



## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

3/6 (Ślōka 24-35), Saturday, 31 January 2026

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/NMD2mCK1Gcw>

**True strength comes not from mere endurance or passivity  
but from clarity, courage, and alignment with one's higher  
purpose.**

The session commenced with the auspicious ritual of lighting the lamp and offering heartfelt prayers to the Divine.

**Vāsudevasutaṁ Devaṁ, Kaṁsacāṇūramardanam  
Devakīparamānandaṁ, Kṛṣṇaṁ Vande Jagadgurum**

(Salutations to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the divine son of Vasudeva, the slayer of Kaṁsa and Cāṇūra, the source of supreme joy for Devakī, and the universal Guru.)

We are now discussing the eighteenth adhyāya of Śrīmad Bhāgavad Gītā — Mokṣa Saṁnyāsa Yoga. It is the concluding adhyāya comprising 78 ślōkas. This is the final adhyāya of Śrīmad Bhāgavad Gītā and constitutes a summary of all the seventeen adhyāyas. The previous session held discussions up to the twenty-third ślōka,

**niyataṁ saṅga-rahitam arāga-dveṣhataḥ kṛitam  
aphala-prepsunā karma yat tat Sāttvicam uchyate||18.23||**

*Action that is in accordance with the scriptures, free from attachment and aversion, and done without desire for rewards, is in the mode of goodness.*

Just as we discussed in the last session, it is only appropriate that we start the session with an inspiring story to bring us in the right spiritual frame of mind. Faith is a fundamental aspect of our spiritual journey, shaping our responses to life's uncertainties and challenges. The following story illustrates the depth and power of true faith, both in oneself and in the divine.

**How Much Faith Do We Have in Ourselves and in Bhagavan? - An Illustration**

A businessman, travelling for official purposes, boarded his flight at the last moment and settled into his seat with a smile, greeting his co-passengers. Seated beside him were a middle-aged woman by the window and a young girl, about eight years old, on the aisle. After storing his luggage, he initiated a friendly conversation with the little girl, who was engrossed in colouring her book. Through their exchange, he learned she was eight years old, enjoyed cartoons and drawing, and had a particular fondness for horses and cats.

Curiously, the businessman noticed the young girl was travelling alone, but he refrained from commenting on it. About an hour into the flight, the aircraft encountered extreme turbulence. The pilot's voice echoed over the Public Address system, instructing everyone to fasten their seat belts and remain calm due to rough weather conditions. The plane shook violently for half an hour, with passengers visibly distraught—some crying, others silently praying. The businessman himself clung nervously to his seat, uttering anxious exclamations with each jolt.

Amidst the chaos, the young girl remained remarkably composed. She had set aside her colouring book and crayons and was resting her hands on her legs, displaying no signs of fear or worry. When the turbulence subsided and calm was restored, the pilot apologized for the bumpy ride and announced the forthcoming landing.

Perplexed by the girl's serenity, the businessman asked her how she managed to stay so calm while all the adults were afraid. The little girl looked into his eyes and replied with a gentle smile, "No, I was not scared because my father is the pilot. He is in control of this plane. So why should I worry? He has promised me that he is taking me home." Her unwavering confidence and trust left the man deeply moved and contemplative.

### **The Essence of Faith**

The story poses a profound question: Do we possess such faith in ourselves and in Bhagavan, who created us? As the old adage goes, "Faith can move mountains." In the spiritual system, meditation serves as a means of connecting with the inner self. With time and practice, meditation nurtures genuine faith in oneself and in the inner voice, empowering us to overcome insurmountable obstacles.

The central message of this story is that true faith is an unshakable virtue. It is the dauntless courage that propels us towards success and smoothens the path ahead. Through faith, we find the strength to persevere and triumph over life's challenges.

### **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.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān says that an Action that is prompted by selfish desire, enacted with pride, and full of stress, is in the nature of passion (Rājasic). We are discussing in this adhyāya about action, governed by the three gunas (**Sāttva**, **Rājas**, and **Tamas**). This śloka describes Rājasic Karma, under the influence of Rājoguṇa. The kind of action (Karma) driven by ego, desire and restless ambition, the hallmarks of Rājasic guna. The keywords in this śloka are selfish desires (**kāmepsunā**), pride or ego (**ahaṅkāra**), efforts, or strain (**bahula-āyāsaṃ**). Rājasic Karma is not wrong in itself and often may produce visible results, success and also achievements. However, the inner motive behind such actions is the root of the problem. When a person acts merely to fulfil his personal desires such as wealth, power, fame, recognition or superiority, the action becomes Rājasic. The focus is not on duty or on righteousness but on "What will I gain from this karma?" The other defining feature is ego. The

doer strongly identifies with action and also its outcome. He often feels “I am the doer (**Kartṛtva abhimāna**), and the success belongs to me. The success must be acknowledged by people.” Such ego driven action binds the individual because success inflates the pride while failure causes frustration, anger, and depression.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān also points out that Rājasic action involves great strain and restlessness. The mind is constantly anxious about results in the wake of pressure, competition, and comparison and there is fear of loss. Even when success is achieved, peace does not follow because new desires immediately arise. Therefore, Rājasic action leads to exhaustion rather than fulfilment. It is important to note that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not condemning arduous work. The issue is not the effort but the attachment. When effort is fuelled by craving and by ego, it drains inner energy whereas the effort guided by duty and surrender uplifts the soul. In daily life, Rājasic action is quite common. It is seen when people work only for promotion or for status, perform charity for publicity, follow religion for personal gains, and compete obsessively unable to take rest. One is disturbed by other's success or by one's own failures. Such an action keeps the mind agitated and strengthens the bondage to karma.

Through this śloka, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān gently warns that while the Rājasic actions may bring temporary rewards, it cannot bring lasting peace or liberation. It keeps the soul entangled in the cycle of desire, action, and result. The spiritual lesson is to transform Rājasic actions into Sāttvic actions by reducing ego and by surrendering results to the Bhagavān and performing one's duty as an offering rather than a transaction. This śloka teaches us that the quality of our action is determined not by what we do, but by why and how we do it. True spiritual growth begins when action is freed from selfish desire and from ego (**Kartṛtva abhimāna**).

In summary, Rājoguṇa is characterized by its propensity to generate strong desires for material advancement and sensory gratification. Actions undertaken in the mode of passion are driven by considerable ambition and marked by significant effort. This often leads to substantial labour and considerable physical as well as mental exhaustion.

The nature of Rājoguṇa is that it creates intense desires for materialistic enhancement and sensual enjoyment. So, action in the mode of passion is motivated by huge ambition and characterized by intense effort. It entails heavy toil and great physical and mental fatigue. An example of Rājasic action is the corporate world. Management executives regularly complain of stress. This is because their actions are usually motivated by pride and an inordinate ambition for power, prestige, and wealth. The efforts of political leaders, over-anxious parents, and business executives are also often typical examples of actions in the mode of passion.

## 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.

That action is declared to be in the mode of ignorance (Tamasic), which is begun out of delusion, without thought to one's own ability, and disregarding consequences, loss, and injury to others. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has classified actions (karma) into three categories—Satvik, Rājasic and Tamasic—based on the dominant quality (guṇa) present in the mind. In this particular śloka, Śrī Bhagavān is defining Tamasic action, which is considered the lowest and most destructive form of karma.

A Tamasic action is one that is initiated from delusion (**Moha**). Here, delusion signifies ignorance—acting without clarity, awareness, or understanding. Such an action is not guided by wisdom, nor by duty, nor even personal gain. Instead, it is driven by confusion, inertia, blind emotions, or intoxication of the mind.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa highlights four major neglects that characterize Tamasic karma:

- **Anubandham** – Meaning ‘consequences.’ The person does not consider the long-term outcomes of their actions—be it social, moral, psychological, or spiritual. Their actions are impulsive and short-sighted.
- **Kṣhayam** – Meaning ‘loss’ or ‘damage.’ The individual is unconcerned about potential losses, including reputation, health, relationships, resources, or inner peace. They act as if consequences do not apply to them.
- **Hinsām** – Meaning ‘injury’ or ‘harm.’ There is no consideration for harm caused to others or oneself. The action may involve cruelty, violence, deceit, or emotional injury, but the doer remains indifferent or unaware of the results.
- **Pauruṣham** – Meaning ‘one’s capacity.’ The individual does not assess whether they have the capability to perform the action. Acting beyond one’s physical, mental, or moral capacity often leads to failure and destruction, but the Tamasic doer is unconcerned. Such actions stem from laziness, anger, intoxication, fanaticism, despair, or blind attachment.

A person performing Tamasic action may not care for the consequences of their actions, reflecting a deep disconnection from responsibility. Importantly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not condemn action itself, but rather the absence of awareness behind the action. Even a small task can become Tamasic if performed recklessly, while a challenging task can be noble if performed with clarity and responsibility.

In practical life, Tamasic action can appear as acting in rage without thinking, engaging in violence or addiction, making decisions under intoxication, neglecting duties out of apathy, or hurting others without remorse. From a spiritual standpoint, Tamasic action binds the soul firmly because it reinforces ignorance and suffering, neither purifying the mind nor leading to growth. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s deeper message is a call for awareness before action. One must ask oneself before any action: “Do I understand this action? Do I know its consequences? Will it cause harm? Am I capable of doing it rightly?” When these questions are ignored, actions descend into Tamas and become a cause of bondage rather than liberation. The aim may have been liberation, but such actions only lead to further bondage. Those in Tamoguṇa are covered by the cloak of ignorance; they are oblivious to what is right and wrong, interested only in themselves and their self-interest. They disregard money, resources, or hardships caused to others. As a result, their actions bring harm to both themselves and others. Śrī Kṛṣṇa uses the word ‘**Kṣhayam**’—meaning loss or decay—to illustrate how Tamasic actions lead to deterioration of health and vitality, and are wasteful of effort, time, and resources. Typical examples include gambling, stealing, corruption, drinking, and other sinful activities (**Pāpa Karma**).

### **The Story of Three Gardeners: An Illustration**

Once, a king decided to build a beautiful garden in his palace courtyard. He called three gardeners—Suresh, Ramesh, and Mahesh—and assigned each a plot of land, seeds, and tools. He instructed them to develop their gardens, with an inspection scheduled in a month.

#### **Mahesh: The Tamasic Gardener**

Mahesh was lazy and careless. He doubted the outcome of his hard work and did not believe the King’s words. Carelessly dispersing seeds without ploughing or watering, he spent most of his time sleeping under a tree. When the King returned after a month, Mahesh’s plot was full of weeds and dry soil. He blamed the lack of rain, the soil, and the seeds. Mahesh’s actions exemplify Tamoguṇa—actions performed without understanding, care, or responsibility. Such actions are lazy,

careless, and destructive, carried out in delusion without concern for duty or consequences.

### **Ramesh: The Rājasic Gardener**

Ramesh worked extremely hard and was always active in his plot. He was also keenly aware of others' plots. Driven by the aspiration to have the best garden and win the King's reward, he compared, competed, and grew restless. His desire for recognition and rewards kept him uneasy. Upon inspection, Ramesh stood proudly, expecting praise. The King, observing the pride in his heart, smiled but said nothing. Ramesh's actions are characteristic of Rājoguṇa—actions performed with desire and attachment to results. This approach brings tension and temporary satisfaction but never lasting inner peace.

### **Suresh: The Sāttvic Gardener**

Suresh believed the garden belonged to the King and that his role was to serve and nurture it. He worked calmly and lovingly, watering, cleaning, and caring for the plants without competing or worrying about rewards. When tired, he rested under the trees, grateful for meaningful work. After a month, Suresh's garden bloomed with fresh flowers and fruits, filling the courtyard with fragrance. The King praised him, and Suresh humbly responded, "Maharaj, it is your grace. I only did my duty." The King appreciated Suresh's attitude, regarding his work as true service. Suresh's actions were without ego or attachment, performed with a pure heart for the welfare of others. These are the hallmarks of Sāttvic Karma—actions guided by righteousness, performed as an offering, and bringing peace and fulfilment.

### **Learnings**

- 1. Tamasic Karma:** Actions performed in ignorance, laziness, and carelessness. Such actions harm both oneself and others.
- 2. Rājasic Karma:** Actions performed with desire, greed, and ego. These bind the doer with stress and restlessness.
- 3. Sāttvic Karma:** Actions performed selflessly, without desire for results, purifying the heart and leading to peace and liberation.

Life is like a garden: acting without thought (Tamas) allows the weeds of ignorance to grow; acting with selfishness and ambition (Rājas) may bring temporary blooms, but they fade quickly; acting with love and surrender (Sāttva) allows the inner garden to blossom eternally.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not ask us to stop performing actions (Karma), but rather to transform the quality of our actions. Progress on the spiritual path means rising from Tamas to Rājas, from Rājas to Sāttva, and finally transcending all three through self-knowledge. The ultimate aspiration is to become Guṇātīta—one who is beyond all qualities. Action performed with awareness becomes worship, while action without awareness results in bondage.

## **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.

The performer is said to be in the mode of goodness (Sāttvika), when he or she is free from egotism and attachment (**anaham-vādī**), endowed with enthusiasm and determination (**dhṛity-utsāha-samanvitaḥ**), and equipoised in success and failure (**siddhy-asiddhyoh**). Śrī Kṛṣṇa had earlier

mentioned the three ingredients of action—knowledge, the action itself, and the doer. Having described the categories of two of them—knowledge and actions—he now moves on to the three kinds of performers of actions. In this śloka, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān describes the ‘Sāttvic Karta,’ the doer who performs action in the spirit of wisdom and selflessness. Śrī Bhagavān describes multiple attributes of the Sāttvic Karta,

1. **‘Mukta-saṅgaḥ’** - meaning freedom from attachment. A Sāttvic doer performs his duty without clinging to the action or its results. He does not identify his ego with the work he performs. It does not mean he is careless or indifferent; it only indicates that the doer works sincerely but without possessiveness. Such a detachment brings inner peace and protects the mind from anxiety, from disappointment and from pride.
2. **‘Anaham-vādī’** - Meaning free from ego and self-praise. A Sāttvic person does not boast, does not seek applause or crave for recognition. He understands that his abilities are the gifts of the divine and that success is the result of many factors and it is beyond individual control. This humility keeps the ego in check and allows wisdom to grow.

**adhīṣṭhānam tathā kartā karaṇam cha pṛithag-vidham  
vividhāśh cha pṛithak cheṣṭā daivam chaivātra pañchamam ||18.14||**

*The body, the doer (soul), the various senses, the many kinds of efforts, and Divine Providence—these are the five factors of action.*

3. **‘dhṛity-utsāha-samanvitaḥ’** - Meaning endowed with strong resolve and enthusiasm. A Sāttvic doer is energetic, committed, and persistent. He does not abandon his duty due to fear, laziness, or temporary obstacles. His enthusiasm is calm and steady, not restless, or impulsive and his determination arises from inner conviction and not from desire for rewards.
4. **‘siddhy-asiddhyor nirvikārah’** - Meaning unaffected in success and failure. The Sāttvic doer remains emotionally balanced, whether he succeeds or fails in his endeavour. It is the frame of mind that he is situated within before he started the karma. Success does not inflate his ego and failure does not depress him. He accepts both as outcomes governed by divine law and continues his work with same sincerity. This mental balance is a sign of inner maturity and spiritual strength.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa then concludes by affirming that such a person is said to be in the mode of goodness (**kartā Sāttvica uchyate**). This verse explains that the true purity of actions depends on the mindset of the person performing them, not the task itself. Even simple tasks can become sacred if carried out with detachment, humility, perseverance, and balance. There are those who sit all day long with **‘Japa mālā’** and justify their idle behaviour as Sāttvic disposition. But they are in reality camouflaging the inertia, their unwillingness to act or perform their karma.

A Sāttvic person is zealous, full of enthusiasm and moreover this enthusiasm is coupled with patience, with courage and with determination. A person endowed with such a wonderful combination is said to be dear to Bhagavān and HE would be anxious to meet such a person.

### **What is Easier? An Illustration**

This thought-provoking story explores the question: What is easier - to seek out God (Bhagavān) ourselves, or to conduct ourselves in a way that draws Him to us? The narrative unfolds with a king who, while walking on the terrace of his palace one evening, notices a saint moving through the bustling marketplace below. The saint is striking in his demeanour, walking with a carefree abandon, seemingly oblivious to the crowd and deeply immersed in his own contemplations. His lack of concern for the people around him and the joy he radiates captivate the king, who instantly feels an intense desire to meet this remarkable man.

Driven by this urge, the king instructs his attendants to bring the saint to him without delay. Lacking a

better idea, the attendants lower a rope from the palace terrace, ensnare the saint, and haul him up to the king's presence. In a matter of moments, the saint stands before the king, who immediately recognizes the impropriety of the act and apologizes for his staff's behaviour. The saint, composed and forgiving, accepts the apology and enquired about the urgency behind such haste. The king explains his restlessness and his overwhelming desire to seek answers, which compelled him to ensure the saint did not slip away. He confesses that his longing to find God has been troubling him, and observing the saint has given him hope. He pleads with the saint to reveal the path to God.

The saint, listening patiently, suggests that the king already knows the answer deep within but struggles to recognize it. He encourages the king to broaden his perspective and to reflect more deeply. The king, still anxious, insists that if he truly knew the answer, he would not be so troubled, nor would he have subjected the saint to such treatment. He implores the saint for guidance. After a brief silence, the saint responds, pointing out that had he himself wanted to meet the king, the journey would have been difficult and filled with obstacles. However, since the king's desire was so strong, he was brought before the king almost instantly. The saint explains that, in the same way, if Bhagavān is eager to meet someone, then the meeting happens quickly and effortlessly.

The king, pondering this, asks how and why Bhagavān would become eager to meet someone. The saint responds with a question of his own, asking what prompted the king's desire to meet him. The king replies that he was moved by witnessing the saint's total immersion in his own inner world, unaffected by his surroundings. This impression inspired his urgent wish to meet the saint. The saint then reveals the heart of the lesson: just as the king was drawn to the saint's unwavering focus and detachment from the world, so too does one draw Bhagavān by making union with Him the sole objective. When a person becomes so wholly devoted that nothing else matters, and cannot imagine life without the Lord, then Bhagavān Himself becomes anxious to meet that devotee. The saint thus imparts a profound spiritual truth in the simplest terms.

### Conclusion

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that for the one who is free from attachment (**mukta-saṅgaḥ**) and full of fortitude and enthusiasm (**dhṛity-utsāha-samanvitaḥ**) actions happen effortlessly. One should however remember that it is not necessary that every time all actions of such a person will be successful, But, when faced with failure, such a person is not dejected. Neither success can make him jump with joy, nor does failure make him distressed or despondent (**siddhi-asiddhyoḥ**). Such a doer who stays equanimous in success and failure is known as Sāttvic Kārta.

In practical life, this śloka encourages us to work honestly, give our best effort, remain humble, and accept results gracefully. Such an approach leads not only to efficiency in our action but also to inner freedom and spiritual growth. The doer becomes an instrument of harmony both within himself and in the world around him. Śrīmad Bhāgavad Gītā does not ask us to do something different. The karma that we do in our day-to-day life does not change, however what changes is the attitude towards performing the karma. For the karma or actions that one performed and those which were categorized as Rājasic or Tamasic, Śrīmad Bhāgavad Gītā paves a way for us to show that the same karma can be done in a specific manner which will lead towards liberation.

### 18.27

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

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

The doer is considered in the mode of passion (Rājasic Kārta) when there is craving for the fruits of the work and the doer is covetous, violent-natured, impure, and moved by joy and sorrow. Such a person does not work simply because the work is right or necessary, Instead, they constantly think, “what will I gain from this?” Success becomes a source of pride and a source of excitement for them whereas failure leads them to frustration, anger, or despair. Such an attachment makes the mind restless and unstable.

Śrī Bhagavān says - “The Rājasic Kārta is greedy.” Greed here does not only mean desire for money, but also craving for power, recognition, praise, status or for control. Even after achieving something, the Rājasic Kārta feels unsatisfied and immediately wants more. This endless hunger prevents inner peace. The śloka also mentions violence ‘**hinsā-ātmakaḥ**,’ This violence may be physical, may be verbal, or may be mental. A Rājasic Kārta may harm others knowingly or unknowingly to achieve his personal goals. Even harsh speech, manipulation, or emotional exploitation falls under the category of violence (**hinsā-ātmakaḥ**). Śrī Kṛṣṇa further describes such a person as impure (**aśhuchiḥ**). Impurity here refers to inner impurity and not the external body. Unclean motives, Selfish intentions, Jealousy, and ego-driven actions are all termed as impurities. Outward rituals or appearances cannot purify the actions that arise from selfish desires (inner impurities).

Another key trait is mentioned here is ‘**harṣha-śhokānvitaḥ**’ - overwhelmed by joy and sorrow. A Rājasic Kārta swings between emotional extremes of joy (**harṣha**) and sorrow (**śhoka**). Praise brings excitement and criticism brings depression and therefore life becomes a role of coaster for such a doer. This śloka teaches that Rājasic action binds a person to sufferings, even if action appears successful. Although such doers may be energetic, ambitious, and hardworking, their inner life remains disturbed at all times. Passion pushes them forward, but attachment pulls them down.

### **A union of two friends - An Anecdote**

Two women, best friends, meet up after a long time. Just as any friends would do, they start their chat with enquiries on the well-being of their families. One of the women asked the other about her brother. This query brought immediate tears and she started crying. After gathering herself, she explained that her brother was no more and he had passed away due to illness. The family missed him and it left a void in their lives. Having said this, the woman went into another round of crying and was very distraught. The other friend managed to console her and, in an effort to divert her attention, asked about her husband. This question worked like magic and the woman recovered from her sorrow and replied with a smile that her husband was doing very well and was promoted recently and got a fat pay hike too. The sorrow had vanished and she started talking about her husband’s success and their upscale way of life. A moment ago, the woman was disconsolate and now she was beaming with joy and pride. This melodramatic change and vacillating state of mind is typical of a Rājasic personality.

### **Uncle’s Visit - An Anecdote**

A young man's uncle called up from abroad to say that he was coming down to pay him a visit. Over the phone the uncle informed him that he was getting a few goodies for him including a laptop, a Robo Vacuum cleaner, some designer clothes, and an expensive watch. The young man’s joy grew no bounds and he could barely contain the excitement. A week later, the uncle landed home and distributed the goodies that he had bought for the family. The young man was excited and welcomed his uncle and served him with great gusto and enthusiasm. A few days later, his uncle declared that he would return to US only after a year and wanted to spend one full year in India with his nephew. The young man was stunned and felt the world collapse around him. His uncle is going to stay with him for one year. He was speechless, usually such visitors from abroad stay for a week or two and they return. Here was his uncle wanting to stay with him for an entire year. All the joy had now turned into discomfort and grief.

The anecdotes illustrate the traits of a Rājasic Kārta. One who is always a carrier of greed and one cannot stay still when one is consumed by greed. The mind is always on the move, endlessly hankering after objects of attention. While Sāttvic Kārtas are motivated by desire for spiritual growth, Rājasic Kārtas are deeply ambitious for materialistic enhancement. They do not realize that everything here is temporary and will have to be left behind one day. Overcome with immoderate 'Rāga' (attachment to mind and senses), they lack the purity of intentions. They are convinced that the pleasures sought by them is present in the worldly realm alone. Hence, they are never satisfied by what comes their way, and they are greedy for more and more (**lubdhaḥ**). When they see others succeeding or enjoying more than them, they become **hinsātmakaḥ** (enviously bent on injury). To fulfil their ends, they sometimes sacrifice morality and hence become impure (**aśhuchiḥ**). When their desires are fulfilled, they become elated, and when they are daunted, they get dejected. In this way, their lives become a mixture of delights and sorrows (**harṣha śhoka anvitaḥ**).

For spiritual growth Śrī Kṛṣṇa wants us to move beyond Rājasic actions. The action itself is not the problem, attachment and ego are the problem. One who performs duty with dedication but without craving for results and offers actions as service to Bhagavān gradually rises from Rājasic to Sāttvic and towards liberation.

## 18.28

### **ayuktaḥ(kh) prākṛtaḥ(s) stabdhaḥ(ś), śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko'lasaḥ, viśādī dīrghasūtrī ca, kartā tāmāsa ucyate. 18.28**

Lacking piety and self-control, uncultured, arrogant, deceitful, inclined to rob others of their livelihood, slothful, despondent and procrastinating-such a doer is called Tāmasika.

A doer in the mode of ignorance (Tamasic Kārta) is one who is undisciplined, vulgar, stubborn, deceitful, slothful, despondent, and a procrastinator. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān has enumerated a set of qualities of a Tamasic Kārta,

- '**ayuktaḥ**' - Meaning unsteady or ill-disciplined. Such a person lacks inner control, clarity and commitment and actions are inconsistent and impulsive, guided neither by reason nor by moral awareness
- '**prākṛitaḥ**' - Meaning crude or unrefined. Indicates a person who is governed purely by base instincts alone. There is extraordinarily little sensitivity, refinement, or awareness for higher values in their mind. Such a doer lives only for immediate gratification, ignoring long term consequences.
- '**stabdhaḥ**' - Meaning arrogant or obstinate. The term refers to rigidity of ego. A Tamasic person refuses to listen to others, learn from others and refuses to change. Even when wrong, they remain obstinate, closing the door for growth and wisdom.
- '**śaṭhaḥ**' - meaning deceitful or cunning and '**naiṣkṛitikaḥ**' meaning dishonest or malicious. They point to moral corruption. Such a doer manipulates others, lies without remorse, and may even enjoy causing harm. There is absence of consciousness and compassion in their mind, in their karma and in their actions.
- '**alasaḥ**' - Meaning laziness or sloth. This is a very visible Tamasic trait. The person avoids efforts, discipline, and responsibility. Even necessary duties feel burdensome and work is postponed or abandoned altogether.
- '**viśādī**' - Meaning despondent or pessimistic. It reflects mindset filled with negativity. A Tamasic Kārta easily falls into despair, blames circumstances, lacks faith in himself or others or in the future.
- '**dīrgha-sūtrī**' - meaning one who procrastinates. Such a doer, delays actions endlessly. Even when task is simple or urgent, such a person postpones it due to inertia, due to fear, due to

laziness or due to confusion.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa concludes that a doer with such qualities is Tamasic, acting from ignorance rather than awareness. Such actions lead to suffering, stagnation, and bondage, both individually and socially.

### **Practical Message**

This śloka is not meant to condemn Tamasic Actions but to create self-awareness. Each of us may carry Tamasic tendencies within us. At times we are lazy, we may have negative thoughts in our mind and we may try to avoid work. These are all Tamasic tendencies. The purpose of the Bhāgavad Gītā is to help us recognize this and gradually rise above Tamas. When such thoughts sprout, one must remember this śloka. Cultivating discipline, clarity, honesty, and responsibility is the teaching of the Bhāgavad Gītā. By moving from Tamasic to Rājasic and ultimately to Sāttvic, a person transforms his actions and thereby their destiny, leading to liberation.

### **18.29**

## **buddherbhedam(n) dhṛteścaiva, guṇatastrividham(m) śṛṇu, procyamānamaśeṣeṇa, pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya. 18.29**

Now hear, Arjuna, the threefold division, based on the predominance of each Guṇa, of understanding (Buddhi) and firmness (Dhṛti), which I shall explain in detail, one by one.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān says – “Arjuna, now hear from me in detail, the three-fold division of intellect and steadfastness according to the three qualities of Guṇas. I shall explain them clearly and completely.” This śloka begins a particularly important teaching that helps us to understand why human beings think, decide and act so differently. When facing similar situations, different people act differently. Why? Śrī Kṛṣṇa introduces the idea that both intellect and willpower or determination are shaped by the three Guṇas (Tamas Rājas and Sāttva). Śrī Bhagavān sets the foundation by stating that not all intelligence is the same. A person having elevated levels of intellect may be Tamasic or Rājasic and not all determination lead to liberation. One may have focus and have conviction in self, but conviction can be tamasic or Rājasic. In such cases, how is liberation achieved?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa thus far had explained the three constituents of action, now He explains the two factors that impact the quality and quantity of work – Intellect (buddhiḥ) and Determination (dhṛiteḥ). The two factors are discussed below,

- **‘buddhiḥ’** – Means intellect. Buddhiḥ is not merely intelligence or IQ. In the Bhāgavad Gītā it means faculty of discrimination. It is the power to decide what is right and what is wrong, what should be done and what should be avoided, and what leads to freedom and what leads to bondage. It forms the faculty of discrimination. Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells arjuna that intellect itself is influenced by three Guṇas. A person may be very clever yet confused about the values. Another may have modest knowledge but deep clarity. This difference arises because intellect operates under influence of Trigūṇas (Tamas, Rājas and Sāttva).
- **‘dhṛiteḥ’** – Means determination, steadfastness, or willpower. It is the inner strength that enables a person to hold on to his intellectual thoughts to persist to remain firm in action and his belief. Śrī Kṛṣṇa warns that persistence alone is not enough. A thief or a saint, both carry determination. The difference lies in what sustains the determination. Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches that even willpower is morally and spiritually coloured by Trigūṇas (Tamas, Rājas and Sāttva).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa emphasizes that both **Dhṛiteḥ** and **Buddhiḥ** are three-fold based on Trigūṇas. Sāttva leads to clarity, to harmony and to wisdom, whereas Rājasic leads to desire-driven action and restlessness. Tamas leads to confusion, negligence, and ignorance. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by saying ‘completely’ and ‘distinctly’ assures Ajuna that this knowledge will be explained clearly and without any ambiguity.

## Spiritual significance

This śloka teaches us a profound truth – That the spiritual growth is not about suppressing intellect or will power but purifying it. By recognizing which Guṇa dominates our thinking and our determination, we can consciously move towards Sāttvic Intellect and determination which will lead us to liberation (**Mokṣa**).

## Practical Implications

Seekers should self-reflect by asking: Do I separate duty from desire? What goals drive me? Are my choices clear and enthusiastic or confused? The answers to these questions reveal whether our intellect and resolve are Tamasic, Rājasic, or Sāttvic. Self-assessment is key.

## 18.30

### **pravṛttiṃ(ñ) ca nivṛttiṃ(ñ) ca, kāryākārye bhayābhaye, bandhaṃ(m) mokṣaṃ(ñ) ca yā vetti, buddhiḥ(s) sā pārtha sāttvikī. 18.30**

The intellect which correctly determines the paths of activity and renunciation, what ought to be done and what should not be done, what is fear and what is fearlessness, and what is bondage and what is liberation, that intellect is Sāttvika.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says – “O Arjuna, that intellect is Sāttvic which understand the path of action and path of renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and restlessness, and bondage and liberation.” In this śloka and the succeeding ones, Śrī Kṛṣṇa systematically explains the three-fold division of intellect, and determination. Bhagavān describes the nature of Sāttvic intellect, the highest and most refined form of buddhi understanding and states that a Sāttvic intellect is marked by clarity by discrimination and by wisdom. Such an intellect does not merely possess information but true insight into life, duty, and spiritual progress. Śrī Kṛṣṇa highlights six areas where this refined intellect functions correctly.

- **‘pravṛttiṃ cha’** and **‘nivṛttiṃ cha’** – Meaning path of engagement and refers to the righteous actions performed in accordance with one's duty dharma while at liberty to renunciate actions that bind the soul. A Sāttvic person knows when to act and when to refrain, recognizing that both action and renunciation and have the rightful place in spiritual life.
- **‘kārya’** and **‘akārye’** – Meaning that which should be done and should not be done. This understanding is not based on personal convenience or fear or on social pressure but on ethical principles and on inner consciousness guided by wisdom. Such a person does not justify wrong actions or avoid rightful duties.
- **‘bhaya’** and **‘abhaye’** – Sāttvic intellect understands fear and fearlessness. It recognizes that fear arises from ego, from attachment and from ignorance while fearlessness comes from alignment with the truth and surrender to the divine order. A person with Sāttvic understanding fears wrongdoing but remains fearless in the performance of righteous duty.
- **‘bandham’** and **‘mokṣaṃ’** – The Sāttvic intellect comprehends actions that which are binding and those that are liberating. Bondage is seen as identification with body with ego with desires and the fruits of action.

During the performance of any karma, if performance is done identifying with the body, with some desires in mind and with sights on the fruits of action – then the doer has to realize that bondage results. Liberation is understood as freedom from this identification through knowledge, through detachment and through devotion. Importantly, a Sāttvic intellect realizes that liberation is an inner state, not merely physical withdrawal from the world. Liberation does not mean give up all the work or retire from the world. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's emphasis is very profound here - True intelligence is moral and spiritual discrimination. It is not cleverness, scholarship, or strategic thinking alone. A highly educated

person may still possess Rājasic or tamasic intellect, either by desire, by confusion or clouded by ignorance about the spirituality.

### **Practical Implications**

In practical life, this śloka teaches that growth both worldly and spiritual depends on the refining of our intellect. When mind is calm, pure, and selfless, the intellect naturally becomes Sāttvic. Such an intellect guides one steadily towards harmony towards right action towards inner peace and mokṣa or liberation. So, this śloka presents Sāttvic intellect as an inner compass of a spiritually awakened life capable of leading through the complexities of action, renunciation, fear, and freedom from bondage.

### **18.31**

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

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

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says – “O Arjuna, that intellect which wrongly understands dharma as adharma and adharma as dharma and which is confused about what ought to be done and what ought not to be done is called Rājasic.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa is making very profound analysis of human psychology through the lens of the three Guṇas. This śloka focuses on Rājasic buddhiḥ. The Rājasic intellect is characterized by restlessness, desire, ego, and personal gains. Buddhiḥ is the faculty of discrimination, the inner compass that helps us discern the right direction versus the wrong directions, that which is appropriate and which is not, moral and the immoral. When Rājas influences this intellect, it becomes clouded by emotions such as ambition that clouds the discriminatory power, attachment, fear of loss, craving for pleasure or for recognition.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa states that Rājasic intellect misinterprets dharma and adharma. This does not necessarily mean that such a person is completely ignorant. On the contrary, a Rājasic person can be intelligent, skillful, and active too. However, their understanding is destroyed by self-interest. That which is beneficial to self appears right and those who object the desires appears wrong for them. As a practical example, a person may justify lying, cheating and deceit if it brings success, power, or comfort to him. A Rājasic person may view this as smart thinking, however this is nothing but Rājasic buddhiḥ where ethics bend under pressure of desire. Such people are experts in bending their ethics to serve their desires.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa also points out the confusion that exists between ‘what should be done’ (kāryam) and ‘what should not be done’ (akāryam). A Rājasic intellect may know moral principles theoretically and yet fail to apply them when personal gain is involved. Such a person may often justify actions saying ‘Everyone does it. I had no choice. In today's world, it is necessary to act like this.’ These justifications arise because Rājas is driven by urgency and outcomes and there is absence of long-term thinking and semblance of inner righteousness. Decisions are made quickly, emotionally, and often without long-term reflections. The mind is always calculating rewards versus loss, status versus shame.

Another key characteristic of Rājasic buddhiḥ is inconsistency. What is considered right today may be considered wrong tomorrow. Ethics become flexible, situational, and negotiable. But, as Buddhiḥ does it, this leads to inner conflict, anxiety, and dissatisfaction because actions are not aligned with the conscious. They are aligned with personal gains. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's teaching here is not meant to condemn but to create awareness.

## Practical Implications

Most human beings function in Rājasic mode especially in competitive environments like a business, a corporate job, in politics or even in family life. Recognizing Rājasic tendencies is the first step towards transformation. When we introspect and identify Rājasic thoughts, decisions, or actions, it is the first step towards transformation. By cultivating selflessness, reflection, patience, and devotion, Rājasic buddhiḥ can gradually evolve into Sāttvic buddhiḥ where decisions are guided by clarity, by duty and by universal good rather than by personal desire.

This śloka serves as a mirror for all seekers, with an invitation to examine whether the understanding of right and wrong is shaped by truth or by what is the need of the hour or shaped by the desires.

18.32

### **adharmam(n) dharmamiti yā, manyate tamasāvṛtā, sarvārthānviparītāṃśca, buddhiḥ(s) sā pārtha tāmasī. 18.32**

The intellect wrapped in ignorance, which imagines even Adharma to be Dharma, and sees all other things upside-down—that intellect is Tāmasika, Arjuna.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa concludes his detailed explanation of human nature by classifying intellect (**buddhiḥ**) and determination according to the three Guṇas. In this particular śloka, he describes the Tamasic intellect as the lowest and most harmful form of understanding. The Tamasic intellect is shrouded in ignorance (**avidya**), lacking clarity, discrimination, and wisdom. Instead of perceiving reality as it truly is, such an intellect views life through confusion, fear, prejudice, laziness, and delusion. The most dangerous aspect of the Tamasic intellect, as highlighted by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is its tendency to mistake wrong action (adharmam) for right action (dharma). A person influenced by Tamasic understanding may justify immoral actions, cruelty, violence, dishonesty, or addiction as acceptable or even necessary. At the same time, they may reject discipline, compassion, self-control, and spiritual effort, regarding them as useless or foolish. Their moral compass becomes reversed, considering right as wrong and wrong as right.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa further emphasizes that the Tamasic intellect distorts perception in all areas of life, including relationships, work, spirituality, and decision-making. Such a person may blame others for their failures, refuse responsibility, and live in denial. They often act impulsively or mechanically, without reflection or foresight. Another key trait of the Tamasic intellect is inertia: resistance to change, self-improvement, and learning. Individuals with this intellect may cling to harmful habits, outdated beliefs, or superstitions, refusing to recognize that their suffering is a result of their own actions. Spiritually, the Tamasic intellect keeps a person far from liberation, as it prevents distinguishing truth from falsehood. The Tamasic individual neither seeks self-knowledge nor understands the purpose of life. Their actions create bondage, not freedom, leading to repeated sorrow. Importantly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not condemn a person with Tamasic intellect; rather, he diagnoses their condition. The Bhāgavad Gītā teaches that no one is permanently Tamasic. Through right association, disciplined action, self-reflection, and spiritual practice, one can rise from Tamas to Rājas, and from Rājas to Sāttva. This śloka serves as a warning and a mirror, inviting us to examine our own thinking and ask vital questions: Do we justify wrong actions? Do we avoid responsibility and self-correction? Do we resist wisdom and effort? If so, Tamas may be influencing our intellect. True progress begins with right understanding, and to purify our intellect is to move closer to clarity, righteousness, and freedom.

Across the three ślokas—30 (Sāttvic buddhiḥ), 31 (Rājasic buddhiḥ), and 32 (Tamasic buddhiḥ) — Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains how human intellect functions under the influence of the three Guṇas. Intellect is the

faculty that decides what is right, what is wrong, what should be done, and what should be avoided. The quality of one's intellect determines the quality of one's life.

### **Sāttvic Intellect**

Śloka 30 discusses the Sāttvic intellect, which is pure, clear, and luminous. This intellect correctly understands dharma and adharma, duty and non-duty, fear and fearlessness, bondage, and liberation. The person with Sāttvic intellect sees things as they are, making decisions guided by wisdom and conscience. True freedom, for them, lies in self-discipline and detachment, and they act with awareness of the long-term consequences of their karma. The Sāttvic intellect is steady, balanced, and guided by higher values, promoting harmony, peace, and spiritual growth. It leads a seeker towards liberation by aligning with ultimate truth.

### **Rājasic Intellect**

Śloka 31 discusses the Rājasic intellect, which is active but restless. It has some understanding of right and wrong, but this is often distorted and clouded by desire, ego, and pursuit of personal gain. A person with Rājasic intellect knows what is right but makes choices based on convenience or self-profit, often mixing dharma and adharma according to self-interest. Their actions are motivated by ambition, attachment, and reward, driven by success, recognition, and results. The Rājasic intellect leads to constant agitation and dissatisfaction, and even morally acceptable actions are motivated by ego or desire, creating bondage and binding a person to cycles of action and reaction.

### **Tamasic Intellect**

Śloka 32 discusses the Tamasic intellect, which is clouded by ignorance and delusion, completely misunderstanding reality. It mistakes dharma for adharma and vice versa, justifying wrongdoings as right. Such a person rejects discipline, effort, and moral responsibility, acting out of laziness, fear, addiction, or blind belief, living in denial and confusion. The Tamasic intellect leads to self-destruction and suffering, preventing learning, repentance, and transformation, and keeps one bound in ignorance and misery.

### **Key Teaching: Refinement of Intellect**

The key teaching of these three ślokas is that intellect is not the same for all people; it depends on their inner quality. The Bhāgavad Gītā does not judge but teaches self-awareness. By recognizing the dominant Guṇa, one can consciously uplift oneself from Tamas to Rājas, and from Rājas to Sāttva. The journey of life is the ongoing process of refining one's intellect.

### **Practical Examples**

Sāttvic Intellect - Wise people who are morally upright, understand dharma correctly, act with long-term vision. Examples in real life,

1. A teacher for example who refuses to accept bribes to pass students
2. A doctor who provides treatment to the poor at minimal cost seeing it as their duty, not for fame or for profit.

The Sāttvic intellect makes decisions guided by truth, by ethics, and by compassion. Actions are morally correct and spiritually uplifting.

Rājasic Intellect - Examples in real life

1. A businessman who donates to charity to gain public recognition or to get tax benefits rather than purely for the welfare of others.
2. An employee who works diligently but primarily to earn a promotion or recognition or increment and not for the love of their work or for helping others.

Rājasic intellect is active and capable but driven by ego, by desire, and by attachment.

Tamasic Intellect – Examples in real life,

1. A student who cheats in the exam and blames the system for their failure thinking dishonesty is justified
2. A person addicted to alcohol or gambling and blames others for the losses instead of taking responsibility.

Tamasic intellect distorts the reality. Decisions are harmful to self and to others often creating repeated sufferings. Such people remain trapped in ignorance unless they consciously strive to change.

### Lessons for us

Ślokas 30, 31, and 32 teach us that the quality of our thinking shapes our destiny. A Sāttvic intellect leads to freedom and respect whereas a Rājasic mind may succeed materially but remains restless. A Tamasic mind causes suffering and confusion. By observing our own decisions and our own motives in life, we can gradually shift from Tamas to Rājas and from Rājas to Sāttvic moving closer to clarity, dharma, and peace.

### 18.33

## **dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate, manaḥprāṇendriyakriyāḥ, yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā, dhṛtiḥ(s) sā pārtha sāttvikī. 18.33**

The unwavering perseverance by which man controls through the Yoga of meditation the functions of the mind, the vital airs and the senses- that firmness, Arjuna, is Sāttvika.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna – “O Parth, that firmness, that steadfast willpower by which the mind, life force and activities of senses are sustained through yoga, remaining steady and unwavering is of the nature of Sāttva.” In this śloka Śrī Kṛṣṇa elaborates on the nature of firmness (**dhṛtiḥ**) and how it can be classified according to three Guṇas. This particular śloka describes Sāttvic firmness. Sāttvic dhṛtiḥ which is considered the highest and most virtuous of all the three dhṛtiḥs. The mind is like restless river constantly flowing with thoughts, emotions and with desires. True dhṛtiḥ is the ability to anchor the mind steadily without wavering especially in the face of distractions or temptations. Sāttva stabilizes the mind without being harsh or without being rigid.

Not only does dhṛtiḥ stabilize the mind, it also regulates the prana, the life force and the indriyas, the senses. A person with Sāttvic firmness does not allow desires or sensory impulses to dominate them. For example, they may see delicious food or hear enticing gossip yet they remain balanced and undisturbed. Śrī Kṛṣṇa emphasizes that this type of firmness is achieved through yoga. Yoga means discipline, steady practice of self-control, meditation, mindfulness, and devotion. Without such practice, firmness may be temporary, wavering or easily disturbed. When one follows these sadhanas, one’s dhṛtiḥ can become Sāttvic and unwavering in nature (**avyabhichāriṇyā**). Sāttvic firmness is unyielding but calm. It does not fluctuate with circumstances or with desires or with emotional disturbances. Unlike Rājasic firmness which may be driven by ambition or by agitation, or the Tamasic firmness which may be born out of stubbornness or ignorance, the Sāttvic firmness is governed by wisdom, by clarity and by dharma.

### Practical implications

- Decision making in our life - A Sāttvic person maintains clarity in his thoughts and acts wisely and not impulsively, resisting temptations. Such people can resist short-term pleasures that conflict with the long-term values.
- Spiritual growth - Sāttvic firmness stabilizes meditation and devotion thereby making spiritual

progress steady.

- Emotional balance - By maintaining balance in mind, body, and senses, one becomes compassionate, patient, and resilient in the face of difficulties.

### Conclusion

This śloka teaches us that true strength is not just physical or rigid resistance but the steady unwavering control of mind, prana, and the senses through disciplined spiritual practices through yoga. This form of firmness is called Sāttvic firmness and it is pure, virtuous, and aligned with dharma. It is the foundation for inner peace, wisdom, and effective action in life. Through yoga, a person can develop this steadfastness thereby ensuring that the actions, thoughts, and the energies remain balanced and purposeful. In short, Sāttvic firmness expressed as a formula is equal to steady mind plus controlled senses plus disciplined practice. This is the hallmark of spirituality for a mature individual.

### 18.34

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

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

Those who engage in their duties and actions with eagerness, desire for results and attachment to success driven by the pursuits of material gain, worldly pleasures or personal ambitions are said to be Rājasic in nature. Their determination (**dhṛtiḥ**) is firm but motivated by passion and by personal good come, not by self-duty. Śrī Kṛṣṇa differentiates types of determination according to three Guṇas (Sāttvic, Rājasic and Tamasic).

This śloka specifically highlights the Rājasic determination, illustrating that people act energetically but for personal gain or for recognition and the determination that supports this kind of intellectual thinking is Rājasic, focussed on self rather than welfare of the society or adherence to the dharmic principles. Philosophical and practical implications of this motivation matter for these people. Rājasic people act with intensity and with courage but their motivation is often self-centered. This śloka reminds us that action aligned with personal gain is a key marker of a Rājasic mind. Such a mind is energetic but with 'attachments.' Their determination is real, strong, and enduring but conditional. Conditional because it relies on achieving the desired results, desired outcome. A Sāttvic action is steadfast without craving for reward and in contrast a Rājasic action seeks rewards and understanding this distinction is vital in spiritual practice. Actions performed by most people in their daily life fall under category of Rājasic, because they work hard for promotions, work hard for wealth or recognition. These actions can lead to stress, can lead to frustration, and can lead to bondage as they are tied to the results.

### Practical Implications

Introspection and self-awareness can help identify Rājasic tendencies and thereby help in applying corrective measures to balance ambition with dharma. One can then gradually move towards Sāttvic actions. Sāttvic dhṛtiḥ is working diligently but without attachment to the fruits. Take for example a corporate manager striving to finish a project on time. His energy and focus are directed towards the bonus rewards. This is Rājasic dhṛtiḥ, the planning and the focus is strong. However, motivation is reward driven and not for a quality of work itself and work is performed for ethical fulfilment. In contrast, a volunteer teaching underprivileged children without expectation of reward or recognition is clearly Sāttvic.

## 18.35

### **yayā svapnaṃ(m) bhayaṃ(m) śokaṃ(m), viśādaṃ(m) madameva ca, na vimuñcati durmedhā, dhṛtiḥ(s) sā pārtha tāmasī. 18.35**

The perseverance (Dhṛti) by which an evilminded person does not give up sleep, fear, anxiety, sorrow and vanity as well, that perseverance is Tāmasika.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that that fortitude that by which a foolish person is unable to abandon sleep, fear, and sorrow is born of darkness (Tamasic). This Śloka explains the nature of fortitude (**dhṛtiḥ**) born out of Tamas (darkness). Bhagavān has outlined this as a part of His discussion on the three-fold divisions of qualities (**Triguṇātmaka**). This Śloka falls within the larger context of where Bhagavān analyses how human qualities and actions are shaped by the 'Triguṇas' of 'Prakṛti.' Bhagavān uses the word 'durmedhā' to refer to a foolish or unintelligent person, someone who lacks discriminative wisdom (Buddhiḥ). Unlike the spiritual spiritually wise, such a person is easily swayed away by sleep, by fear or by sorrow. Their fortitude is weak, inconsistent, and unhelpful because it arises from inertia, from ignorance rather than conscious understanding or from dharmic purpose.

Bhagavān says '**svapnam**' to indicate 'sleep' and 'dream' state. This is not ordinary rest but it represents laziness and procrastination consequently delaying what can be done first. Other aspect of such a state is indulgence in inactivity which prevents the person from acting rightly. '**Bhayam**' (fear) represents an irrational fear that is excessive and rooted in ignorance of one's true self and duties. Such an irrational fear immobilizes the mind.' '**Śhokam**' (grief) represents uncontrolled grief and attachment that leads to emotional instability, clouded judgment, and stalled progress. Śrī Kṛṣṇa warns that the dhṛtiḥ of such a person is not genuine dhṛtiḥ because it does not arise from conscious awareness, reflection, or alignment with dharma. Instead, it is a Tamasic fortitude, one that is born out of darkness, laziness, ignorance and out of delusion.

This śloka emphasizes that Tamas or darkness manifests in the human mind as,

- Inertia and attachment to comfort, resisting action when one's dhṛtiḥ demands action.
- Helplessness in the face of fear and sorrow. Unable to face the challenges without being emotionally destabilized.
- Lack of discrimination. actions are guided by habit, by ignorance or selfish avoidance rather than insight.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa specifically addresses Arjuna here to teach a crucial principle - True courage and steadfastness must come from wisdom, buddhi and understanding and not from ignorance. A person influenced by Tamas may seem patient or calm but this is passive and weak and not active and disciplined fortitude. This is unlike the Sāttvic fortitude that leads to spiritual growth or successful action.

#### **Practical Implications**

This śloka teaches us to avoid Tamasic habits such as excessive sleep, laziness or emotional despair and develop Sāttvic dhṛtiḥ which is stable, conscious, and aligned with dharma. Self-awareness and wisdom are necessary to overcome fear and sorrow effectively. This Śloka warns us that dhṛtiḥ arising from darkness is weak and counterproductive.

The session concluded with the recital of Hanuman Chalisa.



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