



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/OP9WEqncY74>

Yoga through the Perfection of Renunciation and Surrender

Chapter 18 of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā – **Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yoga: The Yoga of Renunciation and Surrender**

The vivechan session commenced with the auspicious dīpa-prajwalan, the ceremonial lighting of the lamp and prayers were offered seeking the blessings of Paramātmā and Gurus, thus creating an atmosphere of divine grace and serenity appropriate for understanding Bhagavad Gītā.

***gurur brahmā gurur viṣṇuḥ gurur devo maheśhvaraḥ |
gurur sākṣāt parabrahma tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ ||***

***kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmāne |
praṇataḥ kleśa nāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ ||***

***om pārthāya pratibodhitām bhagavatā nārāyaṇena svayam |
vyāsenā grathitām purāṇamuninā madhye mahābhāratam ||
advaitāmṛtavarsīṇīm bhagavatīm aṣṭādaśādhyāyīnim |
amba tvām anusandadhāmi bhagavadgīte bhavadveṣīṇīm ||***

A very warm welcome to all the participants.

We are now discussing the concluding chapter of Srimad Bhagavad Gītā, the 18th chapter which is a sort of summary of all the previous chapters.

In the previous sessions we have seen Bhagavān has explained-- our actions varies depending on our gunas. The 3 gunas influence the karta's intellect, willpower and happiness.

The kartas can also be classified into three categories:

- Those who operate in the mode of goodness
- Those who operate in the mode of passion
- Those who operate in the mode of ignorance.

Thus intellect, fortitude and happiness of the karta may vary in three different manner depending whether he is operating through the medium of 'mode of goodness', 'mode of passion' or 'mode of ignorance.'

Every sentient being works under the influence of these three modes of nature-- Sattva. Raja and Tama.

Our action which is guided by our intellect and our fortitude ultimately leads to happiness. The quality of happiness depends on the quality of our intellect and resolve.

Happiness derived from contact of the senses with their sense objects (in the mode of passion) is superior to which is derived from sleep, indolence, and negligence,(in the mode of ignorance).

Further the happiness generated by the pure intellect which is situated in self-knowledge is superior to the happiness derived through senses while being in the mode of passion.

Happiness derived in the mode of goodness is permanent and blissful. It depends on us which type of happiness we want to derive. We should put in efforts accordingly.

Uptill now Sri Krishna talked about individual beings and their mode of action and happiness. HE has vividly guided us as an individual-- what should be our course of action? Which path should one take so as to lead a life of peace and truthfulness?

As an individual we all are trying to walk on the path to liberation.

When these individual efforts are gathered together, it serves as an umbrella for the society. A society then strives and work together towards the betterment of humanity.

As an individual sadhaka we are proceeding in the path of spirituality and putting in our efforts to learn Gītā. When the collective output of this effort is considered it is huge and influential.

Every individual is working with his intellect and steadfastness. Everyone is endeavouring to derive happiness. When these efforts are gathered together, the society as a whole is benefited. All the parameters applied individually when assembled together, its impact on the society at large is enormous.

The collective output of the organisation as a whole is very positive and helpful for the society at large. Sri Krishna speaks about this collective goodness in the next slokas. The transition from an individual to the society at large takes place.

In the 40th sloka Sri Krishna says--

***na tad asti pṛithivyām vā divi deveṣhu vā punaḥ
sattvaṁ prakṛiti-jair muktaṁ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ: 40***

No living being on earth or the higher celestial abodes of this material realm is free from the influence of these three modes of nature.

The gunas operate not only on this lok but in all the lokas. Any thing born in this Prakṛti will work under the influence of the three gunas-- Sattva, Rajo and Tama.

The three gunas impact the society as a whole. The collective impact of the three gunas result in creation of "Chaturvarna".

In the sloka 13 Of chapter 4 Sri Krishna has said--

***chātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛiṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśhaḥ
tasya kartāram api mām viddhyakartāram avyayam :13***

The four categories of occupations were created by ME according to people's qualities and activities.

Although I am the Creator of this system, know ME to be the Non-doer and Eternal.

Guna which is born out of the activities or karma is not only from the current birth's activities. It includes our karma from previous births also. Based on the collective gunas and karmas of individuals, HE has created the chaturvarna system which aids in smooth functioning of the society.

Sri Krishna is elaborating on this aspect again in the next sloka. As mentioned earlier this chapter is a reiteration and elaboration of many of the things spoken in the earlier chapters. HE speaks here how this division of varna helps in smooth functioning if the society.

18.41

brāhmaṇakṣatriyaviśāṃ(m), śūdrāṇāṃ(ñ) ca parantapa, karmāṇi pravibhaktāni, svabhāvaprabhavaiguṇaiḥ. 18.41

The duties of the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas, as well as of the Śūdras have been assigned according to their innate modes of Prakṛti (Guṇas), Arjuna.

Sri Krishna says here: The duties of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras—are distributed according to their qualities, in accordance with their *guṇas* (and not by birth).

This system of bifurcating the duties of human beings is done for the better good of the society. But of late it has become a controversial topic and is being used by the vested interest groups to divide the society.

We as Gītā Sadhakas, should try to understand that it is created by Sri Krishna Himself. HE has taken the ownership of its creation. The very fact that it has been created by Prabhu Himself, it is rational and based on logic. It is also scientific.

Let us take the example of a family-

In a family duties are distributed. Children are not asked to cook for themselves or earn money and finance their own needs. Cooking is mainly done by the ladies folk of the family. Earning money, the financial aspect is taken care by the elders of the family. Children are given the responsibility of acquiring knowledge and preserving the heritage so that the future of the domain knowledge is ensured. Some of the elder male members are entrusted with the duties of ensuring the safety aspect of the family, protect against intruders and hooligans. Very senior members look after the overall functioning of the family and teach the children the customs and traditions and that is how it is ensured that the samskaras are passed on.

Some of the male members take care of the maintenance and repair of the dwelling units.

This is how the duties are distributed in the family mainly based on individual abilities. Even when we study the structure of an organisation, we find similar divisions there also.

Responsibilities in an organisation are also divided accordingly---

- Knowledge centric
- Safety and security centric
- Finance and wealth centric
- Service centric.

In an organisation we find departments entrusted with research and development work. There are separate security departments to take care of the safety aspect. There are exclusive finance and commercial departments and separate departments taking care of services and maintenance as well. With the same concept Bhagavān has created the classification keeping in view the requirement of

the society. It is only an extrapolation of the concept in order to provide adequate and balanced support for the functioning of the society.

The divisions are made among the people according to the *guṇas* that constitute their personality, and thus different professional duties suitable for them. The system of *varṇāśram dharma* is a foundational Hindu social classification described in the Rig-Veda.

The four traditional Varnas are—

- **Brahmins -- knowledge centric**
- **Kṣatriyas -- Safety and security centric.**
- **Vaishyas -- Wealth and commerce management centric.**
- **Shudras -- Services centric**

This foundational structure has ensured the survival of our society and civilisation.

If we look back into the history we find many ancient civilisations have vanished from the earth. For example the Greek civilisation, one of the oldest civilisation could not sustain the invasion of Romans. It has evaporated.

In contrast the Hindu civilisation and Sanatan Dharma has survived many brutal attacks. Our attackers were ruthless and tried their best to destroy us but we did not buckle down.

The main reason being our societal system--

- There were class of Brahmins standing tall to protect our knowledge and culture.
- There were class of Kshatriyas' standing formidable to protect the people and cities.
- There were class of Vaisyas taking care of our wealth.
- There were Sudras fulfilling all service oriented needs.

So it is very important that we understand clearly this very foundation of our Sanatan Dharma.

Next, Sri Krishna goes on to explain the characteristics of each of these categories.

18.42

**śamo damastapaḥ(ś) śaucaṃ(ñ), kṣāntirārvameva ca,
jñānaṃ(m) vijñānamāstikyaṃ(m), brahmakarma svabhāvajam. 18.42**

Subjugation of the mind and senses, enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations, external and internal purity, forgiving the faults of others, straightness of mind, senses and behaviour, belief in the Vedas and other scriptures, God and life after death etc., study and teaching of the Vedas and other scriptures and realization of the truth relating to God—all these constitute the natural duties of a Brāhmaṇa.

In this sloka Bhagavān describes the characteristics of Brahmins who perform knowledge centric activities. Their personalities are adorned with--

- **śamah** -- tranquility
- **damah** -- restraint, subjugation of mind and senses
- **tapaḥ** -- austerity, enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations.
- **śhauchaṃ** -- purity both internal and external
- **kṣhāntih** -- patience, the power to forgive the faults of others.
- **ārvavam** -- integrity
- **jñānaṃ** -- knowledge of Vedas and scriptures

- **vijñānam** -- wisdom
- **āstikyaṁ** -- belief in a hereafter, believing in life after death
- **Brahmā-karma** -- work of the priestly class
- **svabhāva-jam** -- born of one's intrinsic qualities -- realisation of the truth relating to Paramātmā.

Their knowledge is not used only for earning a living. It is used for a bigger goal of self realisation and liberation of the soul from the clutches of birth and death cycle.

Jnana and Vijnana--

The difference between the two are-- one is knowledge and the other is experiential knowledge. The Brahmins acquire knowledge by reading scriptures and acquire experiential knowledge by doing tapa and Sādhanā (**jñānaṁvijñānam āstikyaṁ**) which takes them towards Paramātmā.

When water is boiling, one knows that the temperature is above 100 degree centigrade. But if one touches the vessel then only he knows how hot it is.

Similarly they acquire experiential knowledge about Paramātmā by doing Tapa. This is associated with firm devotion or Bhakti.

A Brahmin is born associated with (**svabhāva-jam**) the intrinsic qualities required for realisation of the truth relating to Paramātmā.

Shamah and Damah--

There is a very fine difference between Shamah and Damah. Shamah means the control of desire in the mind and Damah means control of desire through senses.

A desire first arises in the mind. Seeing some good object the wow! feeling first occur in the mind.

Controlling that wow! feeling is Shamah. It is the emotional aspect and requires the mind control. Refraining the indriyas or senses from having the desire to possess it is Damah.

Tapah--

"**Tapā Dwanda Sahanam**" is a principle found in our Hindu philosophy (Yoga Sutras of Patanjali).

This phrase means:

- **Tapā (Tapas):** Refers to austerity, self-discipline, or "burning" impurities to purify the body and mind.
- **Dwanda:** Refers to dualities or opposites, such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honor and dishonor, success and failure.

Tapah is to do Sādhanā constantly and peacefully to win over the conflicts of mind with respect to the dualities.

Bhagavān has explained in the 14th sloka of 2nd Adhyaya---

**mātrā-sparśhās tu kaunteya śhītośhṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ
āgamāpāyino 'nityās tāns-titikṣhasva bhārata**

O son of Kunti, the contact between the senses and the sense objects gives rise to fleeting perceptions of happiness and distress. These are non-permanent, and come and go like the winter and summer seasons. O descendent of Bharat, one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.

śhauchaṁ refers to purity both internal and external.

Internal peace is peace within when there is complete absence of turbulence in the mind.

kṣhāntih refers patience, the power to forgive the faults of others.

In this connection let us examine what Dnyaneshwar Mauli has said--

Despite being tortured by the members of the society, he always prayed, that let everybody get the right intellect.

There was complete absence of annoyance in his mind. He had the powers to exercise curse. He could have cursed anyone. But instead he pardoned everyone and prayed for their welfare without absorbing any negativity.

These are the basic characteristic of Brahmin.

These characteristics are like 24 carat gold. Some impurities are to be there otherwise gold can not be made into ornaments.

Less the impurities more the value of the ornament. Equally less the impurities in us more nearer we are to Paramatma.

18.43

śauryaṃ(n) tejo dhṛtirdākṣyaṃ(m), yuddhe cāpyapalāyanam, dānamīśvarabhāvaśca, kṣātraṃ(ṅ) karma svabhāvajam. 18.43

Heroism, majesty, firmness, diligence and dauntlessness in battle, bestowing gifts, and lordliness-all these constitute the natural duty of a Kṣatriya.

In the sloka Sri Krishna describes the characteristic of Kṣatriyas--

- **śaurya** -- valor
- **tejo** -- Strength
- **dhṛitih** -- Fortitude
- **dākṣhyaṃ** -- Skill in weaponry and also doing the right thing at the right time
- **apalāyanam** -- Not fleeing
- **dānam** -- large heartedness
- **īshvara-bhāvaśh** -- leadership qualities
- **kṣhātraṃ karma svabhāva-jam** -- warrior and administrative work are their intrinsic born qualities

If the Ksatriya class were not there then imagine who would have protected our land and our Sanatan Dharma from the invaders. It is because of the valiant Shivaji Maharaj and other brave souls, that our religion is protected and we are sitting here and chanting Bhagavad Gītā today.

They have protected us from invaders. No invaders dared to enter Shivaji's kingdom. Such was his bravery and gallantry.

The Ksatriya class is fully responsible for the security of the society and they had demonstrated it time and again. In the borders Army is protecting the country on account of which we all are freely moving and enjoying our days.

Sourya or valor does not mean demonstrating one's strength or hit someone. In real sense it means protecting people from the attack of enemies.

Ksatriya king's '**teja**' or brilliance was like radiance of the sun. Their bravery is like the light and energy of the sun. It gets displayed automatically and serves all people like how the sun gives light to every being.

We all know the story of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and how he escaped from the clutches of Aurangzeb. Shivaji Maharaj and Sambhaji Maharaj both were captured by Aurangzeb. They both escaped from the clutches of Aurangzeb applying their wit. Their escape was not a matter of valor rather it was a play of wit and fortitude (**dhṛitih**).

Thus one has to be very cautious so as to what one does. We have to do right things. But doing the

right things at the right time is more important. Doing the right thing at the right time is **dākṣhyata**. During his journey to Bijapur, Afzal Khan created umpteen number of huddles and disturbances for Shivaji. Everytime Shivaji Maharaj manoeuvred the huddle applying his intellect, his **dākṣhyata**.

If we analyse this sloka and the traits of Ksatriya described, we find Shivaji had all the qualities in him. He used to do the right things at the right time.

One might say everybody should do right things at the right time. Why only Kṣatriyas?

The answer to this is when a Brahmin misses out something, he can always recapture it. If the Vaisya incur a financial loss, he can always recover it. But Ksatriya can not afford to miss doing the right thing at the righttime as it is a question of life and death for him.

Not only his own life, he is responsible for the life of others to whom he is providing protection. That is the reason why **dākṣhyata** is such an important aspect of Ksatriya's characteristics.

The other important aspect is **apalāyanam** -- Not fleeing.

After listening patiently to all his complains Bhagavān said to Arjun,"no matter whatever may be the cause but you can not flee the battle ground.

**hato vā prāpsyasi swargaṁ jītvā vā bhokṣhyase mahīm
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛita-niśchayaḥ**

If you fight, you will either be slain on the battlefield and go to the celestial abodes, or you will gain victory and enjoy the kingdom on earth. Therefore arise with determination, O son of Kunti, and be prepared to fight.

An episode from Mahabharat--

Virata's son Uttar wanted to flee the battle ground when Kauravas attacked him. This happened during the one year incognito exile of pāṇḍavas where in Arjun was disguised as Brihannala, the dance and music teacher of Uttara, the daughter of Matsya king Virata. During this war Arjun in the guise of Brihannala charioteered Uttar. Seeing all the brave Kaurava warriors, Uttar wanted to runaway from the battle field. At that point Arjun gave him the courage to fight and solicited him not to abandon the battle field. In that war although Arjun was only the charioteer but practically fought the war from behind keeping Uttar in his front. He almost fought single handedly with all the Maharathis of Kauravas and defeated them. Sri Krishna was also not present by his side to guide him. One can well imagine his valor. He never lamented or felt discouraged. He was the mightiest warrior of his time and did his karma accordingly.

The next important characteristics of Ksatriya is-- **Danam** means charity. One can do charity only if one is large hearted.

In the 17 th chapter 20th sloka Bhagavān has said---

**dātavyam iti yad dānaṁ diyate 'nupakāriṇe
deśhe kāle cha pātre cha tad dānaṁ sāttvikam smṛitam**

Charity given to a worthy person simply because it is right to give, without consideration of anything in return, at the proper time and in the proper place, is stated to be in the mode of goodness.

In olden days charity was a part of karma. The great kings used to view charity as one of their functions and they performed it meticulously. They did it as their dharma and not with any expectation unlike present days.

The ancient temples like Somanath temple, Padmanabhaswamy temple have huge treasures. All these were donated by great people like Ahilya Bai Volker and other eminent kings.

In south the Chholas, the Kakatiyas, the Vijayanagar empire donated huge amounts in the form of gold and money to the temples.

Another aspect of the characters of Ksatriya's is "*īshvara-bhāva*". They ensure that everybody in their kingdom stay safe.

In the next sloka Sri Krishna describes the qualities of Sudras.

18.44

kṛṣigaurakṣyavāṇijyaṃ(m), vaiśyakarma svabhāvajam, paricaryātmakaṃ(ñ) karma, śūdrasyāpi svabhāvajam. 18.44

Agriculture, rearing of cows and honest exchange of merchandise-these constitute the natural duty of a Vaiśya (a member of the trading class); and service of the other classes is the natural duty even of a Śūdra (a member of the labouring class).

Agriculture, dairy farming, and commerce are the natural works for those with the qualities of Vaishyas.

Their primary activity includes agriculture. They do yeoman service by providing food to the people and fodder to the animals.

Cattle rearing is one of their main activities.

In olden days each household used to have one or two cows. With the flat culture coming in that practice is being done away with.

Cattles are a national asset and they should be taken care like any other national asset. In India although it is an ancient practice to rear cattles still much literature or documentation is not available. Neither much research has been done on the improvisation of cattle rearing techniques. As India is world leader in milk production, all of us should know about this ancient practice and functioning of Gaushalas. Very little we know about this.

Slowly many organisations are coming up with modern Gaushalas and improved methods of cattle rearing.

One should read Gou kathas written down by spiritual gurus and listen to discussions made by our Param Pujya Gurudev.

It is said that--

- Chanting of Gītā in the house is a spiritual work and brings auspiciousness.
- Chanting of Gītā in a temple is more auspicious and brings more punya.
- Chanting of Gītā on the banks of river Ganga brings ten times more punya and
- Chanting of Gītā in a cowshed or Gaushala gives 100 times more punya.

Hence there is a spiritual connection among human beings and the cattles. This is also evident as Sri Krishna Himself reared cattles till the age of eleven. HE was born in a Ksatriya family and spent HIS childhood days in the house of Nanda Maharaj who was a Vaisya.

Nanda Maharaj had nine lacs of cows in his Gaushalas. Those days "Nanda" is a title conferred on the person who had so many lakhs of cows.

The other occupation which the vaisyas undertook was trade and commerce.

They were thus inclined toward producing and possessing economic wealth through business and agriculture. They sustained the economy of the nation and created jobs for the other classes.

Next Sri Krishna describes the occupations undertaken by Sudras.

Before we proceed further little clarification is needed with respect to the pronunciation and meaning of the word Sudra.

The word Sudras is a class of people with particular types of activities. In phonetics it resembles to the sound of a word called "Kshudra" or petty.

This word appears in the sloka 3 of chapter 2 in the third charan as"

"kṣhudraṁ hṛidaya-daurbalyaṁ"-- which means-- weakness of the petty heart.

Apart from somewhat similar sounding, the two words have no connection at all. But many people confuse between the two words and inadvertently think that "Sudra" means petty which is totally erroneous.

If we dig to the root of the word "Sudra", it indicates towards "relieving pain of others". They believe in serving others.

- Serving through work is the natural duty for those with the qualities of Shudras.
- In fact the service people like electricians, plumbers, mechanics, carpenters are the most needed people in the society.
- If there is a power failure in the house, we need the electrician urgently.
- If the water is not coming we require the services of plumber forthwith.
- One day after returning to the house, we find the main door lock is not opening, we would urgently call for the key repair fellow, or the carpenter as the case may be.
- If someone is very sick we need to see a doctor urgently.
- All these requirements have their urgencies and accordingly people providing these services are an inseparable and most needed part of the society.
- Service people are the foundation of the society.
- If one day the pujari does not turn up to the puja, nothing will happen. If studies are not done for a day because the teacher is absent, no great inconvenience happens. If business does not run for a day or two it is not a matter of serious concern. But imagine if pipe man does not come or electrician does not come, then how much inconvenience we will face.
- The house we live in comfortably is built by masons who are again service people.

Therefore, this class needs to be protected as we need their services badly.

Thus we should understand their importance and should never condemn their class or their services.

Sri Krishna says this classification is done very scientifically and based on logic. This division is purely based on actions which in turn are guna dependant.

We should understand clearly so that we can make others understand the concept.

After explaining why and how these bifurcations are created, Bhagavān explains the importance of following one's own Dharma.

18.45

**sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ(s), saṁsiddhiṁ(m) labhate naraḥ,
sVākarmanirataḥ(s) siddhiṁ(m), yathā vindati tacchṛṇu. 18.45**

Keenly devoted to his own natural duty, man attains the highest perfection in the form of Godrealization. Hear the mode of performance whereby the man engaged in his inborn duty reaches that highest consummation.

By fulfilling one's own duty, born of his innate qualities, human being can attain perfection.

Abhirataḥ means fulfilling or remaining devoted.

Remaining devoted to his karma is a way of worshiping Paramātmā.

"Work is worship"-- This concept Bhagavān has emphatically spelt out in many previous slokas. Again in this sloka HE is reiterating the same.

Such people who constantly pursue their own duties never envying others attain

perfection("siddhiṃ labhate").

This is karma-yoga and karma-yogis will achieve same amount of perfection in God realisation as the bhakti-yogis or jnana-yogis achieve. They will have similar accomplishments.

18.46

**yataḥ(ph) pravṛttirbhūtānāṃ(m), yena sarvamidam(n) tatam,
sVākarmaṇā tamabhyarcya, siddhiṃ(m) vindati mānavaḥ. 18.46**

From whom all beings come into being and by whom the whole universe is pervaded, by worshipping Him through the performance of his own natural duties, man attains the highest perfection.

Paramātmā who is the creator of the entire universe also pervades the entire universe. The concept that Paramātmā pervades all of us in HIS unmanifested form is little difficult to comprehend. Although some of us do comprehend and understand but it is difficult to explain the concept to the children. While explaining the children we simply say Bhagavān stays up in the space.

It is not that Paramātmā created this universe and then remained separate from us in HIS own abode - Vaikuntha in space. HE is not separated from us. HE pervades all of us.

yena sarvam idam tatam -- by whom all this is pervaded.

By performing one's own natural occupation, one worships the creator who is everywhere. We all come into being from HIM. By performance of our own work, we can easily attain HIM.

In the Nyaya and Samkhya philosophy the material cause of an objects is explained through **Upādāna Kāraṇa**.

It is the substance out of which something is made which also constitute its essence. This universe is created with the help of the Prakṛti. Thereafter HE HIMSELF has entered all the particles of the creation.

Let us understand it with an example. When we worship Bhagavān in the form of a deity in our puja room, we offer HIM with the best fruits and Prasad which we cook for HIM with lots of love and care. Then when the same Bhagavān is present everywhere all around us although we cannot see HIM, we should also offer HIM our best deeds or karma.

sva-karmaṇā tam abhyarchya means "worshiping through one's natural occupation".

There is no prescribed time limit for worshipping Bhagavān. What should be the ideal time for which we should worship? May be for 1 hour, 2 hours or three hours. Sri Krishna says one can worship ME, 24 hours by offering his own karma or deeds.

As we offer fruits and flowers to the deities so also we should offer our karma to HIM. That will become the cause for our upliftment.

When we are offering flowers and fruits our hands automatically pick up the best flowers and fruits and we offer those to our deity. Similarly when we are offering our karma, we should offer the best of our karmas to HIM.

If we do some bad karmas we can not offer those to Bhagavān. Thus slowly we will be restrained from doing wrong deeds.

Automatically we will try and perform all our works to the best of our knowledge. Then slowly tendency to get detached from the fruits of the deeds or action will develop within us.

Practical utility of this sloka--

Now a days very often we find children uttering the words that they are getting bored. Then if we attract their attention to this sloka, they will get rejuvenated and start taking interest again in their work as they start considering it as an offering to Paramātmā.

Even we the elders many times feel demotivated to work. At that time we can remind ourselves of

this sloka and we will get the right energy and enthusiasm to work.

The Pasaydan is a prayer by Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj which is found in the final chapters of Dnyaneshwari. The opening verses are--

आता विश्वात्मके देवे । येणे वाग्ये तोषावे ।
तोषोनि मज द्यावे । पसायदान हें ॥
Which means--

It asks the Divine to bless all beings with joy and foster friendship among all living creatures.

18.47

**śreyānsvadharmo viguṇaḥ(ph), paradharmātsvanuṣṭhitāt,
svabhāvaniyataṃ(ñ) karma, kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam. 18.47**

Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another well-performed; for, performing the duty ordained by his own nature, man does not incur sin.

It is better to do one's own *dharma*, even though imperfectly, than to do another's *dharma*, perfectly. By doing one's innate duties, a person does not incur sin.

Dharma here means karma or duties.

One always feels that the other person's work is better. One feels the other person works less for his fat salary or he does not have to sit for long hours in front of the computer, so on and so forth.

The complains are endless. The neighbour's garden always looks greener.

We all have the habit of finding faults with our own conditions.

Sweets served in the plates of the person sitting next appears bigger and sweeter.

We have to develop the habit to shun such thoughts. Instead we should always think that my karma (svadharma) is good for me and I need not dare to do other's work.

When we do our *svadharma* (prescribed occupational duties), there is a two-fold advantage.

1. It is in tune with our disposition. Hence, it is as natural to our personality as flying is to a bird and swimming is to a fish.

2. Since it is comfortable to the mind, it can almost be done involuntarily, and the consciousness becomes free to be engaged in devotion.

An Example--

A wealthy person had an aquarium in his house. He saw others upgrading their belongings. He also thought as he is wealthy and can afford, he should also upgrade his aquarium. He being an wealthy person, if he has to go for an upgradation of his aquarium, then he should feel it either with milk which is a costly material than water or even with ghee which is still costlier. He did accordingly. Then results were obviously disastrous.

One should not do any thing by seeing others. One should restrict himself to whatever suits to his condition.

Similarly the duties which is ours, we should restrict ourselves only to that and not go for other's occupation even if it appears more alluring.

18.48

**sahajaṃ(ñ) karma kaunteya, sadoṣamapi na tyajet,
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa, dhūmenāgnirivāvṛtāḥ. 18.48**

Therefore, Arjuna, one should not relinquish one's innate duty, even though it has a measure of evil; for all undertakings are beset by some evil, as is the fire covered by smoke.

Here Sri Krishna explains the same with examples.

One should not abandon duties born of one's nature, even if one sees defects in them.

All endeavors are veiled by some evil. People sometimes withdraw from their duties because they see a defect in it. Here, Shree Krishna states that no work is free from defect, just as fire naturally has smoke on top of it.

saha-jam means born of one's nature.

"Sa" means together and "ja" means born with

sa-doṣham means with defects

Sri Krishna says even if there are some defects in your Svadharma, even then do not relinquish it. This is because pursuing your own profession is any day better than adopting other's profession. From far everything looks nice and green. Only when you go near that means you start doing the new job you know its downside.

HE gives the beautiful example of fire and smoke. To start with fire is always veiled by smoke (**dhūmenāgnir ivāvṛtāḥ**).

Similarly your duties may have some flaws initially.

Example of Vir Savarkar--

The glaring examples are our freedom fighters. Their jobs were not easy. They had mountains of troubles stored in them.

But the freedom fighters stood steadfast in their duties. They had the option of deserting the operation but they never did that.

Vir Savarkar was offered lucrative jobs in England by the Britishers but he never accepted them and stuck to his Svadharma of working for the freedom of his motherland.

The path he chose for himself was fraught with difficulties. Proceeding in that path, he had to undergo rigorous jail term, fight battles in the court against Britishers. Despite severe difficulties he stuck to his own karma and did not abandon it.

Sri Krishna tells us in the next sloka how one should do his own karma.

18.49

**asaktabuddhiḥ(s) sarvatra, jitātmā vigatasprhaḥ,
naiṣkarmyasiddhiṃ(m) paramāṃ(m), sannyāsenādhighacchati. 18.49**

He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, whose thirst for enjoyment has altogether disappeared and who has subdued his mind, reaches through Sāṅkhyayoga (the path of Knowledge) the consummation of actionlessness.

One should do his duty remaining unattached (**asakta-buddhiḥ**).

Our intellect should remain unattached to material results.

Normally we always get attached to something or the other-- either to the environment around, or an ideology, or to people around. Bhagavān says remain unattached everywhere (**sarvatra**). By remaining unattached one can perform better. Focus on the work will remain steady.

- ***vigata-sprīhaḥ*** -- free from desires
- ***naiṣhkarmya-siddhiṁ*** -- state of action lessness
- ***paramāṁ*** -- highest
- ***sannyāsen ādhigachchhati*** -- attain by the practice of renunciation

One can remain unattached only when one is free from desires (*vigata-sprīhaḥ*) by controlling his senses.

There are four categories of people residing in this earth.

1. They need to do work but they do not do any work. They are nowhere close to jnana and bhakti but still they do not make any efforts to acquire these traits.
2. They need to do work and they do their work meticulously. They try to acquire knowledge by reading scriptures and doing other spiritual activities.
3. People who have already done their duties and have had received knowledge and hence do not do work any more.
4. They are the people who have acquired highest knowledge. They have nothing more left to achieve or receive. They need not work any longer. But still they continue pursuing their activities for the betterment of the society. They work for the benefit of others. They uplift the downtrodden people.

This 4th category of people are Mahatmas who still do their work by remaining in an actionless state (*naiṣhkarmya-siddhiṁ*).

They are the people whose intellect is unattached everywhere, who have mastered the mind, and are free from desires by the practice of renunciation and they attain the highest perfection of freedom from action.

Some of the examples of such people who worked relentlessly for the society are--

- Param Pujya Gurudev Sri Govinda Giri Maharaj
- Samartha Ramdas Swamy

This state can be reached even amidst the flow of the world by detaching ourselves from events and outcomes, and simply focusing on doing our duty.

Sri Krishna has demonstrated this to us through HIS own life's activities. Throughout HIS life HE remained engaged in work although it was absolutely not necessary for HIM to do.

HE has explained the same in the sloka 22 of chapter 3--The Karma-Yoga.

***na me pārthāsti kartavyaṁ triṣhu lokeṣhu kiñchana
nānavāptam avāptavyaṁ varta eva cha karmaṇi 3.22***

There is no duty for ME to do in all the three worlds, O Parth, nor do I have anything to gain or attain from this universe. Yet, I am engaged in prescribed duties.

Another glaring example of such category is the 'SUN' which we see everyday. It provides light to the earth relentlessly without expecting anything in return.

Next HE explains what happens thereafter.

siddhiṃ(m) prāpto yathā brahma, tathāpnoti nibodha me, samāsenaiḥ kaunteya, niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā. 18.50

Arjuna, know from Me only briefly the process through which man having attained actionlessness, which is the highest consummation of Jñānayoga (the path of Knowledge), reaches Brahma.

Once Siddhi is attained what happens thereafter is explained.

Thereafter one attains Brahmā-Tattva or Paramātmā Himself.

Sri Krishna has explained to us systematically step by step---

- what is karma
- How the karma should be done
- How to remain unattached to the karma
- Not only doing the karma but doing it selflessly, for the benefit of others.

The purpose of understanding the whole process of karma results in the purification of the mind.

Now HE explains the result of all these--

One, who has attained perfection (of cessation of actions), can also attain Brahmān by being firmly fixed in transcendental knowledge.

The internal state become pure and clean-- Chitta-Suddhi. It becomes transparent and completely desireless. From here one goes to one eternal state of blissfulness and that is the Brahmā-Tattva.

Questions and Answers

Srinivas ji

Q: What is the meaning of '*samāsenaiḥ kaunteya*' and '*niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā*'

A: '*samāsenaiḥ*' means briefly or in short. Here Sri Krishna is summarising what all HE had said before.

'*niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā*' means -- One can also attain Brahmān by being firmly fixed in transcendental knowledge.

After explaining what is karma and how it should be done Sri Krishna further states what happens when one reaches the action less state (naiṣhkarmya-siddhiṃ). One then attains Brahma-Tattva.



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You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar,

as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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