

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 17: Śraddhā-Traya-Vibhāga-Yoga

1/3 (Ślōka 1-10), Saturday, 11 April 2026

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/2zH6NPcLZbg>

Bhagavān Tells Arjuna Why What We Believe In and Eat Matters

The 17th chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is **Shraddha Traya Vibhag Yoga - Explanation about the three types of Shraddha.**

This was the first of the three-part interpretation session of the 17th chapter of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, specially adapted for the young and enthusiastic Kid Sadhaks of Geeta Pariwar.

As per Geeta Pariwar's tradition, we started with prayers to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna followed by lighting of the auspicious lamp so that we are guided towards the path of Goodness, with the blessings of the Paramātmā, our Guru and the light of knowledge.

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**gururbrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ gururdevo maheśvaraḥ.
guruḥ sāksāt paraBrahmā tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ.**

Guru Brahmā, the Creator, Guru Vishnu, the Preserver, Guru Devo Maheshwarah (Śiva), the Destroyer, are the Guru Sakshat ParaBrahmā, the Supreme Being or Almighty. Guru is the embodiment of Para Brahmā and to HIM I bow.

**kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmāne.
praṇataḥ kleśanāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ.**

Obeisance to Krishna, Vaasudeva, Hari the Paramātmā, Govinda, we bow our heads to you for the destruction of all our grief.

This was followed by prayers to Gītā Mata

**oṃ pāṛthāya pratibodhitāṃ bhagavatā nārāyaṇena svayaṃ,
vyāsena grathitāṃ purāṇamuninā madhye mahābhārāte.**

***advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇiṃ bhagavatīmaṣṭādaśādhyāyinīm,
amba tvāmanusandadhāmi bhagavadgīte bhavadveṣiṇīm***

O Bhagavadgītā, you have been told to Arjuna, the son of Prtha by Bhagavān Narayana Himself and afterwards you were included within the Mahabharata by the ancient sage Vyasa. Your eighteen divine chapters are like a shower of the immortal nectar of wisdom of the Absolute. O mother, destroyer of man's rebirth into the darkness of this mortal world, upon you I meditate.

The vivechan session began with seeking the blessings of our Guru, Param Pujya Swamishree Acharya Govind Dev Giri Maharaj, and a hearty greeting to all the young Gītā Sadhaks present at the session.

Right at the start, a very beautiful and reassuring thought was shared, that just like Bhagavān chose Arjuna to receive the teachings of the Gītā, in the same way, all the children present in the session were also specially chosen. It is Bhagavān's grace that gives us the right understanding (**buddhi**) and knowledge, and we are able to join such beautiful vivechan sessions and learn the Gītā.

It was recalled that the name of **Chapter 16** what the children had learned earlier is **Daivāsura Sampad Vibhāga Yoga**.

In that chapter, Bhagavān teaches us about the two types of nature that are present in the people, namely, **Daivī (divine)** and **Āsurī (demonic)**. There are 26 divine qualities such as fearlessness, purity, charity, self-control, non-violence, absence of anger, and straightforwardness. Children were reminded that these are not just to be heard, but to be **brought into our lives**.

At the same time, Āsurī qualities like *dambha* (pretence), *darpa* (pride), and *abhimāna* (ego) must be identified within ourselves and gradually removed.

This naturally connected to the **Geeta Pariwar Dhyeya Vākya** which is **“Geeta Paḍho, paḍhāo, jīvan meṃ lāo”** that is **“Learn Geeta, Teach Geeta and Live Geeta”**

Children were encouraged:

- To **read the Gītā** regularly
- To **learn and memorise ślokas** and share them in class
- To **help others learn**—friends, classmates, relatives
- And most importantly, to **live the teachings of the Gītā in our daily life**

It was also beautifully connected to real life by recalling inspiring ideals like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Rani Lakshmbai and how they lived with courage, selflessness, and a sense of duty towards the nation. They did not think of their own comfort but stood firmly for what was right. In the same way, we too may not have to fight battles, but we must learn to perform our duties sincerely and use the knowledge given by Bhagavān to contribute positively to society.

We all know that a teacher serves society by sharing knowledge while a doctor serves by healing people. Similarly, **as students, our duty is to study sincerely and grow with good values**.

It was also shared that many young children have memorised all **700 ślokas** and progressed through levels like *Jigyāsu*, *Pāṭhak*, *Paṭhik*, and *Vṛtti*. This was presented as an inspiration for others to follow the path too.

A very important teaching from Chapter 16 was recalled which is when *Daivī* qualities are present, one progresses towards *mokṣa* or higher states and when *Āsurī* qualities dominate, it leads to downfall or suffering.

Bhagavān clearly warns against the **three gates to downfall Kāma (desire), Krodha (anger),**

and **Lobha (greed) which must be consciously given up.**

In the twenty-third Śloka of Chapter 16, Bhagavān has said,

***yaḥ śhāstra-vidhim utsrijya vartate kāma-kārataḥ
na sa siddhim avāpnoti na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim***

Through this Śloka, another key teaching Bhagavān imparts is if a person ignores **Śāstra** (scriptures) and acts only according to personal desires, then:

- They do not attain success (**siddhi**)
- They do not attain happiness (**sukha**)
- They do not attain the highest goal (**param gati**)

Therefore, Bhagavān in the twenty-fourth Śloka advises us

***tasmāch chhāstraṁ pramāṇaṁ te kāryākārya-vyavasthitau
jñātvā śhāstra-vidhānoktaṁ karma kartum ihārhasi***

that **Śāstra** should be our guide in deciding what to do and what not to do.

At this point, a very interesting story was shared.

Bhagavān Śrī Krishna once gave a task to Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira to go around the kingdom, observe people, then report who is good and who is bad.

Duryodhana returned and said, “Everyone is bad. I did not find a single good person except myself.”

Yudhiṣṭhira on the other hand returned and said, “Everyone is good. I did not find anyone bad except myself.”

The same world, the same people—but completely different conclusions. It is because each one of us see the world through our own mindset.

Duryodhana focused only on faults and Yudhiṣṭhira focused on goodness.

The children were then asked—who should we become like? The answer was clear that it is Yudhiṣṭhira and we should learn to:

- See good in others
- Be cautious of wrong, but not obsessed with it
- Build a positive and noble outlook

A very natural question may arise that, *if we are told to follow the Śāstra, how do we know what Śāstra says, especially since we have not studied all scriptures?*

The answer is very simple and practical:

- The **Gītā itself is a Śāstra**—we learn from it
- Our **parents’ guide us** based on right and wrong
- Our **teachers (gurus) show us the correct path**
- Our **elders (grandparents, seniors) share their experience**

All of this together becomes our guiding framework—our living **Śāstra**.

If we listen, understand, and live these teachings, we naturally move towards a better life—just like

Arjuna did under the guidance of Bhagavān Śrī Krishna.

Let us now delve into the Ślokas of Chapter 17 to understand **Śraddhā** in detail.

17.1

arjuna uvāca ye śāstravidhimutsrjya, yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ, teṣāṃ(n) niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa, sattvamāho rajastamaḥ. 17.1

Arjuna said: Those, endowed with faith, who worship gods and others, disregarding the injunctions of scriptures, where do they stand, Kṛṣṇa, - in Sattva, Rajas or Tamas.

The Śloka starts with “**Arjuna uvāca**”, which means Arjuna is asking a question to Bhagavān.

This question here was beautifully connected to what Bhagavān had already said earlier in Chapter 16, that is one who disregards *Śāstra* and acts merely according to personal desire attains neither success (*siddhi*), nor happiness (*sukha*), nor the highest goal (*param gati*).

Listening to this at the end of Chapter 16, Arjuna naturally had a doubt. He asks what happens to those people who do not follow *Śāstra*, but still perform worship with faith (*Śraddhā*)? What is their state and what kind of person are they? Is it **Sāttvika**, **Rājasika**, or **Tāmasika**?

When we say **Śraddhā**, it means **faith or belief**. Even if we do not fully understand something, we feel, “*If I do this, it will be good.*” That **inner trust** is called *Śraddhā*.

We may then wonder—what kind of Śraddhā do we have?

This question becomes even more relevant because, many of us may not know all the scriptures, but we still pray to Bhagavān and do pūjā with sincerity.

To help understand this better, different types of people were explained:

- Some people **know Śāstra and follow it with faith**
- Some people **do not know Śāstra, but still have faith and worship sincerely**
- Some people **neither know Śāstra nor have faith**
- And some people **do not even want to know or follow anything—they simply act as they like**

This made the discussion very relatable, because we can see these types around us and sometimes even within ourselves.

Thus, Arjuna’s question is not just his own—it reflects a doubt that can arise in all of us.

Bhagavān Śrī Krishna gives the answer to Arjuna’s question in the next śloka.

17.2

śrībhagavānuvāca trividhā bhavati śraddhā, dehināṃ(m) sā svabhāvajā,

sāttvikī rājasī caiva, tāmasī ceti tāṃ(m) śrṇu. 17.2

Śrī Bhagavān said :That untutored innate faith of men is of three kinds- Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika. Hear of it from Me.

In this śloka, Bhagavān says that **Śraddhā (faith)** itself is of **three types** namely **Sāttvik, Rājasik, and Tāmasik**.

Bhagavān next explains how to understand which type of *Śraddhā* a person has beautifully by connecting it with something very familiar to all of us which is our **Svabhāva** or nature.

We see that some people are very kind and helpful, while some get angry quickly and then there are some who like to share and others who do not. Here the nature (*svabhāva*) of the person determines our *Śraddhā*.

It is interesting to note that our nature does not come only from this life. It is formed from many past births or *janmas*. It takes into account:

- What kind of qualities we had earlier
- Whether we were more *Sāttvik, Rājasik, or Tāmasik*
- Whether we had divine (*Daivī*) or demonic (*Āsurī*) tendencies

All these get **accumulated as Saṃskāras**, and from that, our present **svabhāva is formed**.

So, **As is our svabhāva, so is our śraddhā; As is our mind, so is our faith**

Therefore:

- A person with Sāttvik nature will have **Sāttvik Śraddhā**
- A person with Rājasik nature will have **Rājasik Śraddhā**
- A person with Tāmasik nature will have **Tāmasik Śraddhā**

How do we actually identify whether someone is *Sāttvik, Rājasik, or Tāmasik* is explained in the next Śloka.

17.3

sattvānurūpā sarvasya, śraddhā bhavati bhārata, śraddhāmayaṃ(yam) puruṣo, yo yacchraddhaḥ(s) sa eva saḥ. 17.3

The faith of all men conforms to their mental disposition, Arjuna. Faith constitutes a man; whatever the nature of his faith, he is verily that.

Addressing Arjuna as Bharata, Bhagavān gives a very important insight which is **Every person's Śraddhā (faith) is according to their inner nature (Antaḥkaraṇa / Svabhāva)** that is, **just as a person's nature is, so is their faith**.

And it works both ways, that is if we know someone's nature, we can understand their *Śraddhā* and alternatively if we know someone's *Śraddhā*, we can understand their nature.

A question may arise that what happens if someone's nature is not very good or someone has abundance of Rājasik or Tāmasik tendencies?

One, of course, will need to change their nature or tendencies, but **change does not happen overnight**.

However, with **continuous effort (prayatna)**, one slowly starts to change themselves.

A very nice self-practice was shared:

- When anger comes, remind yourself: *"I should not get angry"*
- Calm yourself down: *"Calm down... calm down..."*

Maybe earlier we got angry 10 times; now we may reduce it to 9 times, then 8 times. Slowly, over time, the habit reduces and finally may go away.

In the same way, we need to deal with our **desires (kāmanā)**.

We may see a friend's toy, and feel, *"I want it"* or see something in an advertisement and feel, *"I should have this too"*

Every time we feel like wanting something, we should pause and think, *"Do we really need it?"*, *"Is it really needed?"*

If the answer is **"Yes, it is needed."**, it is fine. If not, we should learn to reduce that desire gradually.

We should therefore, always:

- Maintain our good qualities
- And slowly reduce any negative tendencies

Thus, **Śraddhā is not just belief, it is a reflection of who we are inside.**

And with this understanding, the children were gently guided to observe themselves and begin improving their nature step by step.

17.4

yajante sāttvikā devān, yakṣarakṣāṃsi rājasāḥ, pretānbhūtagaṇāṃścānye, yajante tāmasā janāḥ. 17.4

Men of Sāttvika disposition worship gods; those of Rājasika temperament worship demigods and demons; while others, who are men of Tāmasika disposition, worship the spirits of dead and ghosts.

In this śloka, Bhagavān gives a very clear and practical way to understand the three types of Śraddhā that is Sāttvik, Rājasik, Tāmasik and identify them in real life.

One way to do it is by observing **whom they worship and how they worship.**

- **Sāttvik people** worship **Devas (Devatās)** like, Brahmā Ji, Viṣṇu Ji, Śiva, Śrīrām Ji, Devī, Agni Dev, Varuṇa Dev and so forth. They are all higher divine forms, and people with Sāttvik nature naturally feel connected to them. Such people know that if **they have desires, it will be fulfilled thoughtfully and appropriately by Bhagavān.**
- **Rājasik people** worship **Yakṣas and Rākṣasas like** Kubera (associated with wealth) or Rahu and Ketu. They want quick results and immediate fulfilment of desires. This shows **people with Rājasik nature, to be Action-driven, Result-oriented and focused on desires (sakam bhāva)**
- **Tāmasik people** worship **Pretas and Bhūtas.** Such people perform such worship to harm others or based on wrong understanding. In the movies, we may have seen such things when

strange rituals involving skeletons are performed. These are not part of normal good practice and definitely not something one should do. People with **Tāmasik nature, are thus ignorant, negative and sometimes with harmful intentions**

Here, Bhagavān gives a very practical tool not to judge others, but to reflect on ourselves and the Sadhaks were guided to become aware of their own inner direction.

17.5

aśāstravihitam(ñ) ghoram(n), tapyante ye tapo janāḥ, dambhāhañkārasaṃyuktāḥ(kh), kāmarāgabalanvitāḥ. 17.5

Men who practice severe penance of an arbitrary type, not sanctioned by scriptures, and who are full of hypocrisy and egotism are obsessed with desire, attachment and pride of power;

In this śloka, Bhagavān explains something very important which is not all **Tapas** (austerity) is performed with the right intention.

First, it was established that in life, all of us are expected to do three things:

- **Yajña (right action as offering)** meaning whatever actions we do, we should do them as an offering to Bhagavān.
- **Dāna (sharing what we have) meaning we have) meaning** whatever Bhagavān has given us, we should share it with others. Examples would be if we have a lot of money, we can donate some or if we have cooked extra food, we can share it or even if we have many pencils or pens and someone needs one, we can give it.
- **Tapa (discipline and self-control) meaning** doing things with discipline and some effort like controlling ourselves or even doing things like **upavāsa (fasting) with faith**.

However, there are some people who perform *ghora tapa* (very harsh austerities) which are not according to *Śāstra (ashāstra-vihitam)*. Examples of such people are **Hiraṇyakaśyapu** or **Rāvaṇa**. They may have performed intense Tapa like standing on one leg for years together, but their intention was not right.

Rāvaṇa did the Tapa as he wanted the **Ātma-liṅga** so that he could become extremely powerful—even like Bhagavān himself. Hiraṇyakaśyapu asked for very complicated boons so that he would **never die**, not in day, not at night, not inside, not outside, not by weapon, not by hand. **Both wanted to increase their power and strength and make themselves supreme, even above Bhagavān. They were filled with Ahañkāra (ego), Dambha (show and pride), Kāma (desire) and Rāga (attachments).**

In contrast a person who truly has **faith in Bhagavān** does not think like this but are ready to follow **what Bhagavān has instructed and walk on the path of śāstra**.

Bhagavān introduces a caution here for those who perform extreme Tapa which may look very difficult but without being guided by proper knowledge, but with the wrong intentions, just to achieve something.

HE guides us to

- not follow ego-driven extreme actions but
- follow the **balanced, right path shown in śāstra**.

This keeps our journey steady, pure, and directed towards Bhagavān.

17.6

karśayantaḥ(ś) śarīrasthaṃ(m), bhūtagrāmamacetasah, mām(ñ) caivāntaḥ(ś) śarīrasthaṃ(n), tñviddhyāsuraniścayān. 17.6

And who emaciate the elements constituting their body as well as Me, the Supreme Spirit, dwelling in their heart- know those senseless people to have a demoniac disposition.

Here Bhagavān explains something very important to us. Till now we saw that some people perform very harsh Tapa, but their intention is not right. Now Bhagavān takes it one step deeper and tells us what actually happens when such Tapa is done.

HE says that such people, out of ignorance, start troubling their own body as such people feel that the more difficult something is, the better it must be. So, they stop eating for many days or give unnecessary pain to the body.

Bhagavān however says this is not correct as the body is not just a simple thing. It is made up of:

- the five elements
- mind, intellect and ego
- senses and their objects

So, when someone keeps punishing the body in this way, it becomes weak tired and loses its strength.

Bhagavān then says that HE HIMSELF **resides in everyone's body. When someone unnecessarily troubles their body, they are not only harming themselves, but they are also troubling Bhagavān who is present within.**

That is why Bhagavān clearly says that such actions come from ignorance and *Āsurī* nature and therefore, something we should never follow.

We also do things like *upavāsa*, which is prescribed in our *Śāstra*. For example, *Ekādaśī* fasting which is prescribed is for one day, sometimes at most two days; but not in a way where we keep starving and harming the body. So, the understanding becomes very clear that we should always follow what is given in the *Śāstra* and not do anything extreme just because it looks difficult or impressive.

Just like from Tapa we can understand a person, in the same way we can understand their nature from their food habits, and from how they perform yajña, dāna and tapa,

Bhagavān first explained what is not correct and then moves towards telling us what is right. In this way, HE gently guides us towards a balanced and correct way of living.

17.7

āhārastvapi sarvasya, trividho bhavati priyaḥ, yajñastapastathā dānaṃ(n), teṣāṃ(m) bhedamimaṃ(m) śrṇu. 17.7

Food also, which is agreeable to different men according to their innate disposition is of three kinds. and likewise sacrifice, penance and charity too are of three kinds each; hear their distinction as follows.

In this Śloka, Bhagavān introduces the next important point, **Āhāra**, that is, food.

Till now we understood that people can be of three types based on their nature which are *Sāttvik*, *Rājasik* and *Tāmasik*. Now Bhagavān says that according to their nature, even their preferences in food start becoming different.

Here we must note that Bhagavān is not saying that food itself is *Sāttvik*, *Rājasik* or *Tāmasik*. Rather, it is the person nature, which is *Sāttvik*, *Rājasik* or *Tāmasik*, based on their food preferences and eating habits.

This difference is not only in food. It is even in:

- how they perform yajña
- how they give dāna
- how they practice tapa

All of these differ based on a person's nature.

By observing a person's food habits, and how they perform *Yajña*, *Dāna* and *Tapa*, we can understand what kind of nature they have.

Bhagavān then starts explaining the differences.

Till now we were understanding the different nature a person can have in a general way. Now Bhagavān starts to explain it in a more detailed and practical way through everyday things like food, actions, charity and discipline.

17.8

āyuh(s) sattvabalārogya, sukhapritivivardhanāḥ, rasyāḥ(s) snigdhaḥ(s) sthirā hr̥dyā, āhārāḥ(s) sāttvikapriyāḥ. 17.8

Foods which promote longevity, intelligence, vigor, health, happiness and cheerfulness, and which are juicy, succulent, substantial and naturally agreeable, are liked by men of *Sāttvika* nature.

Bhagavān Śrī Krishna now starts talking about **āhāra — what kind of food we like**, and how that itself tells us about our nature.

We had just understood that people are of three types — *Sāttvik*, *Rājasik* and *Tāmasik*.

It is said **“jaisa ann, vaisa mann”** that is **as is the food, so becomes the mind**. Thus, if we want a good, clear, positive intellect, then naturally we will choose good food.

Bhagavān begins with the food choices of a *Sāttvik* person and explains what kind of food they naturally prefer.

He says that a *Sāttvik* person chooses food which increases:

- **āyu** (long life)
- **sattva** (clarity of mind, good intellect)
- **bala** (strength)
- **ārogya** (health)
- **sukha** (happiness)
- **prīti** (inner satisfaction and love)

A *Sāttvik* person wants to live a long life, not for enjoyment, but because they want to do good work, serve society, contribute to the country, and do something meaningful. Keeping this goal in mind, even their food choices become thoughtful. They choose food that gives them strength, because without strength they cannot do their duties. They also think about health because if the body is healthy, then automatically there is happiness. And when there is happiness, love and positivity towards others also increase.

So āyu, strength, health, happiness and *prīti* are all connected, and *Sāttvik* people choose food that supports all of this.

Bhagavān then describes what kind of food is considered A *Sāttvik*: They are:

- **Rasyā** — juicy, like fruits; that is why those who like fruits very much often have a *Sāttvik* tendency
- **Snigdḥā** — having the right amount of ghee or oil
- **Sthirā** — which stays in the stomach for a longer time and gives sustained energy; not something that digests immediately and makes us hungry again
- **Hṛdyā** — which is pleasing to the heart, even in appearance as even the way we serve food matters. When a plate is arranged properly — with salt, pickle and salad on one side, sabzi placed neatly, rice in the center with dal on top, and maybe kheer in a bowl; just the look of it gives such joy! Even salads cut in nice shapes and arranged well make the food more appealing. That is also part of *Sāttvik āhāra*. As it is pleasing, balanced and nourishing.

So overall, *Sāttvik* people prefer food that supports their well-being in every way viz. their life, their mind, their strength, their health and their happiness. In this way, Bhagavān shows how even something as simple as food reflects the inner nature of a person.

17.9

kaṭvamlalavaṇātyuṣṇa, tīkṣṇarūkṣavidāhinaḥ, āhārā rājasasyeṣṭā, duḥkhaśokāmayapradāḥ. 17.9

Foods which are bitter, sour, salty, overhot, pungent, dry and burning, and which cause suffering, grief and sickness, are dear to the *Rājasika* type of men.

Bhagavān continues the same flow and explains the food preferred by a person of *Rājasik* nature.

Here, Bhagavān explains that the food preferred by a person of *Rājasik* nature is not completely different from *Sāttvik* food. We know all food has different types of taste like salty, sour, spicy and so forth. The difference however is in the quantities and can become a problem when used in **excess**. Thus, when the same tastes go into **overuse**, then they become *Rājasik*.

For example:

- very **bitter (kaṭu)** food
- very **sour or salty (amla, lavaṇa)** — not just a little, but “more and more”
- very **spicy (tīkṣṇa)** — so much that if spice is less, it feels like there is no taste
- very **hot (uṣṇa)** — not just warm, but piping hot all the time
- very **dry (rūkṣa)** — without any juiciness

Such strong and intense preference are signs of *Rājasik* nature.

Sometimes we also feel like eating something very *chatpata* which is a little extra spicy, a little extra tangy, a little extra sweet. Things like pani puri, chaat, pizza, burger naturally attract us. Thus, we can see that even within us, there is some *Rājasik* tendencies. We should, however, try to slowly move from *Rājasik* towards *Sāttvik*. It may not be possible overnight, because this is part of our nature and habits; but with practice, we can gradually change our food preferences.

It is not that we should stop everything completely but should have food that are spicy or sour or salty or bitter in moderation and in the right proportion.

Bhagavān then explains that when we keep preferring *Rājasik* food, it leads to:

- **duḥkha** (pain)
- **śoka** (sorrow, worry)
- **āmaya** (disease)

How does that happen?

If we eat food that is too spicy, then there can be burning, irritation, even ulcers. If we take too much salt or sugar, it can lead to problems like BP or diabetes. When disease comes, naturally we feel unhappy which brings sorrow, and from sorrow comes worry.

Thus, *Rājasik* food ultimately leads to discomfort, disease, and mental disturbance.

This is why Bhagavān says that such food is naturally preferred by those who have a *Rājasik* nature and *Rājasik* faith.

So, what we like to eat is not random, it reflects our inner nature, and slowly we have to refine it in the right direction.

17.10

yātayāmaṃ(ñ) gatarasaṃ(m), pūti paryuṣitaṃ(ñ) ca yat, ucchiṣṭamaṃpi cāmedhyaṃ(m), bhojanaṃ(n) tāmasapriyam. 17.10

Food which is ill-cooked or not fully ripe, insipid, putrid, stale and polluted, and which is impure too, is dear to men of a *Tāmasika* disposition.

In this Śloka, Bhagavān completes this understanding by explaining the third category, that is, the food preferred by those with a *Tāmasik* nature.

Bhagavān says that *Tāmasik* people prefer food, which is not properly cooked, not fresh, and putrid.

Sometimes food which is supposed to be fully cooked is eaten half-cooked. This is different from things like fruits or salads which are naturally eaten raw. But food which should be properly cooked, if eaten half-cooked just out of habit or preference is not correct.

The next type is **gata-rasam**, that is food which has lost its freshness. For example, food that was cooked earlier but has now become dry or stale. Ideally, food should be eaten within three to four hours of being prepared. Earlier, there were no refrigerators, so keeping food uneaten for too long would spoil it easily. Even today, though we store food in the fridge, it is better to avoid eating stale food as much as possible and prefer fresh food.

Then comes **pūti and pariṣita** that is food that has developed a bad smell or has become spoiled.

Sometimes in hot weather, if food is left outside, it starts smelling and is spoiled. Such food should not be eaten and discarded.

Then comes **ucchiṣṭa**, that is, leftover or contaminated food. Food already served in our plate and touched should not be kept back. We should also not share half-eaten food with others.

It is common today to see that during birthday cake cutting, one person takes a bite and then feeds the same piece to others. This should be avoided and instead, a fresh piece should be given. Similarly, in school, we should not drink from someone else's water bottle or share food in a way that becomes "jhootha".

Everyone has different bacteria in their mouth, and sharing food and water in this manner can spread infections and diseases.

Last comes **amedhya**, that is, impure food. If food is not prepared with cleanliness and if proper hygiene is not maintained while cooking, then that food is considered impure. Example of such food would street food where we do not always know how it has been prepared.

So overall, *Tāmasik* food includes:

- half-cooked food which otherwise should have been properly and fully cooked
- stale or old food
- food with bad smell or spoiled
- leftover or "jhootha" food
- impure, unhygienic food

Bhagavān says that such food is preferred by those with a *Tāmasik* nature.

Thus, by observing what kind of food a person prefers, we can understand their nature — whether *Sāttvik*, *Rājasik* or *Tāmasik*. We also understand what we should move towards and what we should avoid.

The enlightening vivechan session came to a close with chanting of the Hari Nama Sankirtana and was offered at the lotus feet of Bhagavān Śrī Krishna.

The winner of last week's Quiz was also declared. The winner was **Ruhi Rani Ji**. She completed the Quiz with the highest number of correct answers in the least time. **Congratulations!!**

Everyone was encouraged to participate actively in the next Quiz by answering questions promptly in the WhatsApp group.

A Questions and Answers session followed, and it concluded with prayer to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna and rendition of Hanuman Chalisa.

Questions and Answers

Spruha Joshi Ji

Q: You explained that *Sāttvik* people worship *Devatās*, *Rājasik* people worship *Rākṣasas*, and *Tāmasik* people worship ghosts and spirits. I thought *Tāmasik* people worship *Rākṣasas*; then why are *Rākṣasas* linked with *Rājasik*?

A: Here, "*Rākṣasas*" does not mean ordinary demons in a general sense. It specifically refers to beings like Rāhu and Ketu. During the *Samudra Manthan*, they sat among the *Devatās* and received drops of *amṛta*, so they became powerful. They are also counted among planetary influences. People worship them mainly for quick results. This reflects a desire for immediate gain, which is a *Rājasik* tendency.

Pratyusha Panigrahi Ji

Q: Many people are non-vegetarian. What does that say about their nature and faith?

A: Food is not directly classified into *Sāttvik*, *Rājasik*, or *Tāmasik* based simply being vegetarian or non-vegetarian. It often depends on region and tradition. For example, in some places where vegetables are not easily available, people consume fish as part of their natural diet. In Bengal, fish is even considered “*Ganga phal*” that is fruit from the Ganga and sometimes offered to Bhagavān.

However, what matters more is if any food causes disturbance in one’s spiritual path, like heaviness, lack of concentration, discomfort, then it should be avoided. Also, stale or impure food, whether veg or non-veg, falls under *Tāmasik*.

Q: I did not understand the meaning of the 5th śloka. Can you please explain it once more.

A: The 5th śloka talks about people who perform extreme austerities not mentioned in *Śāstra*. For example, standing on one leg for long periods, staying in water for days, or doing very extreme Tapa, just to gain powers or boons. Such actions are driven by ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and show (*dambha*). Bhagavān says this is unnecessary. Simply following what is prescribed in the *Śāstra*. with sincerity is enough to reach HIM. There is no need for such extreme practices.

Raghav Joshi Ji

Q: If we should not drink from someone else’s bottle because it becomes “*jhootha*,” what if the bottle is the same or shared?

A: If someone drinks by touching the bottle to their mouth, it becomes “*jhootha*” and sharing it should be avoided. We should carry our own water bottle and avoid sharing in a way that involves contact.

If needed, water can be poured without touching, but ideally, one should use their own bottle. This is a common mistake in school, but now that we know, we should be careful.

Saanvi Pathak Ji

Q: What does the word “*rukṣa*” mean in the 9th śloka?

A: “*Rukṣa*” means dry food that is food that has lost its natural essence. For example, food that has dried up over time. It is no longer fresh and has lost its nourishing qualities.

That is why it is advised to eat food **within 3-4 hours** of preparation, while it still has its natural “*Sattva*.”

Then it was gently clarified that while *Śāstra* advises fresh food, in today’s times with refrigeration, some adjustments happen. Still, as much as possible, we should try to follow what is prescribed without being stubborn about it at home. When we grow up and cook ourselves, we can follow it more strictly.



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:

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Thank you-For reading the summary

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

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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