



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 18: Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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Svabhāva, Duty, and Complete Surrender to Bhagavān

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

The sacred ritual of lighting the Dīpam at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān marked the beginning of our spiritual journey into the timeless wisdom of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā. The gentle radiance of the flame, accompanied by heartfelt prayers, filled the atmosphere with Bhakti and reverence.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय हरये परमात्मने ।

प्रणतः क्लेशनाशाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥

नमामि सद्गुरुं शान्तं सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहम् ।

पूर्णब्रह्मपरानन्दम् ईशमाळन्दिवल्लभम् ॥

रत्नाकराधौतपदां हिमालयकिरीटिनीम् ।

ब्रह्मार्षिराजरत्नाढ्यां वन्दे भारतमातरम् ॥

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयम्

व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।

अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीमष्टादशाध्यायिनीम्

अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

नमोस्तुते व्यास विशालबुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।

येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमयः प्रदीपः ॥

With these auspicious invocations complete, the discourse began with heartfelt prostrations at the feet of Param Pūjya Śrī Govinddev Giriji Maharaj, and warm greetings were extended to all the Gītā Sādhakas assembled for this sacred study.

The eighteenth chapter of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā may be compared to the kalasha placed on the pinnacle of a temple. Just as the kalasha sits at the very top and represents the completion and glory of the temple, in the same way the 18th chapter stands as the crown and culmination of the entire Gītā.

In this chapter, Bhagavān presents the complete essence of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā.

In truth, the entirety of spiritual knowledge is contained within the Vedas. The essence of the Vedas is contained within the Upaniṣads. The essence of the Upaniṣads is contained within the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā. And the essence of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā is contained within the eighteenth chapter.

Thus, the chapter that is presently under discussion is an extremely important and essence-filled chapter.

The Working of the Three Guṇas

As Bhagavān continued explaining various aspects of life and knowledge, HE once again described how the three guṇas operate in the world. HE explained how diversity and differences arise in everything due to the influence of these three guṇas.

Because of the influence of these guṇas, several aspects of life take on different forms: Jñāna (knowledge), Karma (action), Kartā (the doer), Buddhi (intellect), Dhṛti (determination) and Sukha (happiness)

All these become sāttvika, rājasika, or tāmasika depending on which guṇa predominates.

We have already observed how these three guṇas shape every dimension of human experience. Even sukha, happiness or inner emotional experience, changes its nature depending on these guṇas.

Thus, happiness itself may appear as: Sāttvika happiness, Rājasika happiness and Tāmasika happiness

Nothing in Creation is Free from the Three Guṇas

After explaining these distinctions, Bhagavān makes a very powerful declaration.

HE states that all these classifications aside, there is a deeper truth that must be understood.

HE declares:

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥ (१८.४०)

This means: There is nothing whatsoever in this world, neither on earth nor even among the devas in the heavenly realms, that is free from the three guṇas born of prakṛti.

Bhagavān thus reveals that: There is no human being, no living creature, no entity, no object, nothing in this entire creation that exists independent of these three guṇas.

At the same time, it is also not the case that only one guṇa exists in any object or person. Rather, all three guṇas: sattva, rajas, and tamas are present everywhere.

Creation itself is woven out of these three fundamental qualities.

The Influence of the Three Guṇas in Daily Life

Because the entire world is composed of these guṇas, every aspect of human life reflects their influence.

In the seventeenth chapter we saw that even food (āhāra) becomes threefold: Sāttvika āhāra, Rājasika āhāra and Tāmasika āhāra

Similarly, the books a person reads may also be of three types: Sāttvika literature, Rājasika literature and Tāmasika literature

Even a home environment can be influenced by these guṇas. A house may reflect: a sāttvika atmosphere, a rājasika atmosphere and a tāmasika atmosphere

The clothes one wears, the lifestyle one adopts, and even the mood and environment around a person are all shaped by the three guṇas.

Thus, everything in human life is influenced by these three fundamental qualities.

Why People Are So Different

Because these guṇas exist in different proportions in different individuals, human beings appear extremely diverse in their nature.

Even a slight variation in the proportion of these guṇas changes a person's nature.

To illustrate this, consider cooking.

When preparing a dish, if the quantities of sugar, salt, or chili change slightly, the taste of the entire dish changes.

In the same way, when the proportion of sattva, rajas, and tamas changes slightly, the nature of a person changes.

This is why we observe that:

- Every person's nature is different.
- Every person's thinking is different.
- Every person's intellect functions differently.
- Every person's understanding of happiness is different.

Thus, the world contains countless varieties of human personalities.

The Four Broad Types of Human Beings

However, Bhagavān further explains that even within this vast diversity, human beings can still be broadly classified.

Although every individual is unique due to the varying proportions of the three guṇas, Bhagavān indicates that humanity can still be understood through four principal categories of people. These four primary classifications arise based on the dominant tendencies created by the three guṇas within individuals.

From this point onward, Bhagavān begins describing these four categories, explaining how different natural tendencies manifest among human beings according to the interplay of sattva, rajas, and tamas.

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.

The Fourfold Varṇa System — Division Based on Guṇa and Karma

Bhagavān now begins explaining the fourfold classification of human beings. HE declares: “O Parantapa (Arjuna), the duties of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras have been divided according to the guṇas that arise from their inherent nature.”

Here, the four types of people mentioned are Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra.

It is important to understand clearly the word Śūdra. The word is pronounced with “śa”, Śūdra, not Kṣudra or any other form. The term Śūdra essentially refers to one who serves, one who engages in service-oriented or labor-oriented work.

Thus, these four groups: Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra represent four kinds of people, and accordingly their actions (karma) also differ.

Bhagavān states:

कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः

This means that these actions are divided according to the guṇas that arise from one’s svabhāva (inherent nature).

How Svabhāva (Nature) Is Formed

The next question naturally arises: How does this svabhāva develop?

Earlier it was explained that svabhāva arises due to the influence of the three guṇas — sattva, rajas, and tamas.

Some individuals appear predominantly sāttvika, some rājasika, and others tāmasika. However, it is important to understand that no person is entirely sāttvika, entirely rājasika, or entirely tāmasika.

All three guṇas are always present within every individual.

Yet, depending on the relative proportion of these guṇas, a person’s nature appears different.

- If rajas and tamas are comparatively less, the person appears sāttvika.
- If tamas and sattva are comparatively less, the person appears rājasika.
- Similarly, when tamas predominates, the person appears tāmasika.

Thus, different individuals appear to possess different temperaments and inclinations.

Furthermore, the actions performed by individuals are influenced by the guṇa that predominates in

them. Due to this influence, human beings perform distinct types of actions.

Bhagavān states that human beings perform clearly distinct kinds of actions, karmani parvibhaktani, actions that are separately and distinctly divided.

Among these, four principal categories of people performing four kinds of actions are observed, and they are designated by the four names: Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra

Varṇa Is Not a Caste

A very important clarification must be made here.

These four: Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra, are not castes (jāti).

Rather, they represent four types of people engaged in four types of actions.

In other words, these classifications are based on the nature of one's work and inclination toward certain types of actions.

A person naturally performs the kind of work toward which HE has an inner inclination. Often such skills do not need to be formally taught.

For example, consider the case of a merchant's son. Sitting beside HIS father at the shop counter from childhood, HE naturally begins learning how business is conducted — how accounts are maintained, how profit and interest are calculated. Without formal instruction, such knowledge gradually becomes natural to HIM.

Similarly, if someone is born in a family where study, chanting of ślokas, and scriptural learning are valued, that child may naturally develop an inclination toward study, recitation of ślokas, and contemplation of knowledge.

However, it must be clearly understood that this tendency does not arise merely because of family or birth alone. Rather, it depends upon the svabhāva of the jīva (individual soul) , the inner tendencies with which that being is endowed.

According to that svabhāva, the individual becomes inclined toward certain types of actions.

The Teaching from the Fourth Chapter

Bhagavān has already explained this principle earlier in the fourth chapter. There HE declares:

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम्॥ (४.१३)

Bhagavān states that the fourfold order of society was created by HIM based on the division of guṇa and karma.

Thus, the classification arises from:

- **Guṇa** — the predominance of sattva, rajas, and tamas
- **Karma** — the types of actions that individuals perform

According to these two factors, four types of people naturally arise within society.

The Formation of Human Nature — Insights from Modern Thought

Modern scientific understanding also attempts to explain how human nature develops.

It suggests that a person's nature is influenced by heredity, meaning the qualities inherited from one's parents.

These hereditary characteristics are carried through what science calls genes or DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). According to genetic science, variations in DNA contribute to differences among individuals.

But heredity alone does not determine a person's nature.

Another major factor is environment.

The environment or surroundings in which a person grows up plays a crucial role:

- The type of people with whom one associates
- The kind of activities one participates in
- The ideas and values one learns from others
- The impressions and saṃskāras one absorbs from one's surroundings

All these elements shape a person's character.

Thus, according to modern thought, two main factors influence human nature:

- Heredity
- Environment

The Scriptural View — Karma from Previous Births

However, the śāstras provide an even deeper perspective.

They state that a person's svabhāva is also shaped by the karma performed in previous births.

The actions performed in past lives leave deep impressions (saṃskāras) within the subtle body. These impressions influence the tendencies and inclinations with which a person is born in the present life.

Thus, according to the śāstric understanding, human nature develops based on several factors:

- Past-life karma
- Actions performed in the present life
- Heredity
- Environment

The impressions and habits one develops. Through the interaction of all these factors, a person's svabhāva gradually forms.

The Sixteen Pillars of Sanātana Culture

The traditional culture described in the śāstras is said to stand upon sixteen foundational pillars.

These sixteen pillars consist of four sets of four principles.

1. Four Varṇas (Types of People): Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra

2. Four Āśramas (Stages of Life)

- Brahmacharya āśrama — the stage of disciplined student life
- **Gṛhastha āśrama** — the stage of household life
- **Vānaprastha āśrama** — the stage of gradual withdrawal from worldly duties
- **Sannyāsa āśrama** — the stage of renunciation

3. Four Puruṣārthas (Goals of Human Life)

- **Dharma** — righteousness and duty
- **Artha** — prosperity and livelihood
- **Kāma** — fulfillment of legitimate desires
- **Mokṣa** — liberation

4. Four Paths of Spiritual Practice (Sādhana Mārga)

- **Jñāna Mārga** — the path of knowledge
- **Karma Mārga** — the path of action
- **Bhakti Mārga** — the path of devotion
- **Yoga Mārga** — the path of disciplined spiritual practice

Thus, Sanātana culture is described as standing firmly upon these sixteen pillars.

Among these sixteen pillars, the four varṇas represent one essential set of four pillars, referring to the four kinds of people in society based on their natural tendencies and actions.

After introducing these four categories, Bhagavān proceeds to describe in detail the kinds of actions performed by each of these four groups. In the following teachings, HE explains the natural duties associated with Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras, based on their inherent guṇas and svabhāva.

18.42

**śamo damastapaḥ(ś) śaucaṃ(ñ), kṣāntirārjavameva 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.

The Natural Qualities and Duties of a Brāhmaṇa

Bhagavān explains the natural qualities and actions associated with the Brāhmaṇa

These are the duties and qualities that arise from the svabhāva (inherent nature) of a Brāhmaṇa. The term svabhāvajam means that these qualities are born from one's natural disposition. The svabhāva of an individual develops due to the influence of guṇas, actions (karma), and even hereditary tendencies, and because of that nature certain actions arise naturally and effortlessly. Bhagavān therefore, lists the qualities that manifest naturally in one whose nature is Brāhmaṇa-like: śama, dama, tapaḥ, śauca, kṣānti, ārjava, jñāna, vijñāna, and āstikya.

Śama refers to mastery over the inner instrument, the antaḥkaraṇa. The inner instrument is described as consisting of four aspects: manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), citta (memory or subconscious), and ahaṅkāra (ego). Śama means the ability to regulate and guide these inner

faculties. Such a person can direct the mind where HE wishes it to go. When HE decides that a particular subject should be contemplated, the mind remains steady in that contemplation. For example, when studying a scripture or performing japa, the mind does not wander aimlessly but remains focused on the task. Maintaining this inner steadiness and control over the mind and inner faculties is called śāma.

The next quality is **dama**, which refers to control over the external senses (indriyas). While śāma relates to the inner faculties, dama relates to the sensory organs. A person possessing dama is able to restrain the senses so that they do not drag the individual toward every attractive object. Such a person can say that the senses will function according to HIS conscious direction rather than forcing HIM toward various temptations. The senses remain calm, regulated, and disciplined. This ability to restrain and regulate the senses is called dama.

The next quality mentioned is **tapah (tapas)**. Tapas refers to disciplined effort and austerity undertaken to achieve a higher purpose. One explanation of tapas is tapas, svādhyāya, and disciplined conduct in life. Another meaning of tapas is willingly accepting hardship or difficulty in order to attain something valuable in life. When a person accepts effort, discipline, and sometimes even discomfort for the sake of fulfilling duties or achieving spiritual progress, that is called tapascharyā. In essence, tapas is the willingness to exert oneself and even endure hardship for the sake of dharma and higher attainment.

Another quality mentioned is **śauca**, which means purity. The concept of śucitā (purity) includes three aspects: cleanliness, inner purity, and sacredness. When a person is clean externally, pure internally, and maintains a sense of sacredness in life, that condition is called śauca. A person with Brāhmaṇa-like nature strives to remain pure both externally and internally. Externally, HE maintains cleanliness and orderliness. Internally, HE strives to maintain purity of thought. By cultivating noble thoughts and by studying uplifting and sacred texts, HE tries to keep HIS inner being pure, clear, and elevated.

The next quality mentioned is **kṣānti**, which means forbearance and forgiveness. This refers to the ability to forgive others when they commit mistakes or wrongdoings. If someone commits an offense, such a person does not immediately react with anger or resentment but has the natural inclination to forgive. The capacity to overlook faults, forgive errors, and tolerate difficulties with patience is called kṣānti. It arises from an inner calmness and a peaceful disposition.

Another quality is ārjava, which means simplicity, sincerity, and straightforwardness. A person possessing ārjava does not harbor duplicity or hidden motives. There is no situation in which something different exists within the mind while something else is displayed outwardly. What exists in the heart is what appears in speech and action. Thoughts, words, and conduct remain aligned and transparent. This natural simplicity and sincerity in both thought and behavior is called ārjava.

Bhagavān then mentions **jñāna and vijñāna**. A person with the nature of a Brāhmaṇa has a deep interest in acquiring knowledge and understanding reality. Jñāna refers to general knowledge, especially the knowledge gained through the senses. For instance, through the eyes one sees objects such as a lamp, a laptop, or a mobile phone. One may see trees, plants, rivers, or the ocean. Similarly, through the ears one hears sounds and gains information. If the sound of waves is heard, one may understand that the ocean is nearby. If the sound of a train is heard, one may understand that a train is passing nearby. All such knowledge obtained through the sense organs is called jñāna, or general knowledge.

Vijñāna, on the other hand, refers to deeper, analytical, and investigative knowledge. Seeing a lamp is one thing, but asking how the lamp produces light, how electricity flows, and how energy functions

involves deeper inquiry. Similarly, vijñāna involves investigation into the subtle structure of the universe. Questions such as what atoms are made of, what particles exist within the atom, how planets move in space, and what distances exist between celestial bodies are all part of this deeper inquiry. The effort to understand the deeper workings of the universe constitutes vijñāna.

The final quality mentioned is āstikya, which refers to faith and reverence toward the Vedas, the śāstras, the Upaniṣads, and Paramātmā. A person with this nature maintains deep trust in the wisdom of the Vedic tradition. Bhagavān has already explained earlier that knowledge can only be attained by one who possesses faith. HE declares:

Without faith, knowledge cannot be properly received. If a student constantly doubts the teacher and refuses to trust what is being taught, true learning becomes impossible. Therefore, śraddhā (faith) is essential even for the acquisition of knowledge.

This principle applies not only to spiritual knowledge but even to fields such as mathematics and science. For example, in geometry a point is defined as something that has no length, breadth, or thickness. Yet when a teacher draws a small dot on the board and says that it represents a point, the student accepts it as a conceptual representation. If a student refuses to accept this assumption, further learning of geometry becomes impossible. Similarly, in atomic theory we are taught that electrons move around the nucleus while protons and neutrons reside within it. These structures are understood through models and experimental inference rather than direct observation. Scientific progress itself requires a degree of trust in established principles and investigative reasoning.

If faith is necessary even for scientific learning, it becomes even more essential for the pursuit of ātma-jñāna (knowledge of the Self). Understanding Paramatma and realizing the nature of the Self requires deep and sincere faith.

Thus, a person with Brāhmaṇa svabhāva naturally develops interest in jñāna (knowledge), vijñāna (deeper understanding), and āstikya (faith in the Vedas and Paramatma). Bhagavān therefore concludes that these qualities: śama, dama, tapaḥ, śauca, kṣānti, ārjava, jñāna, vijñāna, and āstikya, constitute brahmakarma svabhavaja, the natural duties and tendencies of a Brāhmaṇa.

Such a person naturally practices self-discipline, naturally restrains the senses, and naturally seeks knowledge and spiritual understanding. This svabhāva does not arise suddenly. Rather, it develops gradually through spiritual effort across many lifetimes. Through repeated practice, actions, and disciplines performed over numerous births, these tendencies become firmly rooted in the individual's nature.

Varṇa Arises from One's Nature, Not Mere Birth

One must also understand that a person's nature is not determined only by the family in which HE is born. The actions that a person performs in the present life also gradually shape HIS svabhāva. It is therefore not correct to assume that simply because someone is born in a Brāhmaṇa family, that individual will automatically possess the true nature of a Brāhmaṇa.

A person's nature develops through actions, tendencies, and impressions accumulated over time. The karma performed in this life as well as in previous lives influences how the svabhāva manifests. Therefore, the mere fact of birth in a particular family does not guarantee that the individual will naturally exhibit the qualities associated with that varṇa.

A simple example from the speaker's life helps illustrate this idea. Sometimes even within the same family, different children display completely different inclinations. For instance, the speaker's mother

says jokingly that although she has three sons, each one has developed a completely different nature.

One of her sons has spent his entire life engaged in study, research, and teaching. He became a professor and feels great joy in learning, reflection, and imparting knowledge to others. His natural inclination lies in study and intellectual pursuits.

Another son possesses a deep interest in social service and working for society. He dedicates his time to helping people, organizing activities for the welfare of the community, and serving society in various ways.

A third son i.e the speaker himself, became involved in business: construction. His natural inclination lies in organizing economic activities and managing resources.

Observing such differences, the speaker's mother humorously says that she has three sons: one like a Brāhmaṇa, one like a Vaiśya, and one like a Kṣatriya. What she means by this is not that they belong to different castes, but that their natural tendencies resemble the qualities associated with those varṇas.

This example clearly shows that Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, and Vaiśya are not rigid caste labels but descriptions of natural tendencies.

Therefore Bhagavān deliberately uses the expression: brahma-karma svabhāva-jam

The word svabhāvajam means “arising from one’s inherent nature.” These qualities and actions are born from the individual’s natural disposition. Gradually, through actions and impressions accumulated over time, the individual’s nature develops in a particular direction.

Thus, the actions associated with a Brāhmaṇa arise naturally and spontaneously from that nature. Such a person is naturally inclined toward discipline, study, contemplation, and self-control.

These are not artificial behaviors forced upon the person. Rather, they arise spontaneously from the svabhāva that has gradually developed through many lives of practice and action.

In this way, the duties of the Brāhmaṇa arise naturally from HIS nature.

After describing the qualities of the Brāhmaṇa, Bhagavān then proceeds to explain the nature and duties of the Kṣatriya — how the Kṣatriya acts, what qualities characterize that nature, and what kinds of actions arise naturally from it.

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.

The Natural Qualities and Duties of a Kṣatriya

After describing the natural qualities of a Brāhmaṇa, Bhagavān proceeds to explain the svabhāva and natural actions of a Kṣatriya.

The expression kṣhātram karma svabhāva-jam indicates that these actions arise naturally from the inherent disposition of a Kṣatriya. Certain kinds of actions and attitudes become naturally appealing and suitable to a person with such a nature.

The first quality mentioned is **śaurya**, which means valor or courage. Śaurya refers to the ability to face great dangers and challenges without hesitation. When a difficult or frightening situation arises, such a person does not become shaken or fearful. Instead, HE stands firmly, confronts the difficulty directly, and accepts the challenge with courage. Even in the face of great crisis, HE approaches the situation boldly and deals with it. This fearless readiness to confront adversity is called śaurya.

The next quality mentioned is **tejaḥ**. Tejaḥ refers to a kind of radiant presence or powerful aura that arises from strength of character and authority. Sometimes when a powerful personality enters a place, their presence alone creates a certain atmosphere. One may feel a distinct influence emanating from such a person. For example, the aura of a king, a Brāhmaṇa, or a Kṣatriya may each be perceived differently. A ruler may possess a commanding presence that naturally inspires respect and attention.

A traditional illustration is often given to explain this idea. In a forest, if an elephant becomes mad and uncontrollable, it may run wildly, destroying everything in its path, and no ordinary creature may be able to stop it. However, it is said that if the elephant hears the roar of a lion, the sheer power of that sound may frighten it so deeply that even the raised foot of the elephant may hesitate to step forward. Such is the power of presence and influence that is described as tejaḥ.

The next quality is **dhṛti**, which means steadfastness, patience, and courage to remain composed in difficult situations. Dhṛti refers to the ability to control oneself and maintain firmness even when circumstances become challenging. It involves the capacity to restrain impulsive reactions and act with thoughtful deliberation.

An example often cited to illustrate dhṛti comes from the history of Chhatrapati Śivājī Mahārāj. When Afzal Khan advanced toward Śivājī Mahārāj, plundering villages, destroying temples, and committing atrocities against the people, many expected Śivājī Mahārāj to rush out immediately to confront him. However, HE remained patient within the fort. Some even began to say that HE was afraid because HE did not immediately appear on the battlefield. In reality, HE was exercising great patience and strategic restraint. HE allowed Afzal Khan to approach in a calculated manner and eventually confronted him at the right moment. This ability to remain calm, control oneself, and act at the proper time demonstrates dhṛti, steadfast courage guided by thoughtful restraint.

Another quality mentioned is **dākṣya**, which means alertness, efficiency, and skillfulness. A Kṣatriya must remain constantly aware and attentive in all situations. Alertness is especially crucial in matters such as warfare, administration, and protection of society.

Bhagavān also praises this quality in the description of a devotee in the twelfth chapter. Among the characteristics of the dear devotee, Bhagavān mentions:

अद्वेषा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥

and further describes the devotee as

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्षः

one who is pure and dākṣa, meaning attentive and efficient.

A traditional example illustrates this quality. Certain great renunciates or saints may live without

personal expectations or desires, yet they remain very careful and attentive in matters related to dharma or service. For example, a renunciate such as Janārdana Svāmī Mahārāj might have no personal attachment to wealth, but if people began offering donations for spiritual work, HE would ensure that every contribution was properly accounted for and used appropriately for the intended purpose. This careful attention and responsibility reflect dākṣya, alertness and efficiency.

Another essential quality of the Kṣatriya is described in the phrase: **yuddhe chāpy apalāyanam**

This means not fleeing from battle. When a Kṣatriya goes to the battlefield, HE must not turn HIS back on the enemy and run away. Courage in warfare is considered a fundamental duty of the Kṣatriya.

Traditionally, when a Kṣatriya leaves home to enter battle, HIS wife, the Kṣatriyāṇī, performs āraṭi and applies a tilaka on HIS forehead. She then sends HIM to battle with the words: *“Return victorious, or do not return at all.”* This statement requires immense courage and strength of heart. A wife telling her husband to either return victorious or not return at all reflects the deep commitment to honor and duty within the Kṣatriya tradition. The expectation is clear: the warrior must not return by showing his back to the enemy.

The next quality mentioned is **dāna**, generosity. A Kṣatriya naturally possesses the inclination to give generously for the welfare of others. Kings and rulers are expected to distribute wealth for the benefit of society.

A well-known poetic line beautifully describes the nature of a generous ruler:

“इतनी देनी देत जो, कित सीखे हो सेन।
ज्यों ज्यों कर ऊँचो करे, त्यों त्यों नीचे नैन॥”

It praises a king whose generosity is so great that the more HE raises HIS hands to give, the more HIS eyes lower in humility. True generosity is accompanied by humility rather than pride.

Finally, Bhagavān mentions īśvara-bhāva. This refers to the sense of responsibility and authority required for governance. The Kṣatriya’s duty is to protect the people and administer the kingdom. While performing this role, the Kṣatriya regards the subjects as HIS own children. HE governs not with cruelty or arrogance but with the feeling that the people under HIS protection are like HIS own family.

Just as Paramatma lovingly protects all beings, the Kṣatriya must protect HIS subjects with a similar spirit of responsibility and care. This attitude of leadership combined with protective affection is called īśvara-bhāva.

Thus, the qualities that naturally arise in the svabhāva of a Kṣatriya are śaurya (valor), tejaḥ (radiant authority), dhṛti (steadfast courage), dākṣya (alertness and efficiency), refusal to flee from battle, generosity, and the protective spirit of leadership.

These constitute kṣhātram karma svabhāva-jam, the natural actions and duties arising from the inherent nature of a Kṣatriya.

Great saints such as Jñāneśvara Mahārāj have explained these qualities in great detail in their commentaries. However, due to limitations of time, it may not be possible to explore every aspect in full detail here. The discussion can therefore continue further by examining the natural qualities associated with the Vaiśya and the Śūdra.

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).

The Natural Duties of Vaiśyas and Śūdras

Bhagavān now explains the natural duties of the Vaiśya and the Śūdra. This verse explains that agriculture, protection of cattle, and commerce arise naturally from the svabhāva of a Vaiśya, while service-oriented work arises naturally from the svabhāva of a Śūdra.

The first duty mentioned for the Vaiśya is **kṛṣi**, which means agriculture. Farming, cultivating the land, growing crops, and producing food are natural inclinations of the Vaiśya. Such individuals find interest and satisfaction in working with land, producing wealth through cultivation, and ensuring the availability of food and resources for society.

The second duty is **go-rakṣya**, which means the protection and nurturing of cows. The Vaiśya naturally takes responsibility for raising cattle, protecting them, and increasing the wealth of livestock (godhana). Caring for cows and ensuring the growth of the cattle population has traditionally been considered an important responsibility because cows provide nourishment and support for society in many ways.

The third duty is **vāṇijyam**, which means commerce or trade. This includes buying and selling goods, managing transactions, and conducting business. A person with the nature of a Vaiśya naturally understands trade. HE may think, *“If a certain product is available cheaply in one place, I can bring it to another place where it is needed, sell it there, and earn profit while also providing convenience to people.”*

Through such trade, goods from different parts of the world reach people everywhere. Today it is possible to obtain fruits, products, and materials from distant regions without leaving one’s home. These things reach society because merchants transport and distribute them. Thus, commerce becomes a means not only of earning wealth but also of serving society by making resources accessible.

The Vaiśya therefore moves goods from one place to another, facilitating exchange throughout the world. While doing so, HE also earns wealth for himself. This is HIS natural inclination. At the same time, Vaiśyas are also known for generosity and charity. They earn wealth but also contribute it toward good and noble causes.

Each person’s interest arises according to HIS nature. For example, if someone asks a Brāhmaṇa to calculate complex business accounts or interest calculations, HE may respond that such matters do not interest HIM. Similarly, if someone asks a Kṣatriya to spend long hours studying abstract texts or mathematical problems, HE may say that HIS interest lies elsewhere.

Different individuals possess different natural inclinations. A well-known example illustrates this idea. The great poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote extraordinarily beautiful poetry and literature. Yet it is said that during HIS school days HE failed in mathematics. Mathematics simply did not interest HIM.

On the other hand, the brilliant mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan displayed extraordinary mathematical ability from a very young age. While still in school, HE was able to solve advanced

mathematical problems that many university students struggled with. Such differences arise because of svabhāva-dharma, the natural tendencies of individuals.

Bhagavān then describes the natural work of the Śūdra as paricaryātmakarṁ karma, service-oriented work. This includes assisting and supporting the work of others and engaging in labor that helps society function.

There are different kinds of strength that society requires. One may speak of four kinds of power:

- Intellectual power (buddhi-śakti)
- Financial power (dhana-śakti)
- Physical or administrative power (bāhu-śakti)
- Labor power (śrama-śakti)

All four forms of strength are necessary for the functioning of society.

Even in a modern organization such as a company, these four types of functions are required. There must be research and development, which relies on intellectual power. There must be a finance department, which manages wealth and financial resources. There must be management and administration, which organize and direct activities. Finally, there must be workers who perform the actual labor involved in production.

Without all these roles, no organization can function successfully.

The same is true for society as a whole. Whether one considers a company, a factory, a community, or an entire nation, all four types of people are necessary.

If there were no Kṣatriyas, who would protect the nation? Soldiers stand guard in extremely harsh conditions, sometimes in freezing temperatures of minus forty or fifty degrees, protecting the country. They are able to perform such duties because their nature enables them to do so. Most people would find such conditions impossible to endure, yet they carry out their responsibilities for the safety of the nation.

Similarly, workers perform strenuous labor so that goods may be produced. Farmers cultivate fields so that food grains become available for society. Because of their work, the rest of society receives the necessities of life.

Thus, Bhagavān explains that society naturally contains four kinds of people, each contributing through their own natural abilities and tendencies.

At this point a question may arise: if these four types of people naturally exist in society, why is it necessary for Bhagavān to describe them here?

The purpose of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā is to guide human beings toward supreme bliss and the realization of Paramatma. Bhagavān therefore explains that whatever work a person naturally performs according to HIS svabhāva... (the teaching continues as Bhagavān reveals how one can attain spiritual fulfillment through performing one's own natural duties).

18.45

**sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ(s), saṃsiddhiṃ(m) labhate naraḥ,
sVākarmanirataḥ(s) siddhiṃ(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.

Attaining Supreme Perfection Through One's Own Karma

Sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ, the central teaching here emphasizes that what truly matters is not which particular karma a person performs. It is not important whether someone is a Kṣatriya, a Brāhmaṇa, a Vaiśya, or a Śūdra. The classification itself is not the essential point. Even the specific type of work performed is not the most important aspect. What truly matters is how a person performs one's own karma. When an individual remains engaged in one's own duties with dedication, sincerity, and wholehearted focus, such a person gradually attains saṃsiddhi, the highest perfection. That supreme perfection ultimately means the realization of Paramātmā, the attainment of sat-cit-ānanda.

This teaching demonstrates that anyone can attain this supreme state. In Mahārāṣṭra, for instance, there exists a rich and beautiful tradition of saints. Among them were individuals from many walks of life. Some were potters, some were Brāhmaṇas, some were kings, and some were extremely poor. Some were merchants, some ran small shops, some sold vegetables in the marketplace, some cultivated vegetables in fields, and some worked as barbers. Their external occupations were different, yet their ultimate spiritual attainment was not limited by those professions. The type of karma a person performs is therefore not the determining factor. Regardless of occupation, every individual has the ability to realize Paramātmā.

The teaching emphasizes that while performing one's own duties, a person can gradually attain the highest spiritual realization. By remaining engaged in one's natural work with sincerity and dedication, one can reach saṃsiddhi, the ultimate perfection, which is the realization of the sat-cit-ānanda nature of Paramātmā.

The question then naturally arises: how does a person attain such perfection while performing one's ordinary work? How does one reach the realization of Paramātmā while remaining absorbed in one's daily duties? The answer lies in the principle expressed as "sVākarmanirataḥ siddhiṃ", a person who remains fully engaged and devoted to one's own karma can gradually attain perfection.

At this point, Bhagavān explains that HE will describe the process by which such perfection can be achieved. Regardless of what one's profession or duty may be, Bhagavān declares that every individual has the potential to attain HIM. HE then explains how this realization becomes possible. The following teaching is therefore presented as an extremely important śloka, revealing the path by which a person, while performing one's own karma, can ultimately attain the supreme spiritual goal.

18.46

**yataḥ(ph) pravṛttirbhūtānām(m), yena sarvamidaṃ(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.

Worship of Paramātmā Through One's Own Karma

The teaching begins with the meaning of bhūta. The word bhūta comes from the expression "bhavati

iti bhūta”, meaning that which has come into existence. All beings and the entire universe that have come into manifestation are called bhūta. The natural question then arises: from where has this entire creation arisen? The answer is that everything has arisen from Paramātmā. The phrase “yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānāṃ” refers to that source from which all beings have originated.

The verse further states “yena sarvamidam tatam”, meaning that the same Paramātmā pervades the entire universe. HE is present everywhere. When someone asks, “Where is Paramātmā?” the deeper answer is: where is HE not? HE is present everywhere, dwelling in every particle of existence. The entire universe is pervaded by HIM.

Bhagavān then explains the path to realizing that all-pervading Paramātmā. HE states that a human being can worship HIM through one’s own karma: “svākarmaṇā tamabhyarcya”. This means that by performing one’s own duties and offering them to HIM, a person worships HIM. While performing daily responsibilities, one can cultivate the feeling that these actions are an offering to Īśvara. The thought arises: “This responsibility has been entrusted by Paramātmā, and it is being performed for HIM.” In this way, every action becomes like a flower offered in worship. Each karma becomes a puṣpa offered at the feet of Paramātmā.

This offering does not require going anywhere special. It can be done inwardly. Through remembrance within the mind, whatever work has been completed can simply be offered to HIM. Yet the question arises whether a person remembers Bhagavān during every action. Often the mind forgets. Therefore, the practice can begin from a simple starting point.

In the morning, upon waking, one may offer a prayer:

कर प्रणाम तेरे चरणों में
लगता हूँ अब तेरे काज ।
पालन करने को आज्ञा तब
मैं नियुक्त होता हूँ आज ॥

With this prayer, a person begins the day with the resolve that all actions performed throughout the day will be done as service to Bhagavān. One then makes a sincere effort to maintain that awareness during various tasks. Whenever a task is completed, it can be mentally offered to HIM.

Even if this remembrance is not maintained continuously—because such constant awareness requires deep spiritual maturity—it is still possible to offer actions at least in the morning and at night. Whenever possible, after completing a task, it can be offered with remembrance such as:

“श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु”
“श्रीरामचन्द्रार्पणमस्तु”
“शिवार्पणमस्तु”
“गुरुवार्पणमस्तु”
“भारत मातार्पणमस्तु”
“दुर्गा मातार्पणमस्तु”

In whichever form one loves to see Paramātmā, that action may be offered to HIM. All forms ultimately belong to the same Supreme Reality. Each offering becomes like placing a flower before HIM. Through such offerings, the entire life gradually becomes worship.

Bhagavān then declares that if a human being simply performs actions in this spirit, that person attains parama-siddhi, the highest perfection. The path is therefore extremely simple. One does not need to abandon one’s profession or duties. Whatever one’s vocation may be—business, service, farming, or any other responsibility—one continues performing it, offering each action to Paramātmā.

This teaching is beautifully expressed by Jñāneśvara Mahārāja:

तया सर्वात्मका ईश्वरा । स्वकर्मकुसुमांची वीरा ।
पूजा केली होय अपारा । तोषालागीं ॥ ११७ ॥

Jñāneśvara Mahārāja explains that when each action is offered like a flower in worship, it becomes the most beloved form of worship for Bhagavān. People often perform rituals such as bathing the deity, offering clothes, applying sandal paste, placing tilaka, and offering flowers. All these are indeed forms of worship. However, when a person performs one's duties with pure intention and offers those actions to Bhagavān, that becomes an even more beloved worship.

Why is this so dear to Bhagavān? Because Īśvara, who is sarvatmaka, present in all beings and everywhere, witnesses these actions. When a person performs responsibilities sincerely as service to HIM, that itself becomes HIS worship.

Just as in ordinary life a person is pleased when someone faithfully completes the work entrusted to them, in the same way Bhagavān is deeply pleased when individuals perform the duties HE has assigned through life and offer them back to HIM. One may simply say within the mind, "Bhagavān, this task has been completed and is offered to YOU. Now the next task begins."

Through such an attitude, Bhagavān becomes extremely pleased.

There is therefore no need to change one's work. Even if someone has been given a simple task—such as sweeping and cleaning a temple—that task is not inferior. A priest performing worship may receive spiritual merit, but the person cleaning the temple can receive the same or even greater merit if that work is performed with the sincere feeling: "This cleaning is the worship of Bhagavān."

Thus, Bhagavān teaches that no karma is small or great. The most appropriate karma for a person is one's own svakarma. When performed with devotion and offered to Paramātmā, that very karma becomes the path to the highest spiritual realization.

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.

The Welfare of Following One's Own Svadharma

It is known that the 18th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā presents the essence of the entire teaching. A very similar verse had already appeared earlier in the third chapter. There it is said:

“श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥”

The meaning conveyed in both places is deeply significant. Bhagavān explains that svadharma, one's own duty, is always superior and more beneficial, even if it appears imperfect or small. Even if one's own work seems to have shortcomings or appears insignificant from the outside, it still remains śreyas, that which is truly beneficial and conducive to one's welfare.

Human beings naturally develop the tendency to admire the work of others while undervaluing their own responsibilities. Someone may think that people working in comfortable offices, sitting in air-conditioned rooms and working on computers, have a very pleasant life. Meanwhile, those who work

with computers may think that people working in construction enjoy moving outdoors, experiencing fresh air, and not remaining confined to one place. In this way, the work of others often appears more attractive, while one's own responsibilities seem less appealing.

However, Bhagavān teaches that even if another person's work appears superior or more appealing, one should not abandon one's own duty in order to perform another's. The karma that arises naturally according to one's own svabhāva and circumstances remains more beneficial when performed sincerely and properly.

Bhagavān further explains that even if some apparent fault exists within one's own duty, performing it does not lead to sin. When a person faithfully performs the duty assigned to them by their role, the responsibility itself protects them from the fault of the action.

For example, a judge may sometimes be required to pronounce a death sentence upon a criminal. Even though that judgment leads to the person's death, the judge does not incur the sin of causing that death because the judgment is delivered in the course of fulfilling lawful duty. Similarly, the executioner who carries out the punishment does not incur the sin of killing, because that action is performed as part of an assigned responsibility.

Likewise, a soldier guarding the borders of the nation may be required to kill an enemy who attempts to enter the country and cause harm. In such a situation, the soldier does not incur the sin of violence or murder, because the action is performed while fulfilling the sacred duty of protecting the nation.

Therefore, Bhagavān states that when a person performs the karma that is naturally aligned with one's svabhāva and responsibilities, one does not incur kilbiṣa—sin or moral fault.

The verse expresses this clearly: *svabhāvaniyataṃ karma, kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam*.

By performing the karma determined by one's own nature, a person does not become bound by sin.

Thus, Bhagavān teaches that a person should remain dedicated to one's own svadharma and perform it sincerely. When one's duties are carried out in accordance with one's nature and offered with the right understanding, they become a path toward spiritual welfare rather than bondage.

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.

Performing One's Natural Karma Despite Imperfections

Bhagavān teaches that the karma which arises naturally according to one's svabhāva should never be abandoned, even if it appears imperfect or accompanied by certain faults. The word "**sahajaṃ karma**" refers to the karma that naturally comes to a person as part of life. From the very moment of birth, many responsibilities and duties gradually become part of a person's life. These duties arise naturally according to circumstances, abilities, and nature. Since these karmas must inevitably be performed, it is better to perform them sincerely and properly.

Sometimes a person may feel that their work contains defects or is not noble enough. It may appear

imperfect or less meaningful. Yet Bhagavān clearly instructs that such karma should never be renounced merely because it seems flawed.

The verse explains the reason: “sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa, dhūmenāgnirivāvṛtāḥ”. Every action in this world carries some limitation or defect. Just as fire is always accompanied by smoke, every karma also carries some imperfection. Smoke does not negate the value of fire; similarly, minor defects do not invalidate karma. Therefore, a person should not become anxious about the presence of imperfections in action.

Instead, Bhagavān instructs that one should continue performing one’s svadharma with the spirit of worship. When duties are performed with the attitude that they are offerings to HIM, liberation becomes certain. Through such dedication, the realization of Paramātmā gradually unfolds.

In this teaching, Bhagavān also briefly summarizes the essence of Karma Yoga, which had already been explained in detail in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the Bhagavad Gītā. In only a few verses, HE presents the core principle again: perform one’s natural duties and offer them to HIM.

A simple practical method is described for bringing the teachings of the Gītā into daily life. It is often expressed through a threefold approach given by Gurudev:

गीता पढ़ें, पढ़ायें, जीवन में लायें

Study the Gītā, teach the Gītā, and live the Gītā. The natural question then arises: what does it mean to live the Gītā?

Living the Gītā does not require abandoning ordinary life or performing extraordinary practices. From the moment one wakes up in the morning and begins the day’s activities, one simply performs each action while remembering Bhagavān as much as possible. One maintains the awareness that these responsibilities have been entrusted by HIM.

After completing a task, the action can be mentally offered to HIM with the feeling:

“तेरा तुझको अर्पण, क्या लागे मेरा।”

This reflects the understanding that the work truly belongs to HIM. HE simply allowed it to be performed through the individual. Once the work is offered back to HIM, the mind becomes free from the burden of ownership.

If a person practices this sincerely even for a single day—performing all tasks for Bhagavān and offering each one back to HIM, one can experience a deep sense of inner freedom. At night, before going to sleep, one may simply remember Bhagavān again and say inwardly that the day’s actions were performed for HIM. Even if remembrance was sometimes forgotten during the day, the entire effort can still be offered to HIM.

With such an attitude, sleep becomes peaceful and restful, and the joy of mukti, inner freedom, can begin to be experienced even in ordinary life.

After explaining the path of realizing Paramātmā through Karma Yoga, Bhagavān then turns toward another path. Some seekers, through the spiritual practices accumulated over many previous births, naturally develop deep knowledge of the Supreme. Their earlier practice of Karma Yoga matures into wisdom, and they begin to perceive the truth of Paramātmā more directly.

Bhagavān then proceeds to explain how such jñānīs, those established in knowledge, ultimately attain HIM through the path of jñāna.

**asaktabuddhiḥ(s) sarvatra, jitātmā vigataspr̥haḥ,
naiṣkarmyasiddhiṃ(m) paramāṃ(m), sannyāsenādhigacchati. 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.

Attaining Naishkarmya-Siddhi Through the Path of Sannyāsa

Bhagavān explains that some seekers attain HIM through the path of Sannyāsa. Such individuals possess a unique disposition from a very early stage of life. Their buddhi remains asakta, free from attachment. They do not develop cravings for worldly objects or desires such as “I want this” or “I want that.” Their inner feeling remains steady: they desire nothing except the realization of Paramātmā.

The verse describes them as “asaktabuddhiḥ(s) sarvatra”, their intellect remains unattached toward all worldly objects and experiences. They are also described as “jitātmā”, meaning one who has gained mastery over oneself. Here the word ātman refers to the entire inner and outer personality: the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, and the inner faculty of consciousness. A jitātmā is one who has gained complete control over all these aspects.

Such a person becomes “vigataspr̥haḥ”, free from personal desires. No longing remains for personal gain or enjoyment. Whatever action is performed is done solely for Paramātmā. Nothing is sought for oneself.

Only such individuals are naturally suited for Sannyāsa. Renunciation is not something easily adopted by mere decision or imitation. Sometimes people express concern that teaching the Bhagavad Gītā might inspire young people to renounce worldly life. Yet renunciation does not arise merely by reading the Gītā. True Sannyāsa arises only in those whose spiritual disciplines have matured through many previous births. Because of that accumulated practice, detachment appears naturally in their lives from childhood itself.

Such seekers gain mastery over their mind and senses and no longer remain bound by worldly desires. Their natural inclination becomes the service of all beings, seeing Paramātmā present in everyone.

Bhagavān then speaks of “naiṣkarmyasiddhiṃ”, the supreme state of actionlessness. This state appears paradoxical: accomplishing everything while apparently doing nothing, and performing many actions while remaining untouched by action. A full explanation of this profound state requires deeper elaboration, but its essence can be understood through the nature of Paramātmā.

From an ordinary perspective, it may appear that Paramātmā does nothing while human beings perform all actions. Yet in reality, the entire universe functions through HIS presence and power. Without directly acting, HE enables all actions to occur. This mysterious state is called Naishkarmya-siddhi.

This supreme state belongs truly to Paramātmā, and through the path of Sannyāsa, a realized seeker can attain that state and realize HIM. Thus, Bhagavān declares that through renunciation and perfect detachment, a seeker reaches the realization of Paramātmā and attains the supreme Naishkarmya-siddhi.

Bhagavān then indicates that HE will further explain how such realization is ultimately attained.

18.50

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.

The Qualifications for Attaining Brahman Through the Path of Knowledge

After explaining the paths of Karma Yoga and Sannyāsa, Bhagavān now begins to describe how a seeker attains Brahman through the path of Jñāna. The verse indicates that once a person has reached spiritual maturity or siddhi, the question arises: how does such a person attain Brahman? Bhagavān declares that HE will explain this process briefly, “samāsenā”, in a concise manner.

The topic here is the parama-niṣṭhā of jñāna, the highest steadfastness in knowledge. This refers to the supreme path through which a seeker realizes Paramātmā through pure knowledge. Naturally, one may ask what qualifications are necessary to walk this path. The path of knowledge requires a particular inner preparedness. It is not simply an intellectual pursuit; it requires profound spiritual maturity.

Bhagavān explains that when certain qualities arise within a seeker, such a person can realize HIM directly through the path of knowledge. In a figurative sense, it is like flying directly toward the goal rather than slowly walking step by step. One might say that such a seeker can “directly fly” toward realization.

This is sometimes compared to the “vihangam marg”, the path of the bird. A bird that wishes to eat a mango can simply fly directly to the fruit and enjoy it. A human being, however, must climb the tree branch by branch before reaching the fruit. In the same way, most seekers gradually progress through effort, discipline, and practice. But those who have accumulated deep spiritual practice over many previous births may attain realization directly through the path of knowledge.

Such seekers naturally possess intense detachment, self-control, and deep insight. Because their spiritual evolution has matured through many lifetimes of practice, they become capable of realizing Paramātmā through the direct path of Jñāna.

Bhagavān then proceeds to describe the specific qualities and disciplines required for this path, explaining the characteristics that enable a seeker to attain Brahman through the supreme steadfastness in knowledge.

18.51

buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto, dhṛtyātmānaṃ(n) niyamyā ca, śabdādīnviṣayāṃstyaktvā, rāga-dveṣau vyudasya ca. 18.51

Endowed with a pure intellect and partaking of a light, Sāttvika and regulated diet, living in a lonely and undefiled place, having rejected sound and other objects of sense,

The Purified Intellect Required for the Path of Knowledge

Bhagavān begins describing the inner qualities required for one who wishes to realize Brahman through the path of Jñāna. The first qualification mentioned is “buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto” being

endowed with a purified intellect.

A viśuddha buddhi is an intellect that gives correct and clear decisions. It does not become confused or misled by impulses, emotions, or ignorance. Such an intellect naturally guides a person toward truth and righteousness. The nature of this pure intellect had already been explained earlier:

**“प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥”**

A sāttvika buddhi understands clearly what should be done and what should not be done, what leads to bondage and what leads to liberation, what is appropriate and what is harmful. Such clarity is the mark of a viśuddha buddhi.

However, intellect alone is not sufficient. The verse also mentions “dhṛtyātmānaṃ niyamya ca”—the presence of dhṛti, firmness and perseverance. Along with pure intellect, there must also be patience, steadiness, and inner strength. Through such firmness, a seeker gains the ability to regulate oneself. The body, senses, mind, and impulses can be disciplined through this inner control.

The verse then describes another essential qualification: “śabdādīnviṣayāṃstyaktvā”. The five sense-objects, śabdha (sound), sparsh (touch), rupa (form), rasa (taste), and gandha (smell), are the natural attractions of the senses. The eyes become drawn toward beautiful sights, the ears become absorbed in pleasant music, and the senses naturally seek enjoyable experiences.

Yet the seeker walking the path of knowledge does not become attached to these objects. It is not that such things are condemned or considered evil. Rather, the seeker simply does not develop fascination for them. The inner longing remains directed toward only one goal: the realization of Paramātmā.

Therefore the verse concludes with “rāgadveṣau vyudasya ca”, abandoning both attachment and aversion. Rāga refers to attraction or attachment toward objects, people, or experiences. Dveṣa refers to aversion or hatred toward them. The seeker of knowledge transcends both.

This does not mean that the world is considered bad or undesirable. Objects may still be good or beautiful, but the seeker does not crave them. The mind remains free from both clinging and rejection. In this state of balance, the mind becomes calm, pure, and prepared for the direct realization of Paramātmā.

18.52

**viviktasevī laghvāśī, yatavākkāyamānasaḥ,
dhyānayogaparo nityaṃ(m), vairāgyaṃ(m) samupāśritaḥ. 18.52**

having controlled the mind, speech and body by restraining the mind and senses through firmness of a Sāttvika type, taking a resolute stand on dispassion, after having completely got rid of attraction and aversion and remaining ever devoted to the Yoga of meditation,

The Lifestyle and Inner Discipline of the Seeker on the Path of Knowledge

Bhagavān continues describing the qualities required for a seeker who wishes to realize Brahman through the path of Jñāna. One of the characteristics mentioned is “viviktasevī”, one who naturally prefers solitude.

This does not refer to occasional withdrawal when a person becomes mentally exhausted or

disturbed. Ordinary individuals may sometimes seek solitude when they are overwhelmed by noise or activity. However, such solitude is temporary, and after some time the mind again longs for company and interaction. The seeker described here is different. For such a person, solitude becomes natural and comfortable. Remaining alone does not create restlessness; rather, it brings inner peace and clarity. The mind becomes stable in such an environment.

The next quality is “laghvāśī”, meaning one who eats lightly and moderately. The seeker does not feel the need for excessive food or indulgence. Only the amount of nourishment required to maintain the body is taken. Food becomes a means to sustain life rather than a source of constant enjoyment.

Another important discipline described is “yatavākkāyamānaḥ”, one who has gained mastery over speech, body, and mind. Such a person is capable of regulating actions and expressions. What to speak, how much to speak, what to eat, what to drink, and even how much rest to take, all these aspects are governed by self-control. The seeker maintains awareness and restraint in every aspect of life.

Bhagavān further states “dhyānayogaparo nityaṃ”, indicating that such a seeker remains constantly devoted to Dhyāna Yoga. The mind naturally becomes absorbed in meditation and contemplation of Paramātmā. Rather than being pulled outward by distractions, the mind repeatedly turns inward toward the remembrance and contemplation of the Supreme.

Finally, the verse mentions “vairāgyaṃ samupāśritaḥ” one who has embraced Vairāgya. The word Vairāgya comes from “virāga”, meaning the absence of attachment. Rāga refers to attraction or clinging toward objects, experiences, or relationships. When such attachment dissolves, the state is called Vairāgya.

For many seekers on the path of Sannyāsa, this detachment arises naturally from childhood itself. Their inner tendencies are directed away from worldly attachments and toward the realization of Paramātmā. Because of this natural disposition, they become capable of walking the path of knowledge and ultimately attaining Brahman.

18.53

**ahaṅkāraṃ(m) balaṃ(n) darpaṃ(ñ), kāmaṃ(ñ) krodhaṃ(m) parigrahaṃ,
vimucya nirmamaḥ(ś) śānto, brahmabhūyāya kalpate. 18.53**

having given up egotism, violence, arrogance, lust, anger and luxuries, devoid of the feeling of meum and tranquil of heart-such a man becomes qualified for oneness with Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.

Freedom from Ego, Desire, and Possessiveness as Preparation for Realizing Brahman

Bhagavān continues describing the inner purification required for a seeker walking the path of Jñāna. Such a seeker gradually becomes free from several powerful inner tendencies.

The verse begins with “ahaṅkāraṃ” ego. Ego is one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome. Many attachments and desires may fall away with effort, but the sense of “I” often remains deeply rooted. Even a renunciate may sometimes develop subtle ego, thinking, “Everything has been renounced; nothing is required anymore.” Yet even this thought can contain a trace of ego. The feeling of “I have no ego” itself can become another form of ego. Therefore, overcoming ahaṅkāra is one of the most subtle and challenging aspects of spiritual growth.

Next comes “kāmaḥ”, referring to desires and cravings. When desires arise, the mind begins to seek their fulfillment. If the desire remains unfulfilled, krodhaḥ (anger) often follows. Sometimes anger arises even after a desire is fulfilled, when expectations are not fully satisfied or when something more was anticipated. Thus desire and anger are closely connected.

The verse also mentions “parigrahaḥ”, the tendency to accumulate and possess many objects. In ordinary life people often gather numerous possessions, many of which are not truly necessary. Events such as difficult times in life sometimes reveal how little is actually required for survival and contentment. The seeker understands this truth beforehand. Knowing that only minimal necessities are required for sustaining the body, such a person does not feel compelled to accumulate possessions. Traditionally, it is said that a renunciate may carry only a kamaṇḍalu, a simple water vessel, and with that minimal possession life continues without burden.

Another tendency mentioned is “balaḥ darpaḥ”, the pride arising from one’s strength, abilities, or accomplishments. The seeker gives up the tendency to speak or behave with arrogance or display of power.

The verse uses the word “vimucya, meaning to completely relinquish these tendencies. The root “mucya” means to release or let go, and “vimucya” indicates letting go thoroughly. This does not always happen through forced suppression. Rather, through inner understanding and spiritual maturity, these tendencies gradually fall away on their own. Ego, desire, attachment, and aversion slowly dissolve without deliberate struggle.

The seeker then becomes “nirmamaḥ”, free from the sense of possession. The word nirmama literally means “nothing is mine.” The feeling of “mine-ness” (mamatā) disappears. The sense of “I” and “mine” no longer dominates the mind. It is important to note that here nirmama does not mean cruel or heartless in the ordinary sense of the word. Instead, it signifies freedom from possessiveness.

The verse also describes such a person as “śānto”, deeply peaceful. When ego, desire, anger, and possessiveness dissolve, the mind naturally becomes calm and steady.

Through this purification, the seeker becomes “brahmabhūyāya kalpate”, fit or qualified to realize Brahman. Such a person becomes capable of merging in awareness with Paramātmā, recognizing the unity with the Supreme Reality.

At this stage, the seeker becomes ready to experience the state of oneness with Brahman. The natural question then arises: after attaining this unity with Paramātmā, what is the state of such a realized being? Bhagavān proceeds to explain this in the next teaching.

18.54

brahmabhūtaḥ(ph) prasannātmā, na śocati na kāṅkṣati, śamaḥ(s) sarveṣu bhūteṣu, madbhaktiṃ(m) labhate parām. 18.54

Established in identity with Brahma (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified), and cheerful in mind, the Sāṅkhyayogī no longer grieves nor craves for anything. The same to all beings, such a Yogī attains supreme devotion to Me.

The State of the Brahma-Bhūta and the Attainment of Supreme Bhakti

Bhagavān explains that when a seeker becomes qualified to unite with Brahman, that person enters the state described as brahma-bhūta. Such a person becomes prasannātmā, inwardly joyful and

serene. Their inner being remains peaceful and cheerful regardless of external circumstances. Whether happiness or difficulty appears in life, it does not disturb their inner state. Within themselves they remain constantly calm and content.

Bhagavān further states “**na śocati na kāṅkṣati**”. Such a person neither grieves nor longs for anything. There is no sorrow over what has not been obtained, nor is there anxiety to gain something in the future. The mind does not fall into grief, nor does it chase after new desires.

Another important transformation occurs in their vision: “**śamaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu**”. When true knowledge arises, the seeker’s perspective becomes equal toward all beings. This samattva, the vision of equality, is itself the essence of Yoga. Earlier in the teachings it was said:

“समत्वं योग उच्यते”

In this state, the seeker begins to perceive the same Paramātmā present within all beings. External differences of form no longer dominate perception. Instead, the inner presence of the Supreme becomes visible everywhere.

There are many examples illustrating this vision. Bhakta Prahlāda could perceive Paramātmā even within a pillar. When he was challenged and asked, “Where is your Nārāyaṇa? Is HE in this pillar?” Prahlāda replied that HE was indeed present there. Such was his unwavering perception of the Divine everywhere.

Similarly, Sant Eknātha Mahārāja once carried sacred water from the river Gaṅgā over a long distance with the intention of offering it to Rāmeśvara. On the way, he saw a donkey suffering intensely from thirst under the scorching sun. Moved by compassion, he gave the entire water to the animal. People questioned him, saying that the water was meant for the worship of Rāmeśvara. Eknātha Mahārāja replied, “Where is the donkey? It is Rāmeśvara whom I am offering this water to.” In that moment, he perceived Paramātmā within that being.

When such equal vision becomes established, Bhagavān declares:

मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम्

that person attains supreme devotion toward HIM.

This is a profound teaching. Often people speak of different paths, Karma, Jñāna, and Bhakti, as if they are separate routes to Paramātmā. Yet here Bhagavān indicates that when knowledge reaches its culmination, it naturally blossoms into Parā Bhakti, the highest devotion.

In truth, Bhakti is not merely another path among many. When Paramātmā is realized, Bhakti itself becomes the natural state of the heart. The seeker feels that nothing more is required once devotion to Paramātmā arises.

A beautiful explanation of Bhakta and Bhakti is given by Samartha Rāmadāsa Svāmī. He describes a bhakta as one who is not separate from Bhagavān:

“विभक्त नद्वे तो भक्त”

A true devotee is one who is not divided from the Divine.

He also defines Bhakti in a profound way:

स्वरूपी आसक्ती हीच भक्ती

Bhakti is complete attachment to the Divine Reality itself. It does not mean merely abandoning worldly attachments. Rather, it means becoming so deeply attached to Paramātmā that other attractions gradually lose their hold on the mind. When the heart becomes absorbed in the Divine to such an extent that worldly subjects no longer dominate attention, that state is called Bhakti.

Earlier, Bhagavān had already hinted at this in the beginning of the seventh chapter:

“मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः”

Bhagavān tells Arjuna to become āsakta, deeply attached, to HIM. When the mind becomes attached to Paramātmā, all knowledge naturally unfolds.

However, reaching that state of devotion requires great inner purification and spiritual effort. Only after the mind becomes purified through discipline, detachment, and knowledge does one attain Parā Bhakti, the highest devotion to Bhagavān.

When such supreme devotion arises, the natural question follows: what happens next? What does a seeker experience after attaining this Parā Bhakti toward Paramātmā? Bhagavān then proceeds to explain the next stage of realization.

18.55

**bhaktyā māmabhijānāti, yāvānyaścāsmi tattvataḥ,
tato māṃ(n) tattvato jñātvā, viśate tadanantaram. 18.55**

Through that supreme devotion he comes to know Me in reality, what and who I am; and thereby knowing Me truly, he forthwith merges into My being.

Knowing Paramātmā Through Bhakti and Entering into the Divine

Bhagavān explains that through Bhakti, a devotee comes to truly know HIM. The verse begins with “bhaktyā māmabhijānāti”, through devotion, the seeker comes to know Paramātmā completely. This knowledge is not merely intellectual understanding. It is a direct and profound realization of the Divine.

Bhagavān states that through Bhakti, the devotee begins to understand HIM in fullness. The devotee does not merely hear about Paramātmā or imagine HIM; rather, the devotee experiences the Divine directly. Such knowledge arises only through deep devotion.

The question naturally arises: who can truly know Paramātmā? Consider the vastness of the universe. Who can describe how vast space truly is? Even the greatest scientists cannot fully measure or define the extent of space. Only space itself could reveal its true magnitude. In the same way, who can fully explain the nature of Paramātmā? Only Paramātmā can reveal HIS true nature.

Therefore, when Bhagavān says “māmabhijānāti”, it implies that the devotee comes to know HIM completely, both inwardly and outwardly. In this state, the devotee does not remain separate from the Divine. Instead, the devotee becomes one with the very essence of Paramātmā.

The verse continues with “yāvānyaścāsmi tattvataḥ”. This means that the devotee realizes the true nature and vastness of Paramātmā. The Supreme is all-pervading, present throughout the entire universe. Although the human mind cannot fully grasp such infinite reality through ordinary perception, the devotee who realizes Paramātmā through Bhakti understands this truth in its essence.

After such realization, Bhagavān says: “tato māṃ tattvato jñātvā, viśate tadanantaram”. Having known Paramātmā in truth, the devotee enters into HIM. The word “viśate” comes from the root “vish”, meaning to enter or merge within. It signifies complete union with the Divine.

In this state, the devotee becomes one with Paramātmā. The apparent distinction between the individual being and the Supreme dissolves. Externally, such a realized being may still appear in human form, visible to others as an ordinary person. Yet inwardly, that being is united with the Supreme Reality.

Jñāneśvara Mahārāja beautifully described such realized beings. According to his teaching, a person who has realized the Supreme may appear outwardly as a human being, yet in truth that person is none other than Param Brahman itself manifest before the world.

However, another question arises at this point. If such a seeker has become united with Paramātmā, what remains to be done? Has all activity ceased?

Bhagavān clarifies that even after this realization, the enlightened being may continue to act in the world. The realization of unity with Paramātmā does not necessarily lead to inactivity. Rather, even after attaining oneness with the Divine, such a being continues to act, yet those actions arise from a completely different state of consciousness. Bhagavān then proceeds to explain what such a realized being continues to do.

18.56

**sarVākarmāṇyapi sadā, kurvāṇo madvyapāśrayaḥ,
matprasādādavāpnoti, śāśvataṃ(m) padamavyayam. 18.56**

The Karmayogī, however, who depends on Me, attains by My grace the eternal, imperishable state, even though performing all actions.

sarVākarmāṇyapi sadā, kurvāṇo madvyapāśrayaḥ,
matprasādādavāpnoti, śāśvataṃ(m) padamavyayam.

Acting in the World While Established in Paramātmā

Bhagavān explains that even after realizing Paramātmā and becoming united with HIM, the realized being does not necessarily abandon action. The verse says “sarVākarmāṇyapi sadā kurvāṇo” such a person continues performing all actions. The external activities of life may still continue. The realized being does not simply sit idle after attaining union with the Supreme.

In fact, such a person may continue to live, move, speak, and work in the world just like others. Yet the difference lies in the inner state. The realized being becomes like a living expression of Paramātmā, a moving presence of the Divine in the world.

Bhagavān says “madvyapāśrayaḥ”, all actions of such a person take place while remaining completely under HIS refuge. The realized being does not feel that actions are performed through personal effort. Instead, everything unfolds under the shelter of Paramātmā.

The one who creates the universe, sustains it, and dissolves it is the very Paramātmā in whom the realized being now abides. Because the person rests in that Supreme Reality, actions naturally occur through that divine power. The individual no longer experiences the sense of “I am doing this.” Activities continue, yet the feeling of personal authorship disappears.

Such a being may still perform acts of devotion, worship, or service. Yet even while performing them, the thought “I am doing Bhakti” does not arise. The sense of personal ownership over devotion itself disappears.

A beautiful illustration is seen in the life of Sant Tukārām Mahārāj. It is not usually said that Tukārām merely had the vision of Pāṇḍuraṅga. Instead, the traditional expression is:

“तुका झाला पांडुरंग”

Tukārām himself became Pāṇḍuraṅga. Yet even after becoming one with the Divine, devotion did not cease. It is said:

आधी होता संतसंग। तुका झाला पांडुरंग ।।

त्याचे भजन राहिना । मुळ स्वभाव जाईना ।।

Even after becoming one with Pāṇḍuraṅga, his devotion continued, because devotion had become his very nature. Worship and remembrance flowed naturally from his being.

Bhagavān then says “matprasādād—through HIS grace, the realized being attains the supreme state. The word prasāda is often used for the sacred offering received from worship. When a person receives prasāda, the heart naturally experiences joy and peace. In its deeper meaning, prasāda refers to the state of inner serenity and contentment that arises through the grace of the Divine.

Through that divine grace, Bhagavān says that the seeker attains “śāśvataṃ padamavyayam”, the eternal and imperishable state. This is the supreme state where there is no return to limitation, no decay, and no loss. It is the state of abiding in the eternal sat-cit-ānanda, complete union with Paramātmā.

Thus Bhagavān has explained how Karma Yoga, Jñāna, and Bhakti ultimately lead to the realization of the Supreme. First, HE explained the path of Karma Yoga, then the path of Jñāna, and finally the culmination in Parā Bhakti and union with Paramātmā.

Now Bhagavān prepares to reveal something even more remarkable. In the upcoming teaching, HE presents a unique integration of these paths, combining Karma, Jñāna, and Bhakti into a single unified approach to spiritual realization. This teaching becomes one of the most profound and significant verses in the Bhagavad Gītā.

18.57

**cetasā sarVākarmāṇi, mayi sannyasya matparaḥ,
buddhiyogamupāsṛitya, maccittaḥ(s) satataṃ(m) bhava. 18.57**

Mentally dedicating all your actions to Me, and taking recourse to Yoga in the form of evenmindedness, be solely devoted to Me and constantly fix your mind on Me.

Offering All Actions to Bhagavān - The Integration of Karma, Jñāna, and Bhakti

The word “cetasā” means with the mind, with full awareness and inner involvement. Bhagavān explains that whatever actions a person performs should be done consciously and then offered to HIM. The phrase “sarva-karmāṇi mayi saṃnyasya” indicates that all actions are to be surrendered to Bhagavān.

The word saṃnyāsa here does not merely mean abandoning action. Its deeper meaning is samyak-nyāsa, which means to place something properly and completely in the right place. Thus Bhagavān

teaches that all actions should be placed upon HIM and offered to HIM.

A person continues performing daily duties, but inwardly leaves every action at the feet of Bhagavān. The attitude may arise naturally: “Bhagavān, this task was given by YOU. Today this work has been completed, and it is now offered back to YOU. It belongs to YOU; please accept it.” In this way actions can be offered with deep love and devotion. Bhagavān does not insist upon any particular emotional expression; HE simply says that whatever is done should be offered to HIM.

When a person maintains such an inner attitude, it becomes Buddhi-Yoga. The mind holds the understanding that all actions are performed for Paramātmā. This is considered the complete and highest form of Karma-Yoga—continuing all actions while inwardly offering them to Bhagavān.

Along with this comes samatva-buddhi, the understanding of equality. Paramātmā exists everywhere and in all beings. Therefore whatever action is performed is ultimately related to Paramātmā. With this awakened understanding, a person acts in the world with love toward all beings, recognizing that all work is being done for the Divine presence that pervades everything.

Bhagavān then declares: “maccittaḥ satataṃ bhava”, the mind should remain constantly established in HIM. Bhagavān does not demand anything complicated. A person may continue performing all duties, but those actions should be offered to HIM, and the mind should also be dedicated to HIM.

This is actually the most difficult part. The mind is not a physical object that can simply be handed over. Yet Bhagavān instructs that the mind, the intellect, and the entire inner being should be directed toward HIM.

The term citta includes the whole antaḥkaraṇa-catuṣṭaya, manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), citta (memory or inner awareness), and ahaṃkāra (ego). To realize Bhagavān, two movements take place simultaneously. On one side the mind moves toward HIM with love and devotion, and on the other side the intellect examines and reflects upon HIM, attempting to understand HIS reality. When love and understanding meet, the seeker grasps the Divine presence and gradually becomes united with it.

In this way Bhagavān instructs that the mind should remain constantly absorbed in HIM. This state represents Bhakti-Yoga. The significance of this verse is that it brings together three paths simultaneously—Karma-Yoga, Jñāna-Yoga, and Bhakti-Yoga. A person performs actions (Karma-Yoga), understands the nature of Paramātmā through the intellect (Jñāna-Yoga), and keeps the heart devoted to Bhagavān (Bhakti-Yoga).

When a seeker practices according to this teaching, all three yogas operate together in life. As a result, the spiritual progress becomes extremely rapid. One may reflect upon this: Bhagavān can be realized through Bhakti alone, through Jñāna alone, or through selfless Karma alone. If all three paths operate together, the speed of spiritual advancement naturally increases.

Bhagavān also clarifies that this path does not mean that difficulties will never arise. Challenges may still appear in life. However, when actions are offered to Bhagavān and the mind remains connected with HIM, those difficulties gradually resolve themselves, and the seeker moves steadily toward the realization of Paramātmā.

**maccittaḥ(s) sarvadurgāṇi, matprasādāttariṣyasi,
atha cettvamahaṅkārān, na śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi. 18.58**

With your mind thus devoted to Me, you shall, by My grace overcome all difficulties. But, if from self-conceit you do not care to listen to Me, you will be lost.

Crossing All Difficulties through the Grace of Bhagavān

Bhagavān declares that if a person keeps the mind constantly fixed on HIM and continues performing actions in life, then all difficulties will be crossed through HIS grace. The word durga refers to obstacles, hardships, or crises that arise in life. Bhagavān assures that whatever challenges may come, a person who remains inwardly connected with HIM and continues to perform duties will cross all those obstacles by HIS prasāda.

No matter how great a difficulty may appear, Bhagavān says that through HIS grace the seeker will move beyond it. The challenges may still arise in life, but they will not overpower the person. Instead, they will be gradually overcome.

However, Bhagavān also gives an important warning. HE says “atha cet”, meaning but if. If a person, due to ahaṅkāra (ego), refuses to listen to this teaching, then the situation becomes different. Ego makes a person think: “Who is Bhagavān to instruct me? This is my life, and I have every right to live and enjoy it as I wish.” When someone lives with such an attitude, absorbed only in personal pride and self-centered thinking, then that person does not accept the wisdom offered by Bhagavān.

Bhagavān therefore says “na śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi”, if this teaching is not heard or accepted because of ego, then the individual will remain bound in the cycle of worldly existence. Such a person will continue to move through repeated birth and death, constantly experiencing the alternating waves of pleasure and sorrow.

Life in the world naturally moves between sukha and duḥkha, happiness and sorrow. These two are opposites and inevitably follow one another. When happiness comes, sorrow will also come at some point; when sorrow appears, happiness will again arise later. This constant fluctuation continues within worldly life.

However, the state of ānanda is different. True ānanda does not have an opposite. When a person realizes Paramātmā as Sat-Cit-Ānanda, that realization brings a state that is permanent and unchanging. Once that eternal state is attained, no force can pull the realized being down from that level of bliss. It is the śāśvata pada, the eternal state.

Bhagavān indicates that this highest realization becomes possible when the teachings are accepted with śraddhā (faith) and lived sincerely. But if someone, out of ego, says, “Why should these teachings be followed? Why should Bhagavān’s words be accepted?” and refuses to listen, then such a person remains lost on the spiritual path.

In that condition the individual does not move forward toward realization but instead becomes confused and spiritually lost, remaining entangled in worldly existence. The cycle of joy and sorrow continues, and the ultimate realization of Paramātmā remains distant.

18.59

**yadahañkāramāśritya, na yotsya iti manyase,
mithyaiṣa vyavasāyaste, prakṛtistvām(n) niyokṣyati. 18.59**

If, taking your stand on egotism, you think, "I will not fight," vain is this resolve of yours; nature will drive you to the act.

Acting According to One's Nature and Surrendering Ego to Bhagavān

Bhagavān explains to Arjuna that if he takes refuge in ahañkāra (ego) and decides, "I will not fight," then that decision will not truly stand. Bhagavān says that if a person abandons reliance on HIM and instead relies upon personal ego, thinking independently, "I will not perform this duty," such a determination is not genuine.

The verse indicates that if someone, supported by ego, concludes "na yotsye", "I will not fight," that conclusion is only an illusion. Bhagavān clarifies that such a resolve is mithyā, false and temporary, because it does not align with the person's prakṛti, their inherent nature.

Bhagavān therefore tells Arjuna that his decision is mistaken. Arjuna is a kṣatriya, and the natural qualities of courage, protection of dharma, and readiness for battle exist within him. Because of this inherent nature, Arjuna cannot simply withdraw and remain inactive. Bhagavān says "prakṛtis tvām niyokṣyati"—one's own nature will eventually compel action. Arjuna's nature itself will draw him back and lead him to fight.

Therefore Bhagavān suggests that if the action must eventually happen, it is far better to perform it while taking refuge in HIM, rather than acting out of personal ego. Actions performed with ego carry the attitude: "I am doing this. I will accomplish it. I will prove myself." This strengthens the sense of individuality and pride.

Instead, Bhagavān's teaching encourages a different inner attitude. A person may think: "This responsibility has been entrusted by Bhagavān. It must be performed for HIM." After completing the work, the person may inwardly offer it back, saying: "Bhagavān, YOU have accomplished this through me." If the task is not completed perfectly, the seeker may humbly pray: "Bhagavān, forgive me; it could not be done fully. I will try again and remain ready to serve YOUR purpose." Performing actions in this spirit gradually dissolves ego and deepens surrender.

A historical example reflecting this spirit can be seen in the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. While establishing Swarājya, he never claimed that he was personally creating a kingdom for himself. Instead, he consistently expressed the sentiment that the establishment of Swarājya was Bhagavān's will. His words reflected the understanding that the movement for Swarājya was not a personal ambition but an expression of Divine intention.

Because of this profound humility and dedication, his legacy continues to be revered. The saint Samarth Ramdas Swami described him as "Shrimant Yogi", indicating that he was not merely a king but a true yogi, inwardly united with Paramātmā.

The deeper message of Bhagavān's teaching is that a person cannot escape one's inherent svabhāva (nature). Actions will eventually arise according to that nature. Therefore the true path is not suppression of action but performing those actions while surrendering ego and aligning them with the will of Bhagavān.

svabhāvajena kaunteya, nibaddhaḥ(s) svena karmaṇā, kartuṃ(n) necchasi yanmohāt, kariṣyasiavaśo'pi tat. 18.60

That action, too, which you are not willing to undertake through ignorance you will perform, bound by your own duty born of your nature.

Acting According to One's Svabhāva and Offering All Duties to Bhagavān

Bhagavān explains to Arjuna that every person is bound by actions that arise from svabhāva, one's inherent nature. This nature develops through prakṛti, shaped by the three guṇas: sattva, rajas, and tamas. Because of these qualities, a particular disposition forms within a person, and according to that disposition, actions naturally arise.

Human beings often believe that they independently decide their life choices. A person may think, "I decided to study engineering," or "I chose this path in life." However, Bhagavān's teaching indicates that the deeper cause lies in svabhāva. The inherent nature quietly draws a person toward certain actions and fields of work. What appears as personal choice is often the unfolding of one's inner nature.

Thus Bhagavān states that all beings are nibaddha, bound by their own nature and the actions that arise from it. In this sense, prakṛti becomes a binding force, because it impels individuals to act according to its tendencies.

Bhagavān further says that if, due to moha (delusion or ignorance), a person thinks, "I will not perform this action," that resolve will not ultimately stand. Arjuna may say that he does not wish to fight, but Bhagavān clarifies that even if such a thought arises from confusion, Arjuna will eventually act according to his nature.

The verse concludes with "kariṣyasiavaśo'pi tat", even unwillingly, one will perform the action compelled by nature. Arjuna's kṣatriya svabhāva will draw him into the battle. His nature itself will make him fight.

The deeper message of these teachings is that one should not attempt to abandon the kartavya karma—the duty that arises naturally according to one's nature and role in life. Instead of rejecting such duties, they should be performed with the right inner attitude.

Bhagavān's instruction is that these duties should be carried out for HIM. A person may think, "Bhagavān has entrusted this responsibility. I have been chosen to perform this work." It should never be seen as a burden forced upon oneself. Rather, it should be understood as a form of grace—that Bhagavān has given the opportunity to perform a particular duty.

When actions are performed with this feeling, that Bhagavān has entrusted this work and that it is being done for HIM—the experience of life changes. Instead of tension and frustration, a person begins to experience ānanda, a deep inner joy.

To truly understand the message of the Bhagavad Gītā, it must not remain merely as intellectual knowledge. Its teachings should be brought into ācaraṇa, into practical living. Even if a small portion of these verses is practiced sincerely, a person will begin to experience the profound peace and joy that the Gītā describes.

The upcoming verses continue this teaching and will be reflected upon in the concluding session. The study and reflection undertaken today are themselves in accordance with the instruction of

Bhagavān. HE has revealed the knowledge, and HE also enables the offering of that effort back to HIM.

Therefore the entire effort is humbly offered at HIS feet:

Om Tat Sat. Śrī-Kṛṣṇārpaṇamastu. (All is offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.)

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Rashmi ji

Question: Sometimes very talented people cannot progress in life because of family circumstances or other limitations. Is that the result of their karma?

Answer: This is explained through prārabdha, the results of past actions that have matured and appear in life as present circumstances. However, Bhagavān has also given the path of Karma-Yoga. By performing one's duties sincerely and with the right attitude, even the influence of prārabdha gradually weakens and dissolves.

Therefore, what has come in life may be accepted as the will of Bhagavān, while the actions that need to be performed are understood as one's kartavya (duty). One may hold the feeling that Bhagavān has entrusted this responsibility and chosen the person to perform it.

When a person lives with this understanding and takes refuge in Bhagavān, complexes do not arise. Neither superiority nor inferiority complex remains, because both are forms of ego. The mind stays balanced and peaceful.

Shrinivas ji

Question: What does viśuddha mean?

Answer: The word viśuddha means especially pure or completely purified. The prefix "vi" indicates a sense of distinction or intensification. Thus śuddha means pure, and viśuddha means pure in a special or higher sense. A similar idea appears in the word "vimucca" (or vimucya). The root muc means to release or to be freed. When the prefix vi is added, it conveys the sense of being completely released or fully freed from something, such as attachment to sense objects. Thus, just as viśuddha indicates special purity, vimucca indicates complete release.

Question: In the last Shloka taken today, does it say a person who has lived with great misconduct can progress if that person turns to HIM with exclusive devotion?

Answer: Regarding nature (svabhāva), if a person is tāmasika, that disposition may appear strong. However, it does not mean it can never change. Transformation does not happen automatically through external situations alone. It begins when even a small inner desire arises to move toward Bhagavān. This is reflected in the teaching:

“अपि चेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक्साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥”

When such a turning happens, the path forward gradually becomes visible. As the seeker follows that path, the inner being becomes purified, and the person gradually moves toward Paramātmā. Thus, even someone deeply influenced by tamas can rise and reach Paramātmā. However, a small effort from the individual is necessary. Without any effort, a person may continue falling deeper into tamas. The first step must come from the seeker. When a person takes one step toward Bhagavān, HE is ready to come many steps toward the seeker. Bhagavān continuously inspires every being from within, giving subtle motivation to move toward the higher path. In fact, the lives of seekers themselves often reflect this principle. When someone takes even a small step, such as beginning the study of the Bhagavad Gītā, that itself is an effort. Once the path becomes visible, the next step is to bring those teachings into life. When a person simply places one's trust in the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gītā and surrenders the inner effort to Bhagavān, life gradually begins to move in the right direction.

The session concluded with prayers offered at the lotus feet of Śrī Hari, followed by the recitation of Hanumān Cālīsā.



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Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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