



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

3/6 (Ślōka 20-28), Saturday, 13 September 2025

Interpreter: GĪTĀ PRAVĪṆA RUPAL SHUKLA

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/QOm5L9Acs1M>

Bhagavān gives us a check list to evaluate the nature of our knowledge, actions and ourselves as the doer of the actions.

The **eighteenth chapter** of Srimad Bhagavadgītā is called **Moksha Sanyāsa Yoga - The Yoga of Liberation and Renunciation**.

The evening began with the lighting of the lamp and prayers offered to Bhagavān, and our Guru Param Pujya Swami Śrī Govind Dev Giri Ji Maharaj.

The 18th chapter of Gītā is referred to as **Ekadyayi Gītā** by Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, as it encapsulates the essence of the entire Gītā. Gītā, by itself summarises the teachings of Vedas. The Vedas comprise a vast collection of knowledge; it is difficult for common man to study and understand the entire contents of the Vedas. If one cannot study the Vedas, he can study the Upanishads. Those who cannot study the Upanishads too can get the same knowledge by studying the Gītā. If one has no time to study all the 700 shlokas of the Gītā, he is advised to learn at least the chapter 18, as it contains the gist of the Gītā. This chapter, containing 78 shlokas, is the longest of the 18 chapters of Gītā. For those who are unable to study the 78 shlokas, it is advised to learn one shloka (78th shloka of chapter 18; 700th shloka of Gītā)

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ

tatra śrīrviḥayo bhūtirdhruvā nitirmatirmama (18-78)

Wherever there is Shree Krishna, the Lord of all Yoga, and wherever there is Arjun, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be unending opulence, victory, prosperity, and righteousness.

'**pārtho dhanurdharaḥ**' refers to the medium (ourselves) who is connected with Sri Krishna at all times. Like Arjuna, we too can be the *pārtho dhanurdharaḥ*, by keeping Sri Krishna in our mind at all times, and performing our activities with the mindset of being a medium of Bhagavān. Such a mindset is sure to bring us Victory. There is no doubt that Sri Bhagavān has chosen us to be His medium. The very fact that we have reached the L4 level of learning Gītā, and are delving into the last chapter of

Gītā is proof to show that we are the chosen ones.

In Shankarabhashya, Bhagavān Adi Shankaracharya quotes an important line from Kathopanishad:

यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य

(Yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhya - only that person whom HE chooses can win Him.)

We did not choose to learn Gītā; rather we are the blessed chosen ones. Hence, we should not step back, but move forward, taking full advantage of the blessed opportunity and improve our lives by following the principles of Gītā. Gītā is not a book for one-time reading. Each time we delve into the shlokas, new meanings are discovered that take us deeper into the spiritual knowledge. It is rightly called as the '**Menu of Life**'. Scholars, scientists and great personalities like Einstein, Openheimer, Gandhi ji, etc. have credited their success to the teachings of Gītā. Let us also try to delve deep into the meanings hidden in the divine treasure.

To recapitulate the previous sessions, we learnt that yajña, dāna and tapaḥ are three essential activities that one should never. In addition, we also learnt that there are five components that work hand in hand for success or failure -

**adhiṣṭhānaṃ tathā kartā, karaṇaṃca pṛthagvidham,
vividhāśca pṛthakceṣṭā, daivam caivātra pañcamam. (18.14)**

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

Let's take the example of a student who desires success in exams. The 5 components that ensure his success or failure can be categorised as follows:

- **adhiṣṭhānaṃ** = base (physical body)
- **kartā** = doer (student)
- **karaṇaṃ** = medium (books, etc)
- **ceṣṭā** = desire (for success)
- **daivam** = Divine / fate

Each component accounts for 20% in the entire formula. While the first four are under the control of the doer, the fifth component (*daivam*) is not directly in our control. Our past deeds have a heavy influence on the daivam component. Albeit, it is possible for us to over-ride it by increasing our efforts in the other categories (like putting more effort in studying), besides increasing our good deeds which will help negate the bad deeds (karmas) that were done in the past.

Next, we also learnt that the three gunas- sattva, rajas, and tamas, form the foundation or nourishment for everything happening in the Universe. In this session, we will see that *jñānaṃ* (knowledge), karma (action) and kartā (doer) are also subject to influence of the three gunas.

18.20

**sarvabhūteṣu yenaikaṃ(m), bhāvamavyayamīkṣate,
avibhaktaṃ(m) vibhakteṣu, tajjñānaṃ(m) viddhi sāttvikam. 18.20**

That by which man perceives one imperishable divine existence as undivided and equally present in all individual beings, know that knowledge to be Sāttvika.

Sattvic knowledge is the purest form of knowledge, where one sees Paramātmā in

everything. A sattvic jnani will see the same essence (tattva) which is immutable (avyayam) and undivided (avibhaktam) existing in all the living entities despite the visible differences. This principle is also explained in chapter 12 - 'sarvatragama' - the Supreme essence pervades all space and matter.

18.21

**pr̥thaktvena tu yajñānaṃ(n), nānābhāvānpr̥thagvidhān,
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu, tajñānaṃ(m) viddhi rājasam. 18.21**

The knowledge by which man cognizes many existences of various kinds, as apart from one another, in all beings, know that knowledge to be Rājasika.

Rajasic knowledge is one that enables one to see all beings as different entities, based on the different personalities or individualities that are visible on the outside. In contrast to the sattvic knowledge, the rajasic knowledge fails to realise the Supreme tattva that is hidden within the different entities.

Main differences between Sattvic Knowledge and Rajasic knowledge:

- **Sattvic knowledge** sees the Brahmā tattva in every individual self - "**Brahmā satyam jagat mithya, jivo brahmaiva naparah**" (*Brahmān alone is real, the world is an illusion, and the individual self (jiva) is Brahmān itself, not different from it*). Every one is a part of the Paramātmā (**mamaivansho jiva loke jivabhutas sanatanah** - 15.7).
- **Rajasic knowledge** believes that each individual has its own soul that is different from the others. Sāṃkhya philosophy emphasizes on this principle of individuality - **Puruṣam bahutvam siddham.**

18.22

**yattu kṛtsnavadekasmin, kārye saktamahaitukam,
atattvārthavadalpaṃ(ñ) ca, tattāmasamudāhṛtam. 18.22**

Again, that knowledge which clings to one body as if it were the whole, and which is irrational, has no real grasp of truth and is trivial, has been declared as Tāmasika.

Tamasic knowledge is the lowest form with a narrow mindset (**alpa**) and no basis of truth (**atattvārtha**). It recognizes the physical body as the whole, with no consideration for the soul or anything beyond the body. Such people remain overly attached to themselves, and do everything for their own happiness - **Apna Kaam Banta Bhad Mein Jaye Janta.**

18.23

**niyataṃ(m) saṅgarahitam, arāgadveṣataḥ(kh) kṛtam,
aphalaprepsunā karma, yattatsāttvikamucyate. 18.23**

That action which is ordained by the scriptures and is not accompanied by the sense of doership, and has been done without any attachment or aversion by one who seeks no return, is called Sāttvika.

Like knowledge, action (karma) and the doer (karta) also fall under the three categories of gunas.

Characteristics of sattvic karma are:

- **niyatam**: Ordained activities that should be done on a daily basis like japa, etc.
- **saṅgarahitam**: done without attachment to the action or its results
- **arāgadveṣataḥ kṛtam**: done without love(*raga*) or hatred (*dveṣa*) towards the action
- **aphalaprepsunā**: done without expectation of fruits or benefits

Most often, our activities are driven by factors of love-hate and the desire for benefits. For example, our Śāstras ordain that we should feed the learned pandits (brahmans) at the end of the rituals. Giving food to the brahmin pandits becomes our niyatakarma. However, some people object to this and prefer to feed the poor people instead. Their objection may also arise due to the hatred they harbor towards the particular community. In another instance, a person may sponsor a poor child's education, with the expectation that the child and the parents give them due recognition and respect in public. One should not boast about the punya karmas accrued. Doing so will reduce our punya karma, and culminate in depleting our punya karma account. We can talk about the good deeds we do if it will serve as a source of inspiration for others, but should not boast about it out of ego. Karmas should be performed with a kartavya buddhi.

18.24

**yattu kāmepsunā karma, sāhaṅkāreṇa vā punaḥ,
kriyate bahulāyāsaṃ(n), tadrājasamudāhṛtam. 18.24**

That action, however, which involves much strain and is performed by one who seeks enjoyments or by a man full of egotism, has been spoken of as Rājasika.

The characteristics of Rajasic karma are:

- **Kāmepsunā**: driven by desire (*kāma*)
- **ahaṅkāreṇa**: driven by ego
- **kriyate bahulāyāsaṃ**: done with a great deal of effort.

18.25

**anubandhaṃ(ñ) kṣayaṃ(m) hiṃsām, anavekṣya ca pauruṣam,
mohādārabhyate karma, yattattāmasamucyate. 18.25**

That action which is undertaken through sheer ignorance, without regard to consequences or loss to oneself, injury to others and one's own resourcefulness, is declared as Tāmasika.

The characteristics of Tamasic karma are:

Tamasic karma refers to those irresponsible harmful actions that arise from delusion (*moha*) without taking into consideration one's own physical or mental strength, or the consequences of the act.

We studied in chapter 2 that **delusion is the after effect of our thought process.**

**dhyāyato viṣayānpuṃsaḥ, saṅgasteṣūpajāyate,
saṅgātsañjāyate kāmaḥ, kāmātkrodho'bhijāyate. 2.62**

The man dwelling on sense-objects develops attachment for them; from attachment springs up desire, and from desire (unfulfilled) ensues anger.

krodhādbhavati saṃmohaḥ, saṃmohātsmṛtivibhRāmaḥ,

smṛtibhramśād buddhināśo, buddhināśātpraṇāsyati. 2.63

From anger arises delusion; from delusion, confusion of memory; from confusion of memory, loss of reason; and from loss of reason, one goes to complete ruin.

- Thought leads to Desire
- Desire when unfulfilled arouses Anger
- Anger results in Delusion
- Delusion causes distortion of Memory
- Distorted Memory leads to loss of Reasoning capacity, culminating in ruin of the person.

Thus, it is evident that **thought is the root cause of any action**. Hence, we should strive to control our thought process, and use our Viveka buddhi to calculate the consequences of our actions.

18.26

muktasaṅgo'nahaṃvādī, dhṛtyutsāhaṣamanvitaḥ, siddhyasiddhyornirvikāraḥ(kh), kartā sāttvika 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 Sāttvika.

Next, we proceed to the three types of doers (*karta*).

A **sattvic karta** is defined by the following features:

- **muktasaṅgah**: Free from all attachments
- **na ahaṃvādī**: Free from ego (*ahaṃ*)
- **dhṛti**: Firmness of mind
- **utsāhaṣamanvitaḥ**: Loaded with enthusiasm (*utsāha*)
- **siddhyasiddhyornirvikāraḥ**: Unaffected by success (*siddhi*) or failure (*asiddhi*)

Steady mind (sthiramatiḥ) defines the sattvic doer, who is not perturbed by success or failure. He is aware that success/failure are subjective matters, and their definition will differ with individuals. For example, a student who is expecting 100% in the exams will consider himself a failure if he gets 90%. On the other hand, a student who is expecting to fail will consider it a success if he gets 50%.

A word of caution: Students should not misinterpret these teachings, and should not refrain from giving their best in their studies. They should remember that as a student, their kartavya karma is to study well and give their best, but not be overly attached to the end results.

18.27

rāgī karmaphalaprepsuḥ(r), lubdho hiṃsātmako'śuciḥ, harśaśokānvitaḥ(kh) kartā, rājasah(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 features of a **Rajasic doer** are exactly opposite to the sattvic doer.

- **Rāgī**: Passionate
- **karmaphalaprepsuḥ**: driven by desire of fruits or benefits
- **lubdhah**: greedy
- **hiṃsātmakah**: cruel

- **ásuciḥ**: impure or unclean (corruption, etc)
- **harṣaśokānvitaḥ**: subject to feelings of happiness or sorrow

The basic quality of rajasic guna is action/ movement. Rajasic person is deeply passionate about his actions as they are driven by desire for fruits. He will do whatever it takes to reach his desired goal, and is easily swayed by emotions of joy and sorrow, success and failure.

18.28

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

The following are the characteristics of a **tamasic karta**.

- **ayuktaḥ**: Unsteady, indisciplined mind
- **prākṛtaḥ**: Unrefined nature
- **stabdhaḥ**: Obstinate
- **śaṭhaḥ**: deceitful
- **naiṣkṛti**: vile/ cheat
- **ālasaḥ**: lazy
- **viṣādī**: depressed
- **dīrghasūtrī**: procrastinator

These features are commonly seen in most human beings. We should recognise them as tamasic, and try to overcome these negative traits.

A tamasic person will embark on any job but will not pursue to the end. **viṣādī (depression) and dīrghasūtrī (procrastination) are two important traits of a tamasic person.** A little amount of stress is accepted as normal, but one must avoid falling into depression. The second trait of procrastination results from loss of focus.

We get easily distracted, more so in the digital world. Why is it so? It is said that indulging in the social media causes our body to release the dopamine hormone, which is also called hormone of pleasure. We find joy in doing these activities and we do more of it, even if it is distracting us from our kartavya karmas. We should learn to have control over our use of our mobile phones. Some ways can be – **uninstalling the distracting apps, or set a timelimit for phone usage, and stick to it no matter what!**

Besides distraction, another important factor that causes us to procrastinate is 'Inconvenience'. We tend to avoid doing something that is not comfortable or convenient for us, and hence delay doing it. Our Pujya Swamiji Govind dev Giriji Maharaj suggests the following way to overcome procrastination – Decide that you will not do something (like eat or take a break or touch the mobile, etc) till you finish the job in hand, and stick to the decision. Being firm with ourselves is a sattvic mindset, and can help us ride over the tamasic mindset.

Buddhi (intellect) and *driti* (Steadfastness) are also of three types, and will be discussed in the next session.

The session ended with a 2-minute Harinaama sankeertana, and a Questions & Answers session.

Questions & Answers session

Bagadi Madhusudhana Rao ji

Q: According to you, shloka 78 '*yatra yogeshwara krishno...*' is the essence of Gītā. But other scholars say that shloka 34 of chapter 9 '*manmana bhava madbhakto..*' is the essence of Gītā. Which one is right?

A: Different saints and gurus explain different shlokas as being the gist of the Gītā. For example, the following shlokas too are believed to hold the essence of Gītā

nirmānamohā jītasāṅgadoṣā adhyātmanityā vinivṛttakāmāḥ (15.5)

manmanā bhava madbhakto, madyājī māṅnamaskuru (9.34)

matkarmakṛmatparamo, madbhaktaḥ saṅgavarjitaḥ (11.55)

The common feature of all these shlokas is '*Sharanagati*', which is the true essence of Gītā.



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.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

Har Ghar Gītā, Har Kar Gītā !

Let's come together with the motto of Geeta Pariwar, and gift our Geeta Classes to all our Family, friends & acquaintances

<https://gift.learngeeta.com/>

Geeta Pariwar has taken a new initiative. Now you can watch YouTube videos and read PDFs of all the interpretation sessions conducted earlier. Please use the below link.

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

Learn Geeta, Spread Geeta, Live Geeta

|| OM ŚRĪKṚṢṆĀRPAṆAMASTU ||