



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 5: Karma-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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Interpreter: SENIOR TRAINER SOU SHRADDHA JI RAODEO

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The Calm Within Action: Bhagavān's Vision of Peace Through Detachment

The fifth chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā, **Karma-Sannyāsa-Yoga -The Yoga of Renunciation of Action and the Yoga of Knowledge**

The session commenced with *dīpa prajwalan*—the customary lighting of the sacred lamp, symbolising purity, devotion, and knowledge. Prayers were offered to the Supreme, and salutations extended to the revered Gurus.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* and its timeless teachings are indispensable for the smooth functioning of human life. Its guidance holds immense utility in leading a life of righteousness, free from malice and ego. Merely reading the *Gītā* is not enough; it must be lived and practised with sincerity and faith. When embraced with devotion, its transformative wisdom fills life with meaning and opens the doorway to bliss and ultimate liberation.

Karma—action—is both integral and inevitable. No living being can remain inactive. Such is its indispensability that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa expounded upon it in great detail, and Bhagavān Vyāsadeva compiled the teachings on *karma* into three chapters—**Karma Yoga** (Chapter 3), **Jñāna Karma Sannyāsa Yoga** (Chapter 4), and **Karma Sannyāsa Yoga** (Chapter 5). Any noble action (*sat-karma*), when performed with the spirit of *sannyāsa*—the renunciation of fruits—becomes a path to liberation.

In the ongoing fifth chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa reveals the profound confluence of **Karma Yoga** and **Sāṁkhya Yoga**. Though distinct in method, both ultimately lead to the same destination—**Paramātmā-prāpti**. The internal state of the practitioner in both paths remains the same—marked by equanimity, serenity, and inner bliss. Yet, while both lead toward liberation, **Karma Yoga** is more accessible for most. The **Sāṁkhya-yogin** seeks to realise the unmanifest form (*avyakta-svarūpa*) of Bhagavān through knowledge, a pursuit that demands deep contemplation and dispassion, often difficult for the ordinary mind. In contrast, **Karma Yoga** calls one to perform one's duties with dedication and

surrender the results at the lotus feet of *Paramātmā*—a path simple in practice yet profound in its effect. Śrī Kṛṣṇa clarifies this beautifully in the opening verses of this chapter.

To understand this more vividly, one may turn to a striking episode from the life of King Janaka—one of the greatest exemplars of *Karma Yoga* and *Vairāgya* (detachment).

Janaka — The Karma Yogi

King Janaka, the noble ruler of Mithilā, was a seeker of the highest wisdom—*Brahma-jñāna*. Though he lived amidst royal splendour, he remained deeply detached and steadfast in his duties. His life was a perfect balance of responsibility and renunciation—*Karma Yoga* in its truest essence.

Janaka was a devoted disciple of the illustrious sage *Yājñavalkya*, renowned for his mastery of *Brahma Vidyā*. Their philosophical dialogues, brimming with subtle truths of the Self, are recorded in the ***Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad***. Out of affection and respect, *Yājñavalkya* would often keep a seat ready for the king and begin his discourse only after his arrival. This special regard occasionally stirred quiet resentment among the other disciples, who lived austere lives in the forest hermitage and felt that Janaka's royal stature earned him undue preference.

One day, as *Yājñavalkya* was delivering his discourse, a soldier arrived breathless, bearing grave news—a devastating fire had broken out in Mithilā. The entire city, along with the royal palace, was ablaze. At once, the disciples panicked and ran to save their meagre possessions—deer-skins, *japa-mālās*, and a few pieces of clothing. But King Janaka sat unmoved, his mind anchored in the teachings of his Guru.

Seeing this, *Yājñavalkya* enquired, “O King, why did you not rush to protect your kingdom and wealth when all others fled to safeguard their few belongings?”

With calm composure, Janaka replied, “Revered one, I have performed my duty as the king in building and protecting Mithilā. Now, I am fulfilling my duty as a disciple, listening to your discourse. Mithilā is not mine—it belongs to *Paramātmā*. If it burns, let it burn. I am not disturbed, for I have already done what was to be done. *Paramātmā* will take care.”

When the disciples returned, having secured their humble possessions, the sage addressed them: “Behold Janaka! He stands to lose his entire kingdom—his palace, his treasures, his family—yet he remains unmoved. You, with nothing to lose, fled in fear to save trifles. Now you understand why I honour him. He is a true *karma yogī*.”

King Janaka's life thus stands as a radiant example of renunciation amidst action. Though he ruled an empire, he was inwardly free—*jīvanmukta*, liberated while living. He was a *Rājaṛṣi*—a king among sages—who demonstrated that liberation is attainable not only through renunciation but through dutiful action performed in detachment.

The story of Janaka carries a timeless message. Every individual can attain inner freedom by performing their *karma* with devotion and detachment from the results. As *Bhagavān* has shown, both *Sāṃkhya Yoga* and *Karma Yoga* lead to the same supreme goal. The destination remains one; it is only the path that differs. Each seeker must recognise their own disposition and choose accordingly.

Yet, a gentle word of caution must be remembered—***Jñāna Mārga*** is not easily attainable, requiring deep renunciation and unwavering concentration. But ***Karma Yoga***—acting selflessly, offering every deed at the feet of *Bhagavān*—is well within the reach of all.

In the forthcoming *śloka*-s, Śrī Kṛṣṇa further unfolds the subtle distinction and harmony between these two paths—revealing how **Karma** performed in surrender becomes **Yoga**, and **Yoga** practised with wisdom becomes liberation itself.

5.12

yuktaḥ(kh) karmaphalaṃ(n) tyaktvā, śāntimāpnoti naiṣṭhikīm, ayuktaḥ(kh) kāmakāreṇa, phale sakto nibadhyate. 5.12

Offering the fruit of actions to God, the Karmayogī attains everlasting peace in the form of God-realization; whereas, he who works with a selfish motive, being attached to the fruit of actions through desire, gets tied down.

In the third and fourth chapters of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has time and again emphasised that the *karma-yogīs*—those who surrender the fruits of their actions to *Paramātmā*—attain eternal peace. Such surrender is not an act of weakness but of wisdom, for it unites the doer with the Supreme Consciousness and frees the mind from the bondage of desire.

In this *śloka*, Bhagavān reveals the very method adopted by these *karma-yogīs*. They become *yukta*—deeply united with the Divine—by renouncing (*tyaktvā*) the fruits of their actions (*karma-phala*) and offering them at the lotus feet of *Parameśvara*. Once so united, they attain *śānti*—a peace that is enduring and unshakable, described as *naiṣṭhikī śānti*, the eternal tranquillity born of complete surrender.

King Janaka of Mithilā stands as a perfect embodiment of this truth. Though he ruled over a vast empire and lived amidst regal splendour, he remained inwardly untouched by all that surrounded him. His renunciation was not in leaving the kingdom, but in living amidst it with total detachment.

The message that Bhagavān conveys through such examples is simple yet profound: perform your *karma*, but do not crave its results. The fruits of one's actions may well be enjoyed by another, and that too is the law of *karma*.

An anecdote illustrates this beautifully. A young boy once asked his grandfather why he was planting so many mango trees when he might not live long enough to taste their fruits. Smiling gently, the old man replied, "*The mangoes I have enjoyed all my life grew on trees that someone else had planted. In the same way, these trees will bear fruits for those who come after me.*"

The essence of this story lies in selfless action. One must continue to perform one's duties as an act of *yajña*—a sacred offering—without expectation or attachment to reward. Those who perform their *karma* in this spirit, devoid of desire, remain in a state of inner bliss and equipoise. Their serenity is not an accidental occurrence; it is the result of tireless *karma* performed with detachment.

A striking example of such *karma-yogīs* in modern times can be seen in the lives of the **Chapekar brothers—Damodar, Balkrishna, and Vasudev**—revolutionaries from Maharashtra who dedicated their lives to the service of the nation. Deeply inspired by Tilak Ji's teachings, they took up arms against injustice and faced death with fearless devotion.

When sentenced to death for their role in the assassination of a British officer, they were asked their final wish. Their request was simple—they wished to hold in their hands a copy of the *Bhagavad Gītā* written by Tilak Ji as they faced the gallows. They sought not life, not wealth, not family—only the sacred *Gītā*. They desired to leave this world with the Divine words in their grasp so that they might

be reborn to continue their service to the motherland. Their courage was born of detachment; their serenity, the mark of true *karma-yogīs*. They were indeed *Gītānugāmī*—followers of the *Gītā* in its truest sense.

This raises a subtle question: how is it that two people performing similar actions meet such different fates—one bound to material existence, the other liberated from it? Bhagavān provides a clear answer.

Those who are *ayukta*—not united with the Divine Consciousness—act under the influence of desire (*kāma-kāreṇa*). Their actions are driven by personal motives; thus, they become entangled (*nibadhyate*) in the very results they seek. Being *saktaḥ*—attached—they remain bound in the endless chain of craving and dissatisfaction. Desires are insatiable. They begin with something as trivial as the wish for a sweet—perhaps a *rasgollā*—and can expand into a longing for luxury, power, or wealth. One desire fulfilled only gives rise to another. They are fleeting and deceptive, never yielding lasting happiness.

Hence, the seeker must remain vigilant, extinguishing desires as they arise. Otherwise, they multiply and bind the mind. Most people act with an inner calculation—“*What will I get in return if I do this?*” and this subtle thought pervades even small deeds.

In contrast, the Chapekar brothers acted without any self-interest. Their aim was solely the liberation of their nation. Even when facing death, they neither rebelled nor pleaded for mercy. They met their end in peace, holding the *Bhagavad Gītā* close to their hearts—truly liberated in spirit.

Unfortunately, in today’s world, this sacred idea of *niṣkāma karma* (selfless action) is diminishing. The constant question—“*What will I gain?*”—has become the root of our actions. Parents unknowingly pass on this *saṃskāra* to their children. Tasks that were once done out of love and responsibility are now incentivised. Children are rewarded for simple household chores, fostering a mindset of expectation rather than contribution.

Some even approach the study of the *Bhagavad Gītā* with the same attitude, asking, “*What will my child gain by learning it?*” The *Gītā*, however, is not a subject of transaction—it is a sacred text that builds character, refines intellect, and strengthens inner clarity. Its rewards are not material but spiritual—*amūrtika phala*—intangible yet everlasting.

It is through such understanding and surrender that one walks the true path of **Karma Yoga**—acting without attachment, serving without expectation, and attaining peace that is *naiṣṭhikī*, eternal and unbroken.

5.13

sarVākarmāṇi manasā, sannyasyāste sukhaṃ(m) vaśī, navadvāre pure dehī, naiva kurvanna kārayan. 5.13

The self-controlled Sāṅkhyayogī, doing nothing himself and getting nothing done by others, rests happily in God—the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, mentally relegating all actions to the mansion of nine gates (the body with nine openings).

The embodied beings who practise self-restraint and remain detached from the fruits of their actions live contentedly in their bodies (*śarīra*), which the scriptures liken to a city of nine gates. Such persons do not cling to the notion that they are the sole doers or the ultimate cause of events.

sarva-karmāṇi manasā sannyasyāste sukhaṁ vaśī

Having renounced all actions *in the mind*, they abide in abiding happiness.

Through steady practice of selfless *karma*, these seekers acquire the discriminative knowledge to discern that the *deha* (body) and *manas* (mind) only appear to act; they are not the true doer. The *jīvātma* resides within the *deha* and remains untouched by the flux of actions enacted through the body and mind under the sway of the three *guṇas* born of *prakṛti*. The subtle mechanism runs thus: *jīvātma* interfaces with *buddhi* (intellect); *buddhi* shapes the *manas*; *manas* sends impulses to the *indriyas* (senses); the *indriyas* execute the work through the body. Seen rightly, the *jīvātma* does not perform or become entangled in these acts; it remains pure and luminous. This realisation is the fruit of elevated *buddhi*, attained by both *karma-yogīs* and *jñāna-yogīs*.

The body is described as ***nava-dvāra***—the nine gates. These are: two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, one mouth, and two excretory openings. The *dehi* provides the vital force that powers all bodily activity, yet it itself is unaffected by the actions performed through these gates.

Two images make this truth unmistakable.

First, consider light. In a dark room, many objects remain unseen; when light shines, they become visible. Light itself is not altered by the objects it illumines. Its sole function is to reveal; it does not impose change on shape, colour, or texture. Light shines self-effulgently, dispelling darkness wherever it goes. So too is the *jīvātma*—unseen, self-illuminating, and the source that makes the world of forms manifest without itself changing.

Second, consider the sky and the clouds. Clouds form in the sky, move across it, and pour down as rain; yet the sky remains unaffected. The clouds cannot exist apart from the sky, for the sky provides the space in which they arise. Similarly, the *avyakta* consciousness—of which the *jīvātma* is a part—provides the substratum and energy for human actions while remaining untouched by the play of manifestations.

Thus, the *dehi* does not act in the sense of being the doer; it remains stainless, untouched by the results of the transient workings of *prakṛti*.

Key takeaway: the soul (*jīvātma*) is like the sovereign of a city; its administration is carried out by a council—the ego (*ahaṅkāra*), *buddhi*, *manas*, and the senses. When the body dies, that administration ceases and the sovereign departs. This subtle presence and its independence from action is clearly perceived by the *karma-sannyāsīs* and intuitively realised by the *Sāṅkhya-yogī* and the *karma-yogī* alike. Their lived understanding of this distinction is the very basis of freedom amidst activity—detachment in action and serenity in being, just as Bhagavān teaches.

5.14

**na kartṛtvam(n) na karmāṇi, lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ,
na karmaphalasaṃyogaṃ(m), svabhāvastu pravartate. 5.14**

God determines neither the doership nor the doings of men, nor even their contact with the fruit of actions; but it is Nature alone that does all this.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa further clarifies that neither the **sense of doership (*kartṛitvam*)**, which arises from the ego, nor the *actions* themselves originate from Him. Nor does *Paramātmā* create the **fruits of**

actions (karma-phala). All such activities take place under the influence of the *guṇas*—the three modes of material nature that govern the functioning of *prakṛiti*.

In truth, *Parampitā Paramātmā* remains untouched by any action or its outcome. He neither commands nor interferes in these happenings. Human beings act according to their *guṇas* and *svabhāva*, which determine their tendencies, choices, and deeds.

Yet, man clings to the false notion of “I am the doer.” This sense of “I” (*ahaṅkāra*) becomes the source of bondage. If one pauses and reflects deeply upon this “I,” one realizes that it is not the **Ātman** who acts, but the **svabhāva**—the inherent nature shaped by *guṇas* and carried forward as a residue of past *karmas*. It is *prakṛiti* that propels all action, and *Paramātmā* remains the silent witness, untouched and uninvolved.

Whenever difficulties or misfortunes arise, man hastily blames *Paramātmā*, exclaiming, “Why has this happened to me?” In reality, it is *prakṛiti* that operates through its *guṇas*. From *prakṛiti* emerge the *guṇas*, and from the *guṇas*, one’s *svabhāva*—the inner disposition that governs all actions. *Bhagavān* stands apart from these happenings, ever pure, ever detached.

In every action, three elements arise—

- 1. The *karma* itself is performed,
- 2. The sense of doership (*karṣṭvām*) manifests, born of ego,
- 3. And attachment to the results follows.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains that all these occur not because of *Bhagavān*, but because of one’s *svabhāva* and the influence of *guṇas*.

To illustrate, consider two children born to the same parents. One grows up to be intelligent and virtuous, while the other lacks discipline and understanding. How does such difference arise? Each soul carries its own *svabhāva*, formed by impressions of past *karma* and governed by its predominating *guṇas*.

The same can be seen in the example of Rāvaṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa—brothers born to the same lineage. One was of demonic disposition (*āsūrī svabhāva*), while the other was gentle, virtuous, and devoted (*daivī svabhāva*). Similarly, the story of Gokaṛṇa and Dhundhukārī stands as another testimony.

Both were raised by the same parents. Gokaṛṇa became a wise scholar, deeply rooted in *dharma*, while Dhundhukārī was overtaken by anger, greed, and deceit. His life was filled with *pāpa-karma*, and upon his death, his soul found no peace. Out of compassion, Gokaṛṇa performed his brother’s last rites and prayed for his liberation. This story beautifully portrays how *svabhāva*, governed by *guṇas* and past *karma-phala*, shapes one’s destiny even among those born in the same household.

As *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* had revealed earlier in the eighth chapter, the *guṇas* determine not only one’s conduct but also the form and nature of one’s rebirth.

In the next *śloka*, *Bhagavān* declares that He has no role to play in either *pāpa-karma* or *punya-karma*. He remains the *sākṣī*—the silent witness—ever untouched by the dualities of merit and sin. Yet, He graciously bestows protection upon those who, with unwavering *śraddhā* and devotion, surrender unto Him.

**nādatte kasyacitpāpaṃ(n), na caiva sukṛtaṃ vibhuḥ,
ajñānenāvṛtaṃ(ñ) jñānaṃ(ñ), tena muhyanti jantavaḥ. 5.15**

The omnipresent God does not partake the virtue or sin of anyone. Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance; hence it is that beings are constantly falling a prey to delusion.

The all-pervading *Paramātmā* remains untouched by the sinful or virtuous deeds of any being. As declared—

nādatte kasyachit pāpaṃ na chaiva sukṛtaṃ vibhuḥ

He neither assumes anyone's *pāpa* nor their *puṇya*. Those who truly understand this principle perceive every happening—every joy, every sorrow, and every moment of existence—as a manifestation of *prakṛiti*. Such realized beings do not blame *Paramātmā* for their misfortunes, for they recognize that it is the play of *guṇas* and *svabhāva* that shapes human experience.

However, those who fail to grasp this truth remain deluded, for their inner wisdom is veiled by ignorance. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa expresses this with great compassion and precision of thought. Being the *Parampitā*, He never condemns, never reproaches, and never uses harsh words. Every word that emanates from Him carries profound benevolence and purpose.

He says—***ajñānenāvṛtaṃ jñānaṃ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ***

“Knowledge is covered by ignorance; therefore, beings are deluded.”

Notably, Bhagavān does not say that the ignorant are devoid of knowledge. He does not declare '*jñāna nāsti*'—that knowledge is absent. Instead, He says '*ajñānenāvṛtaṃ jñānaṃ*'—knowledge exists, but it is veiled. This subtle distinction reveals His infinite compassion. Ignorance is not the absence of knowledge; it is merely a covering that can be removed. The tone is deeply positive and encouraging, reflecting the divine optimism that every being has the potential to awaken.

In the world, people who possess some degree of knowledge often look down upon others, saying dismissively, “He knows nothing.” But Bhagavān never uses such a tone. He acknowledges the presence of knowledge in all; it is only obscured by the shadow of *ajñāna*.

To understand this, consider the simple example of an electric bulb. Its natural light is white and pure. When wrapped with red paper, the light appears red. The moment the covering is removed, the pure white light shines forth again. Likewise, when the covering of ignorance is lifted, the brilliance of knowledge—ever-present within—reveals itself naturally.

Thus, ignorance (*ajñāna*) is temporary and removable, while knowledge (*jñāna*) is eternal and intrinsic.

One must therefore remember that Bhagavān is not responsible for anyone's *sukha* or *duḥkha*. He does not distribute joy or sorrow, merit or sin. All such experiences arise from one's own *svabhāva* and *karma-phala*.

Indeed, it is a divine mercy that human beings are not burdened with memories of their previous births. If those impressions were carried consciously, the weight of them would overwhelm the present life. The divine accountant, ***Chitragupta***, keeps the record of every *karma*—of what one does, what one speaks, and even what one thinks. These cumulative records determine the

circumstances of one's present existence—its happiness, challenges, and lessons.

In this cosmic order, Bhagavān remains the silent witness, ever pure, ever compassionate—allowing every soul to evolve through the play of *prakṛiti*, *guṇas*, and *karma*, until the veil of *ajñāna* is lifted and the light of true knowledge shines once again.

5.16

jñānena tu tadajñānaṃ(m), yeṣāṃ(n) nāśitamātmanah, teṣāmādityavajjñānaṃ(m), prakāśayati tatparam. 5.16

In the case, however, of those whose said ignorance has been destroyed by true knowledge of God, that wisdom shining like the sun reveals the Supreme.

Ajñānam, or ignorance, is often symbolised as darkness—a state in which the radiance of truth remains concealed. When the inner light of knowledge is veiled by this darkness, beings remain deluded, unable to perceive reality as it is. Yet the moment true understanding dawns, the darkness of ignorance dissolves completely, just as the arrival of light dispels the night.

The illumination of *Ātma-jñāna*—knowledge of the Self—is that supreme light which annihilates ignorance in its entirety. It is not merely intellectual understanding, but a profound awakening in which the seeker realises the eternal presence of *Paramātmā* within.

This knowledge is likened to the rising sun—***āditya-vajjñānam***. Just as the sun scatters the shadows of night, the inner sun of wisdom eradicates the gloom of *ajñāna*. To comprehend this, one may contemplate the nature of the sun itself. Does the sun ever encounter darkness? The answer is no. Wherever it travels, light prevails and darkness is driven away.

Similarly, consider *Amṛita*—the nectar of immortality. Can death ever touch *Amṛita*? Never. In the same way, one who has awakened to true knowledge never experiences ignorance again. For such a being, *ajñāna* ceases to exist, just as darkness ceases where light shines.

For many, ignorance creates a false distance between the individual soul (*jīvātmā*) and *Paramātmā*. This imagined separation is the cause of all bondage and sorrow. Only through *jñāna*—the light of self-awareness—can this darkness be lifted, revealing the oneness of the individual soul with the Supreme.

For others, this veil has already been removed. Through deep realisation of the Self, they have awakened to their divine essence. Such beings, freed from the delusion of duality, live in the world yet remain untouched by it. They are the ***Jīvan Muktas***—the liberated while still embodied.

They move amidst all, yet within them reigns an unbroken stillness. Their eyes behold the same light in all beings, their minds remain unstirred by praise or blame, and their hearts rest perpetually in the awareness of Bhagavān.

Thus, **the rise of knowledge is the dawn of liberation. When the sun of *Ātma-jñāna* ascends within, the darkness of ignorance vanishes forever, and the soul shines in its own eternal brilliance—pure, self-luminous, and free.**

5.17

tadbuddhayastadātmānaḥ(s), tanniṣṭhāstatparāyaṇāḥ, gacchantyapunarāvṛttiṃ(ñ), jñānanirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ. 5.17

Those whose mind and intellect are wholly merged in Him, who remain constantly established in identity with Him, and have finally become one with Him, their sins being wiped out by wisdom, reach the supreme goal whence there is no return.

Bhagavān teaches that the one who possesses unwavering faith (*śraddhā*) in Him, whose mind and intellect remain firmly anchored in His remembrance, attains complete liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death. Such a being, steadfast in devotion and absorbed in *Paramātmā*, experiences a profound inner illumination. When the light of knowledge (*jñāna*) dawns, it transforms the very nature and disposition of the seeker.

He realises that the *Ātmā*—his own inner Self—is indeed an inseparable fragment of *Paramātmā*. With unshakable conviction, he perceives Bhagavān as the sole eternal reality—**tad-buddhayaḥ**. His awareness expands to recognise that the Divine pervades all creation—**tadātmānaḥ**. His mind and intellect remain deeply united with the Supreme—**tanniṣṭhā**—so entirely absorbed that no worldly thought can disturb his inner stillness. All his efforts, aspirations, and energies flow in one direction alone—towards seeking refuge in *Paramātmā*—**tat-parāyaṇāḥ**.

Bhagavān declares that true knowledge (*jñāna*) purifies the seeker by dissolving all accumulated impurities—**nirdhūta-kalmaṣāḥ**. Freed from the bondage of sin and ignorance, such a person attains oneness with *Paramātmā* and transcends the cycle of rebirth—**apunah-āvṛttim**.

The description of the enlightened one thus becomes a mirror for every *sādhaka*. These qualities are not merely to be admired but to be reflected upon deeply, serving as tools for introspection, correction, and continuous spiritual evolution.

The Transformative Journey of Maharishi Vālmīki

The life of **Ādi Kavi Maharishi Vālmīki** beautifully exemplifies how divine knowledge and steadfast faith can transform even the darkest of hearts into radiant embodiments of wisdom.

He was not born a sage. In his early life, he was known as Ratnākar—a highway robber who lived by looting travellers. Bound by ignorance and delusion, he considered sin to be his sustenance. Yet destiny had prepared a turning point for him. One day, he encountered the great sage Nārada Muni, whose words pierced through the veil of his ignorance.

Nārada gently asked Ratnākar if his family, for whom he committed countless sins, would share his burden of wrongdoing. Filled with arrogance, Ratnākar went home to seek their reply—only to be met with silence and denial. His own family refused to partake in the fruits of his misdeeds. The veil of ignorance was torn. Deep remorse engulfed his heart, and for the first time, repentance stirred within him.

Nārada then instructed him to chant the sacred name of **Śrī Rāma**. Immersed in **Rāma-nāma japa**, Ratnākar entered a long meditation so deep that an anthill grew around his body. When he finally emerged, he was no longer Ratnākar the robber, but Vālmīki—the sage born of the *valmika* (anthill).

His transformation was complete—his sins dissolved, his heart purified, and his consciousness awakened. The divine name of **Śrī Rāma** had washed away the darkness of *ajñāna*, revealing the luminous self within. It was from this state of enlightenment that Maharishi Vālmīki composed the

immortal **Rāmāyaṇa**, the sacred chronicle of **Bhagavān Śrī Rāma's** life and virtues.

Thus, Vālmīki's life stands as a timeless testament that no being is beyond redemption. When the light of knowledge dawns and faith in Bhagavān deepens, even the most sinful heart can awaken to divine splendour. Knowledge purifies, faith uplifts, and remembrance of Bhagavān transforms—turning the ignorant into illumined, and the fallen into liberated ones.

5.18

vidyāvinayasampanne, brāhmaṇe gavi hastini, śuni caiva(ś) śvapāke ca, paṇḍitāḥ(s) śamadarsīnaḥ. 5.18

The wise look with equanimity on all whether it be a Brāhmaṇa endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a pariah, too.

This shloka reveals the profound idea of **Samatva**, the inner balance that blossoms as the light of wisdom dawns within a seeker. Such an enlightened being, established in the vision of equality, perceives the divine presence (*ParaBrahmā*) in all beings. For them, every form in creation is but a manifestation of the same *Paramātmā*. This spiritual vision—**Sama-darśinaḥ**—forms the recurring refrain of the Bhagavad Gītā, expressing that true **Yoga** lies not merely in meditation or renunciation, but in unwavering equanimity amidst all dualities of life.

In this context, the Gītā introduces two beautiful terms: **Vidyā** and **Vinaya**. **Vidyā** signifies knowledge, while **Vinaya** represents humility. It is not uncommon to find the learned lacking in humility, or the humble bereft of great learning. Yet, the scriptures remind us through the saying—“**Vidhyā Vinayena sampanne**”—knowledge shines only when adorned with humility. Together, they illuminate the character of a person. Such a being, endowed with both **Vidyā** and **Vinaya**, is revered as truly wise. For them, the distinctions of high and low dissolve—be it a Brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog, or a *Chāṇḍāla* (outcaste), all are seen with the same divine regard. The hallmark of wisdom, therefore, is not intellect alone, but the serene balance of equanimity and equality.

However, it is essential to discern between **Sama-darśinaḥ** and **Sama-varṭta**. The word **Varṭta** arises from the root **vṛt**, meaning existence or conduct. **Sama-darśinaḥ** implies perceiving all beings equally, whereas **Sama-varṭta** refers to equal conduct or identical behaviour towards all. Though perception may be equal, behaviour naturally differs according to the play of *Prakṛti* and circumstance.

To understand this distinction, consider the tender wisdom of a mother with two sons—one strong and athletic, the other frail and recovering from illness. Her love embraces both equally, yet she serves them different meals suited to their health. Her heart knows no partiality, but her actions are guided by discernment. Likewise, a teacher in a classroom views all students with the same affection and sense of duty, yet she devotes extra time to one who needs greater attention. Her vision remains equal, while her conduct aligns with each child's capacity. Thus, equality in perception does not always translate into uniformity in action.

The Bhagavad Gītā urges seekers to grasp this subtlety and to cultivate the right understanding of the shloka. *Sama-darśinaḥ* is the true ornament of a *Yogī*—one whose heart reflects the same divine light in every being.

The life of **Sant Nāmdev** offers a luminous illustration of this truth. The revered 14th-century saint of

Maharashtra once prepared *roṭī* and *ghī* for *Bhagavān Vitthal*. As he arranged the offering, a dog darted forward, seized the *roṭī*, and ran away. Nāmdev did not react with anger or rebuke; instead, he ran after the dog, lovingly calling out, “O *Bhagavān*! How will You eat the dry *roṭī* without *ghī*? Please take this too!”

This simple yet profound act reveals the depth of his spiritual realisation. For Nāmdev, the divine was not confined to temple or idol—he beheld *Bhagavān Vitthal* even in the form of a hungry dog. Such is the vision of the true ***Sama-darsī***, whose heart has expanded to embrace the One dwelling in all.

5.19

ihaiṁva tairjitaḥ(s) sargo, yeṣāṁ(m) sām̐ye sthitaṁ(m) manaḥ, nirdoṣaṁ(m) hi ṣamaṁ(m) brahma, tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ. 5.19

Even here is the mortal plane conquered by those whose mind is established in equanimity; since the Absolute is untouched by evil and is the same to all, hence they are established in Paramātmā.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa employs the word “**sām̐ye**” to describe one established in equal vision towards all beings. This **sām̐ya-bhāva**—this state of balance—transcends external behaviour and reaches the innermost recesses of one’s being. It implies freedom from attachment and aversion, from the sway of happiness and sorrow, pleasure and pain. Such a one, says Bhagavān, who has cultivated equanimity in all conditions, conquers the cycle of birth and death while still living—***ihaiṁva tair jitaḥ sargaḥ yeṣhām̐ sām̐ye sthitaṁ manaḥ***.

For the wise, this equipoise arises naturally. Their minds remain tranquil and impartial under every circumstance. To illustrate this, one may consider a wealthy household. When guests of high social or financial standing arrive, they are served with elaborate courtesy, yet the same host might not extend equal warmth to a guest of humbler means. Differences emerge subtly through human conditioning. However, the mind of a truly learned person remains *prasanna*—serene and impartial, ever in the mode of *prasād*.

In a temple, *prasād*—the sanctified offering—is distributed equally among all, without distinction of caste, class, or wealth. It is this same spirit of inner equality that illumines the heart of the enlightened one. Such beings, purified by wisdom, attain *mokṣa*—liberation—here and now, ***iha eva***.

When Bhagavān speaks of “**brahmaṇi nirdoṣaṁ samaṁ**”, He delineates two essential attributes of *Brahman*: “**Nirdoṣa**”, meaning spotless or free from blemish, and “**Sama**”, meaning balanced or equal. The realised one who abides in *Brahman* partakes of these very qualities—purity and equality—effortlessly.

The life of Sant Nāmdev Mahārāj offers a luminous glimpse of this truth. In his divine vision, the distinction between **Bhakta** and **Bhagavān**, between the devotee and the Divine, dissolved into oneness—into “**Brahma-sthiti**”—the state of resting in the Infinite. In this condition of perfect unity, perception remains flawless, impartial, and ever tranquil.

For every seeker (*sādhaka*), the aspiration for *mokṣa* begins with introspection—examining whether one’s mind truly reflects equality and purity in thought and action. One may wonder if such *samata* is possible amidst the complexities of the present age, **Kaliyuga**. Yet the path remains open for all who sincerely follow the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gītā.

Examples from the Rāmāyaṇa

The **Rāmāyaṇa** offers a resplendent example of **samata**. When Bharata returned from *Gandhāra* and heard of the exile of Śrī Rāma, he sought to know from Sage Vasiṣṭha how Rāma had responded to the decree. The sage replied that he had witnessed both occasions—when Rāma was declared crown prince and when He was commanded to leave for the forest—and in both, Rāma’s countenance remained unchanged. Neither joy nor grief touched His serene expression. Such was the perfection of *samata* in Bhagavān Śrī Rāma—complete equanimity in the face of both honour and hardship.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak jī: The Yogī of Kaliyug

In more recent times, the life of **Bal Gangadhar Tilak jī** reflects the same spirit of *samata*. When sentenced by the British authorities to six years of imprisonment in Mandalay, Burma, Tilak jī faced his confinement with remarkable calm. Outside the prison, agitation and appeals for his release filled the air, yet within his cell, he remained composed and undisturbed.

One night, a guard, astonished to see him asleep amidst such turmoil, inquired how he could rest so peacefully. Tilak jī smiled and replied that he had fulfilled his duty; there was no cause for sorrow or restlessness. His heart had attained *samata*—perfect balance amidst adversity.

Years later, when *Netaji Subhāsh Chandra Bose* visited the same prison, he remarked that even enduring a single day there would have been unbearable. Tilak jī, however, transformed his imprisonment into a sacred period of reflection, composing his monumental treatise “*Gītā Rahasya*”, a profound commentary on *Karma Yog*.

Drawing strength from the Bhagavad Gītā, Tilak jī demonstrated that the essence of *Yog* is not withdrawal from action but equanimity in the midst of it. His life became the embodiment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s teaching—“**Samatvaṁ Yoga Uchyate**”—wherein true freedom lies not in escape from the world, but in serene balance amidst its ever-changing tides.

5.20

na prahr̥ṣyetpriyaṁ(m) prāpya, nodvijetprāpya cāpriyam, sthiraḥ brahmasamudhō, brahma vid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ. 5.20

He who, with firm intellect and free from doubt, rejoices not on obtaining what is pleasant and does not feel perturbed on meeting with the unpleasant, that knower of Brahma lives eternally in identity with Brahma.

In the previous shloka, the focus was on maintaining equanimity in external interactions, especially in our dealings with the outer world. This shloka, however, shifts the emphasis inward, exploring how to remain equipoised within—specifically, with respect to our emotions and mental state.

Bhagavān describes the one who is neither elated by pleasure (**priyam**) nor disheartened by sorrow (**apriyam**) as Brahma vid. Such a person does not rejoice excessively in happiness (**prahr̥ṣyet**) nor grieve in times of distress (**udvijet**). Possessing firm faith and steadfast understanding, this individual remains undeluded and unwavering. This is the true knower of Brahman—the Brahma vid. Being firmly established in Brahma tattva (the true understanding of the Supreme), such people attain genuine liberation (**mokṣa**).

While the Brahma vid is steadfast and equanimous, many people are easily swayed by extreme emotions. For instance, when a politician wins an election, the victory is often celebrated with grand processions and displays of power—a manifestation of the doer’s arrogance and an attempt to satisfy

the winner's ego, sometimes even belittling the opponent. This is one extreme form of emotional display. On the opposite end, some individuals find themselves deeply saddened by life's adversities. A student struggling with academic pressure may resort to thoughts of suicide, or a businessman unable to repay loans might take the same drastic step.

Life presents challenges repeatedly, testing our emotional resilience. It is essential to develop the ability to face these trials with a stable and balanced mind. Knowledge brings the realisation that our true welfare lies in complete surrender to the Paramātmā (Supreme Being). When self-will merges with divine will, one naturally develops equanimity, enabling serene acceptance of both pleasure and pain.

Questions and Answers

Seema ji

Q: If all our actions are directed by Paramātmā, why are we held responsible for their outcomes as "Paap" or "Punya"?

A: There is often a misconception that all actions performed by individuals are solely the will of the Paramātmā, or the Divine. However, it is important to clarify that the actions themselves are a result of our own choices and intentions. The energy that enables us to act—the vital force within us—is indeed the Paramātmā. To better understand this distinction, consider the analogy of electric current flowing through various devices.

When electric current passes through a heater, it produces heat. When it flows through an air conditioning compressor, it results in cooling. In certain scenarios, passing through a conductor may even cause fire. The critical question arises: is the outcome, whether heating, cooling, or burning, the responsibility of the electric current itself? Clearly, the answer is "No." The outcome depends on the design, operation, and condition of each device, not on the current.

Similarly, in our lives, the results of our actions are determined by our own "setup," intellect, execution, and, most importantly, our desires. Desires originate from the mind and drive our behaviour. While the Paramātmā serves as the underlying energy or power enabling us to act, the responsibility for the outcome—whether good or bad—rests with the doer. The Divine energy facilitates action, but it is our mind and intention that shape the result.

Therefore, just as the electric current cannot be blamed or credited for the functioning of the devices it powers, the Paramātmā is not involved in the outcomes of our actions. It is the individual's desire, intellect, and effort that determine the outcome, and thus, the credit or blame belongs to the doer alone—not to the underlying energy or Divine power within.

Bhushan Lal ji

Q: How do you define a yogi?

A: Shlokas 18-20 of this chapter highlight "Samatha" as the main trait of a Yogi, with "Sama-darśinaḥ" being their defining characteristic.

Narayan Ji

Q: I request clarification regarding the terms "Sama-darśinaḥ" and "Sama Vartha" within the context of the previously provided example involving a mother and child. Additionally, I am interested in understanding the respective roles that "Knowledge" and "Behaviour" play in this context.

A: The earlier example of a mother and her children serves as a useful illustration for distinguishing between “Sama-darśhinaḥ” and “Sama Vartha.” The mother’s love for both her children is equal, representing the quality of “Sama-darśhinaḥ”—the ability to view all with an equal vision, without discrimination or bias.

However, when it comes to the practical aspects of caring for her children, such as preparing food, the mother acts according to their individual physical needs. She provides each child with what is appropriate for them, considering their specific requirements. This action exemplifies “Sama Vartha”—the principle of equal conduct adjusted to the individual’s genuine needs rather than a rigid sameness.

To further explain the influence of behaviour, consider a scenario where one child is disciplined and obedient, whereas the other is mischievous and disobedient. The mother continues to love both children equally, upholding the essence of “Sama-darśhinaḥ.” However, her approach to guiding and conditioning each child varies according to their behaviour at that moment.

When the disciplined child commits a mistake, the mother might simply explain the error, and the child is likely to understand and promptly correct himself. In contrast, the naughty and disobedient child may require a different, perhaps firmer, approach to understand and rectify his behaviour. Thus, the mother’s method of conditioning is shaped by the unique personality and behaviour of each child.

In summary, while “Sama-darśhinaḥ” reflects an underlying equality in the mother’s feelings towards her children, “Sama Vartha” is demonstrated in her actions, which are sensitively adapted to each child’s needs and conduct.

Q: Is there a relationship between "Sama-darśhinaḥ" and "Sama Vartha" in the context of knowledge?

A: A powerful example from the Ramayana highlights the quality of “Sama-darśhinaḥ”—the ability to view all beings with an equal vision, transcending personal biases and past actions. After the conclusion of the war and the defeat of Ravana, Vibhishana, Ravana’s brother, was reluctant to perform the final rites for Ravana. Vibhishana believed that Ravana’s evil deeds made him unworthy of being regarded as a brother and thus refused to carry out the necessary rituals.

In response, Sri Rama intervened with remarkable compassion and impartiality. He addressed Vibhishana, stating, “If you cannot consider him your brother, please consider Ravana as my brother and complete the rituals.” By making this request, Sri Rama demonstrated that, despite Ravana’s misdeeds and the punishment he received, there remained a fundamental respect and concern for the soul’s liberation.

Through this action, Sri Rama exemplified “Sama-darśhinaḥ” in its truest sense. Once justice had been served and the war had ended, Sri Rama’s focus shifted towards the spiritual well-being of Ravana’s Atma (soul), seeking even his liberation. This narrative serves as a profound illustration of seeing beyond past actions and personal relationships, embodying the principle of equal vision and compassion towards all.

Indira ji

Q: I practise meditation, jap, and prayer like many retirees, but I find my desire for peace and bliss hinders liberation. How can I overcome these desires?

A: Desires need not be eradicated entirely from our lives, especially those that are constructive and positive in nature. It is essential to recognise that desires are an intrinsic part of human existence; no

one can truly live without them. What matters is the perspective with which we approach our desires, particularly those that guide us towards peace and bliss. Such aspirations should not be viewed as obstacles to spiritual progress or liberation.

As emphasised by our revered Swamiji, the Śrīmad Bhāgavad Gītā is "Jñāna Drishtith," meaning it is established in knowledge. According to our scriptures, among the four pillars of human pursuit—Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire), and Moksha (liberation)—Kama is regarded as a significant object of pursuit (Puruṣārtha). The scriptures guide us to ensure that any Kama or desire we nurture is formed by Sātvik (pure and harmonious) intentions, rooted in knowledge, and aligned with Dharma. Desires that are supported by purity and righteousness, and are aligned with Dharma, are considered worthy of pursuit. Therefore, the desire for attaining peace should not be seen as an impediment to one's spiritual practice (sadhana). Instead, such a desire can guide an individual along the righteous path, helping them uphold Dharma. It is, thus, the right kind of desire to cherish and hold onto during one's spiritual journey.

The session concluded with a heartfelt prayer followed by the chanting of the Hanumān Chālīsā.



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