumstances. So their sanskaras are different. Even a husband and wife living under the same roof are of different nature. So even if they are brothers, they have their own independent life , governed by their own sanskaras. One may be a peaceful person and the other an angry person. The Sanskara thus influence their behavior but there is a chance to rectify their sanskars in this life and take it as a means to repair the faults of previous lives. This realization comes by being in the company of good people reading the Bhagavad Gītā and contemplate that Sri Krishna has said that it must be true. One should have Shraddha and confidence and this will rectify and purify one's Anthakarna (inner self).



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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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