

GITA CLASS – CHAPTER 2, PART 9

‘Vedāvināśinam nityam ya enamajamavyayam

Katham sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kam ghātayati hanti kam. 2.21.

Here, we are discussing how *karma* is not ordained for a *Jñāni*, and how *karma* does not exist within the *Jñāni*. That is the discussion. The questioner says, ‘if *karma* is ordained only for an *Ajñāni*, then *Vidyā* must also be only for an *Ajñāni*. Why is this? It said that *Vidyā* for a *Jñāni* is like grinding something that is already ground. This was the section, ‘*piṣṭapeṣaṇavat viditavidyasya.*’ This means that there is no need to ordain *Jñāna* for a *Jñāni*. Therefore, both *Karma* and *Jñāna* are ordained only for an *Ajñāni*.

Then we discussed the answer to this question in the commentary. This was the part, ‘*anuṣṭheya bhāvābhāvasya.*’ In one place, there is the *bhāna* of duty (*anuṣṭheyam*). In the other, there is the absence of the feeling of duty. This feeling is, ‘this is something that I must perform.’ This exists in one thing and doesn’t exist in the other. That is why it says next, ‘*agnihotrādi vidyarthajñānottarakālam agnihotrādi karma anekasādhanopasaṁhāra pūrvakam anuṣṭheyam - ‘kartā aham mama kartavyam.*

Here it is explaining about the condition of both the *Jñāni* and *Ajñāni*. ‘*Agnihotrādividhyarthajñānottarakālam.*’ The ordinances on *karmas* such as *Agnihotra*, after grasping the meaning of that.’ When does one gain this knowledge? This knowledge is gained through the study of the *Vedas*. After this study, he contemplates according to the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* philosophy. From this contemplation, the person gains awareness. What is that knowledge? This is the knowledge of the meaning of the injunctions of *Vedic karmas*, such as the fire-sacrifice (*agnihotra*). ‘*Agnihotrādividhyarthajñānam.*’

There are several injunctions in the *Vedas*, such as ‘*agnihotra juhūyād.*’ This means, ‘the fire-sacrifice must be performed.’ The person thus gains knowledge of the meaning of these injunctions. This is called in the *Bhāṣyā*, ‘*Vidhi Artha Jñāna.*’ Who does this apply to? It is speaking about the people living in a society based upon the life-stages and classes. This isn’t speaking about

the condition of man today. It is talking about the society that existed more than a 1000 years ago. What does it say about them?

It says, 'after attaining knowledge of the meaning of the injunctions for *Vedic karmas*.' This is the part, '*Agnihotrādividhyarthajñānottarakālam*.' After attaining this knowledge, they perform *karmas* such as the *Agnihotra*. How is this? It says, 'this is along with the assemblage of numerous accessories.' This is the part, '*aneka sādhanopasaṁhārapūrvakam*.' In other words, there are countless things required for these *karmas*. If a person has the feeling, 'I must perform these *karmas*,' he will have to collect all of these materials and accessories for the performance of a *homa*. Thus, this is '*anekasādhanopasaṁhārapūrvakam*.' After this, the *bhāṣyā* says, '*anuṣṭheyam*.' This means that the person must perform the *karma* at this point.

At this point, the *Vedic karma* becomes a duty to perform. That is the meaning of '*anuṣṭheyam*.' And the performer has the feeling, '*kartāham*,' 'I am the doer.' This kind of resolve is necessary to perform *Vedic karma*. One must have the feeling, 'I am performing this *karma*. It is my duty to perform this.' The *bhāṣyā* says, '*ityevam prakāravijñānavataḥ*.' This means, 'a person who gains practical knowledge (*vijnana*) in this manner.' The word '*vijñāna*' here, means 'the complete knowledge of *karma*.' This is '*vijñāna*.' It doesn't refer to *Ātma Jñāna*, Self-knowledge.

We should understand words like '*vijñāna*' can be used differently in different situations. Although it can be used to indicate *Ātmajñāna*, here it is used to indicate the knowledge gained through experience of these *Vedic karmas*. Therefore, we cannot give the same meaning to this word in every situation. Here, it means '*karma jñāna*,' the knowledge of *karma*. In the *Pūrva Mimamsa* philosophy, this word means, 'complete knowledge of *karma*.'

Normally, the word '*vijñāna*' indicates full knowledge of a subject. Here, this *vijnana* refers to *karma*. This consists of the knowledge, 'who is an suitable aspirant (*ādhikāri*) for *karma*? What are the results of *karma*? What are the means for *karma*?' Thus, for a person who has gained the complete *samskara* and knowledge of *Vedic karma*, it says, '*aviduṣaḥ*,' is an *Ajñāni*, '*yathā anuṣṭheyam bhavati*,' in the same way that this *karma* is performed with the feeling 'I must do this,' in *Vidyā*, Self-knowledge, this feeling of duty does not exist.

Here we should understand that it says that the *Vedic karmas* are to be performed by an *Ajñāni*. What is this Ignorance? It is explained in the *Bhāṣyā* as the feeling, ‘*kartāham*,’ ‘I am the doer.’ Also, ‘*Mama kartavyam*,’ ‘this must be performed by me.’ This is what the performer of *Vedic karma*, who is an *Ajñāni*, thinks. Then it says, instead of this, ‘*na tathā*,’ not in this way is the experience of the *Jñāni*, ‘*Na jāyate ityādi ātmasvarūpavidhyartham*.’ This means, ‘the words which indicate the true nature of the *Ātman*, such as the previous shloka, ‘the Self is never born nor dies.’ It says that the knowledge gained from this does not create the feeling of doership or duty.

After hearing these principles and contemplating on them, the feeling of duty in a person is destroyed. How is that? We discussed this the other day. We said that only a person with the feeling of doership can have the feeling of duty. A person who has the awareness ‘I am the doer,’ will experience the feeling, ‘this must be performed by me.’ However, whoever hears and contemplates the scriptural dictums of Self-Knowledge will gain the awareness, ‘I am not the doer.’ Then the feeling of duty will not exist.

This can be said in another way. We can also say that whatever actions are performed after attaining this knowledge are not a duty. They aren’t performed as a duty. So we can either say that those who are situated in *Jñāna Niṣṭhā* have no duty, or that the actions they perform are not done as a duty. Why is this? ‘*Kim tu*,’ this is said next, that a person who hears and contemplates in this manner has the knowledge, ‘I am not the doer. I am not the enjoyer.’ This is said, ‘*kim tu ‘nāham kartā,*’ – ‘*nāham bhoktā.*’

These are the two main things that prompt a person to perform *karma*. These are the two feelings, ‘I am the doer,’ and ‘I am the enjoyer.’ ‘I am the one performs the *karma*, and I will also experience the fruit of the *karma*.’ We have already discussed before. In other words, the performer of *Vedic karma* has the knowledge, ‘the Self is separate from the body. This *Ātman* is acting, and will experience the fruit of action after death.’

Only a person with this kind of awareness performs *karma* as a duty. Such a person is considered an *Ajñāni*. The other person is not like this. Instead, it says that the other person has the knowledge indicated by the *śloka*, ‘the Self is never born and never dies.’ Therefore, he knows, ‘I am not the doer or enjoyer.’

This is described in the commentary as, ‘On the dawn of knowledge that the Self is One, a non-doer, non-enjoyer, etc., *karma* ceases to exist within the *Jñāni*.’ It says this in the commentary as, ‘*iti ādi ātmaikatvākartrtvādiviṣayajñānāt.*’

What is the knowledge gained by the *Jnani*? It is ‘*ātma aikatvaṁ,*’ the knowledge of the Oneness of the Self. This means the Oneness of the *Jivātma* and *Paramātma*. Also, he knows that the Self is a non-doer (*akartā*) and non-enjoyer (*abhoktā*). From this knowledge, it says, ‘the knowledge of doership and enjoyership is not produced from this Knowledge. This is the part, ‘*anyat na utpadyate, iti eṣaḥ viśeṣaḥ upapadyate.*’

So, if one hears the scriptural dictums which indicate the true nature of the Self, the reflection and contemplation of these dictums that come later cannot be considered as a duty (*anuṣṭheyam*). Why is that? It is because the *sadhak* knows the Self as a non-doer. After this, he or she tries to identify with the Self, with the knowledge that the Self is neither the doer nor experiencer. Therefore, there is no feeling of duty in this. There will naturally be some doubts when this subject is discussed. We explained some of this the other day. The doubt was as to whether or not the feeling of doership exists in spiritual *sādhana*. The answer is that no, it does not.

This is further explained in the commentary. It says, ‘*yaḥ punaḥ ‘kartā ahaṁ’ iti vetti ātmānam, tasya ‘mama idaṁ kartavyaṁ’ iti avaśyamābhāvinī buddhiḥ syāt, tadapekṣayā saḥ adhikriyate iti taṁ prati karmāṇi sambhavanti.*’

So, it says, ‘*yo punaḥ ‘kartā ahaṁ’ iti vetti ātmānam.*’ This means, ‘whoever knows the Self as the doer, a follower of *Vedic karmas*.’ One thing we must pay attention to is that this feeling of doership and duty refers to the performance of *Vedic karmas*. When we perform ordinary actions, we don’t have to have the firm resolve, ‘I am the doer,’ or ‘I am the enjoyer.’ Instead, we generally perform these actions naturally from our *vāsanās*. We don’t have to imagine, ‘I am the doer’ and then perform these actions. We just act. We act, with the awareness, ‘I am acting.’

However, *Vedic Karma* is not like that. There, a specific resolve is needed. This is a part of the actual *karma*. The performer must make the resolve at the beginning of the *karma*, ‘I am performing this *karma*.’ When the offering is given at the start of the *karma*, this resolve is required. This resolve is intentional.

In ordinary worldly actions, this awareness of doership and enjoyership exists, but it isn't a resolve that is made intentionally. Here, the feeling of 'I am the doer,' and 'I am the enjoyer' primarily refers to the conscious resolve of the performer of the *karma*.

Thus it says in the commentary, 'Yah 'kartā aham' iti vetti ātmānam.' 'Whoever knows the Self as the doer.' In other words, what does a person do when he performs *Vedic karma*? He thinks, 'I am the doer.' Then it says, 'tasya 'mama idam kartavyam' iti avasyambhāvinī buddhiḥ syāt; tadapekṣayā saḥ adhikriyate iti tam prati karmāṇi sambhavanti.'

Then what does he feel? It says, 'mama idam kartavyam.' This means, 'this is my duty (*kartavyam*). This awareness of duty is needed in *Vedic karma*. In this way, the performer makes the resolve intentionally, 'this sacrifice must be performed by me.' 'I am one who desires to attain heaven. Therefore, I am beginning the performance of this *yāga*.' This resolve is an actual part of the performance of the *yagna*. Then it says, 'avasyambhāvinī buddhiḥ.' This means that he has the awareness (*buddhi*) that this *karma* must be performed (*avasyambhāvinī*). That is the meaning.

This intentional awareness of the need to perform the action is not required in ordinary actions. These actions are simply performed naturally. Then, it says, 'tat apekṣayā,' through this knowledge, 'saḥ adhikriyate,' he becomes suitable (*adhikārī*), 'iti' thus, 'tam prati karmāṇi sambhavanti.' This means that such a person must perform *karma*. For such a person, 'karmāṇi sambhavanti,' karmas occur.'

Therefore, in the same way that a normal person performs ordinary actions, the performance of *Vedic karma* becomes natural for a person with the qualities described. In other words, after studying the *Vedas*, contemplating on the *Vedas*, and knowing about the *Ātman*, he naturally feels, 'I must perform these *karmas*.' Then, he must perform *karma*. He then cannot avoid this.

'Na cha avidvān, 'ubhau tau na vijānitaḥ' iti vachanāt.' viśeṣitasya cha viduṣaḥ karmākṣepavachanāt cha 'katham sa puruṣaḥ' iti.' The 19th śloka, 'Ubhau Tau Na Vijānitaḥ,' says that the person identified with *karma* does not know the true nature of the Self. The person who performs *karma* does not have

the knowledge, 'the Self is neither slain nor the slayer.' Instead, he has the knowledge, 'I am the doer. I make others do.' Therefore, the commentary says, '*viśeṣitasya cha viduṣaḥ.*' This means, this was said in particular, '*Vedāvināśinām,*' 'Know that as Immutable,' and '*Na Jāyate Mriyate,*' 'That is never born nor ever dies.' Because all of these *ślokas* are said, for the *Vidvān*, '*karmākṣepavachanāt,*' *karma* is refuted. In the Gita, it says, '*nāyam hanti na hanyate.*'

This means that the Self does not act nor make anything act. The Lord, taking into consideration Arjuna's doubt, says this. Arjuna had the thought, 'I am doing this war, and the Lord is making me do it.' Thus, the Lord refutes both of these. This is refuted, '*katham sa puruṣaḥ pārtha.*'

This is shown very clearly, that a *Vidvān* and an *Avidvān* are not the same in relation to *karma*. *Karma* does not exist within the *Vidvān*, while it exists within the *Ajñāni*. When we use the words '*Vidvān*' and '*Avidvān,*' this doesn't refer to the normal use of this word 'an ignorant person.' This refers to a person who has studied the *Vedas* and contemplated according to the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* philosophy. How is this study of the *Vedas*? He studies the *Vedas*, along with the *Angas*, or limbs of the *Vedas*. From this study, he knows about the *Ātman* accordingly. He is a suitable aspirant of *karma*. This '*Vidvān*' who performs *karma* is called here as an '*Avidvān.*' That should be given attention.

This doesn't refer to the normal uses of the word 'an ignorant person.' When the word *Ajñāni* is used in the commentary, it refers to a person who has studied the *Vedas* and contemplated on the Self as the doer and enjoyer, and who performs *Vedic karma*. Such a person is called an '*Avidvān.*' This doesn't refer to the ordinary use of the word 'Ignorant.'

'Tasmādvīśeṣitasyāvīkriyātmadarśano viduṣo mumukṣoścha sarvakarmasamnyāsa evādhikāraḥ. Ata eva bhagavānnārāyaṇaḥ sāmkyānviduṣo/viduṣaścha karminḥ pravibhajya dve niṣṭhe grāhayati - 'jñānayogena sāmkyānām karmayogena yoginām' iti. Tathā cha putrāyā/ha bhavānvyāsaḥ - 'dvāvimāvatha panthānu' ityādi. Tathā cha kriyāpathaścha purastātpaśchātsamnyāsaścheti. Evameva vibhāgam

*punaḥ punardarśayisyati bhagavān. Atattvavid 'ahamkāravimūdhātmā
kartā/ham' iti manyate, tattvavittu nāhaṁ karomīti. Tathā cha
sarvakarmāṇi
manasā samnyasyā/ste ityādi.'*

Here, the matter discussed is made very clear. '*Viśeṣitasya avikyātmadarśanaḥ.*' Here the word '*viśeṣitasya*' means that the *Jñāni* has been described specifically in the previous *śloka*s, such as, 'the Self is never born nor dies.' Then it says, '*avikriyātmadarśano.*' This means the *Ātma Jñāni*, one who is established in the experience of the Self, '*Viduṣaḥ,*' for the *Vidvān*, *karma* doesn't take place. '*Mumukṣos cha,*' as well as for a *mumukṣu*, one who desires Liberation, this kind of *karma* is not possible.'

In this way, three kinds of people are discussed here. One is the *Vidvān*, second is the *Avidvān*, and third is the *mumukṣu*. It says that *karma* does not exist for the *Vidvān (Jñāni)*. *Karma* exists for the *Avidvān (Ajñāni)*. When the *Ajñāni* moves to the condition of a *mumukṣu*, one who desires Liberation, this subject as to whether *karma* exists within the *mumukṣu* or not becomes a discussion.

We said that there are three categories, the *Vidvān*, *Avidvān*, and the *mumukṣu*. We may normally feel that a *mumukṣu* must be the same as an *Avidvān*. Then if we say that a *Mumukṣu* has no *karma*, we will have to say that the *Avidvān* also has no *karma*. This is what we will think. However, it is not like that. The *Mumukṣu* is also a *Jñāni*. He is not an *Avidvān*. The *Mumukṣu* is following the path leading to *Jñāna*, Self-knowledge. He does not follow the path of the *Ajñāni*. Because of this, it is said that the *mumukṣu* is freed from *karma*.

Why is this? Why is it said that the *Mumukṣu* is on the path leading to *Jñāna*? This is because the *Mumukṣu* has the discrimination between the Self and non-Self. When the suitability of an aspirant is discussed, this discrimination between the Self and non-Self is indicated. This is the true knowledge of what is the *Ātman* and what is not the *Ātman*. We said before in the *bhāṣyā* '*Ātmaikatva Jñānam.*' This is the knowledge of the Oneness of the Self. This is also the knowledge that the Self is *avikriya*, devoid of modifications. All of these consist of

the true knowledge of the Self, or discrimination between the Self and non-Self. This quality makes one a *mumukṣu*, one who desires Liberation.

This *mumukṣu* is situated side by side with the *Jīvanmuktan*. He is very close to that state. This kind of *mumukṣu* cannot be categorized in the same group as the *Ajñāni*. How did we say an *Ajñāni*, or an *Avidvān* is? It is a person who studies the *Vedas*, contemplates on the Self according to the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* philosophy, and enters the field of *Vedic karma*.

Then what about a *mumukṣu*? The *mumukṣu* is a person who studies the *Vedas* and contemplates according to the *Uttara Mīmamsa* philosophy, which consists of the *Upaniṣads*. He enters the path leading to *Mokṣa*. That is the difference between the two. One person contemplates according to the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* philosophy and enters the path of *karma*. He accepts the life of a householder (*gṛhastha*). He accepts the life-stage of *gārhasthyam*. He is called an *Avidvān*.

And what about the other? First, when *Shankara* is speaking, this is all in the background of a *Vedic*-based society. This is not like the ordinary commentaries of the *Gīta* we see. So we should pay special attention to this. When the *Gīta* is explained normally, our mind does not think of the background of a *Vedic*-based society. We have not lived in such a society, and neither have we seen one. However, *Shankara* is someone who lived in such a society, and grew up in that environment. That is why the meaning *Shankaracharya* gives this meaning to the words ‘*Vidvān*’ and ‘*Avidvān*’ are like this.

What does the *Vidvān* do? He is established in *Jñāna Niṣṭhā* (abidance in Self-knowledge). And what about the *mumukṣu*? He is not established in *Jñāna Niṣṭhā*. Instead, he practices *Jñāna Niṣṭhā*. However, this *Jñāna Niṣṭhā* becomes spontaneous for the *Vidvān*. Therefore, both the *Vidvān* and the *Mumukṣu* are in *Jñāna Niṣṭhā*. For one, it is spontaneous, and for the other, a practice. This is the difference between the two.

It says in the *bhāṣyā* that the *mumukṣu* is an *ādhikāri* (suitable aspirant) for the renunciation of all *Vedic karmas* (*sarva karma sanyassa*). We said before that if an *Ajñāni* must perform *Vedic karmas* such as the *Agnihotra*, he must have the resolve about the *Ātman*, ‘I am the doer and the enjoyer.’ For such a person, due

to his *saṁskāra* of previous lives, or from the merit gained from the study of the *Vedas*, what does he do? His thoughts turn to *Uttara Mīmamsa*, the *Vedānta*. When this happens, he hears and gains knowledge about the Self, as ‘the *Ātman* is not the doer. The *Ātman* is not the experiencer of the fruits of *karma*.’ He then gains this knowledge of the Self.

At this point, he renounces *karma*. When he knows the *Ātman* is this way, he renounces the *Vedic karmas*, such as *Kāmya* and *Niṣidha karmas*. In a *Vedic*-based society, the remaining *karmas* which are necessary are called *Nitya* and *Naimitta karmas*. These are the remaining *karmas* which must be performed. If this is viewed from a society that is not *Vedic*-based, this refers to ordinary *karmas*, worldly actions. In other words, the actions which we constantly perform are worldly *karmas* (*laukika*). These *karmas* do not fit into the four types of *Vedic karma*, which are *Nitya*, *Naimitta*, *Kāmya*, and *Niṣidha Karmas*.

We do not perform our *karmas* from our knowledge of the *śrutis* and *smṛtis*. We simply perform the actions in relation to each circumstance that life presents us. The *karmas* *Shankara* is discussing are not relevant to us. The *karmas* that we constantly perform are worldly *karmas*. This is not what we are discussing here. We are discussing *Vedic karma*.

So, as we said before, a person may gain the inquisitiveness to know the true nature of the Self. This can happen from his or her *saṁskāra* from previous lives, or from the merit gained from studying the *Vedas*. Then what does he do? He completely renounces the path of *karma*. However, he cannot completely renounce *karma*. Instead, he renounces the *Kāmya* and *Niṣidha karmas* (*karmas* that are performed for desires, and prohibited *karmas*). After this, he continues to perform the *Nitya* and *Naimitta karmas*.

Because he has gained true knowledge of the Self, what does he do? He renounces the ego (*ahamkāra*) and performs *karma* as an offering to the Lord. At that point, he has left the path of *karma* and entered the path of *Karma Yoga*. This means to perform *Karma*, united in *Yoga*. As he performs *karma* as *Karma Yoga*, according to the mental purity he gains, what does he do? He starts to pay more attention to the practice of hearing, reflection, and contemplation.

Because of this, his suitability as a *jijñāsu* (seeker of knowledge) grows. His suitability for *karma* decreases. This happens gradually. Then his *śraddha*

gradually goes from *karma* to identification with the Self (*Ātma Anusandhanam*). He gains more alertness in the practice of hearing, reflection, and contemplation. He thus gains the discrimination between the Self and non-Self mentioned before, and gains possession of the 4 qualities of a mature aspirant (*sādhana chatuṣṭaya*). Then spontaneously, *karmas* become distanced from the *sādhak*.

When these *karmas* become distanced from the *sādhak*, he becomes a true *mumukṣu*. That is the meaning of 'the renunciation of all *karmas*' for a *mumukṣu*. He comes very close to the condition of the *Jñāni*. This is because he is led further into the practice of hearing, reflection, and contemplation.

A person living in such a *Vedic*-based society performs all his *karmas* according to the injunctions of the *Vedas*, or of the *Smṛtis*. That is the type of person being referred to here. Such a person then renounces the *Nitya* and *Naimitta karmas*, the daily *Vedic* rites and *karmas* related to offspring. These *karmas* drop away from him. He becomes firmly established in *Jñāna Niṣṭhā*. Because he contemplates on the true nature of the Self, as the non-doer, he does not have to perform those *karmas* that require the sense of doership. Such *karmas* fall away from the individual of themselves.

At this point, the individual externally accepts the life-stage of *sanyassa*. That it is what is called a *Vividiṣa Sanyassa*. At that point, the person has no *dharma*s of the classes (*Brāhmaṇa*, etc.). He does have a *dharma* of the life-stage. This is the life-stage of *sanyassa*. He performs all of the *dharma*s related to that life-stage. These *āśrama dharma*s (*dharma*s of the life-stages) change according to the time period. All *dharma*s are subject to change, according to the time period.

The *sanyassa dharma* that existed in the time of *Sri Shankaracharya* and others has disappeared. This is because the times have changed. Because of this, the *dharma*s practiced at that time are not relevant in our time. As the society changes, these life-stage *dharma*s also change. These are the *āśrama dharma*s.

The *Sanyassi* doesn't have to perform any class *dharma*s (of *Brāhmaṇa*, etc.). He does, however, have to perform his life-stage *dharma*. This is the *dharma* of the life-stage of *sanyassa*. He thus performs this *dharma*. The most important part of this *dharma* is the practice of hearing, reflection, and contemplation. In *Sanskrit*, these are 'śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana.' As the *sanyassi*

constantly performs this, there is not a single *karma* the *sanyassi* must perform with the feeling 'I am the doer.' This is because he rejects all such *karmas*.

This condition of being situated in the practice of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*, is what is called the *Jñāna Niṣṭhā* of a *mumukṣu*. According to the person's purity of mind (*chitta śuddhi*), he experiences the awakening of Knowledge (*Jnanotpatti*). We have discussed this in the *bhāṣyā* before. Along with the attainment of this *Jñānotpatti*, he attains 'sarva karma samnyāsa,' the renunciation of all *karma*, and he attains the state of *Naiṣkarmyam*, freedom from *karma*.

In the Gita, this is described. '*Naiṣkarmyam paramo siddhiḥ.*' The state of unaction, *naiṣkarmyam*, is the supreme attainment.' The perfection of this *naiṣkarmyam* is what is called *jīvanmukti*, Liberation in the body itself. That is what is called, '*Vidvat Sanyassa.*' Before reaching this level, what is the *mumukṣu*? The *mumukṣu* is one who is suitable for the renunciation of all *karmas*. After renouncing these *karmas*, he is to become established in the practice of hearing, reflection, and contemplation. That is what the commentator says.

However, before reaching that state, there are many states that must be traversed. In that condition, this *karma yoga*, along with *bhakti*, *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, etc., are all aids in the attainment of this *Mumukṣutvam*, the intense desire for Liberation. Once this state of *mumukṣu* is attained, the *sādhak* must renounce *karmas*, which are *Nitya*, *Naimitta*, *Kāmya*, and *Niṣidha karmas*. This is what happens.

That is why the commentary says, '*viduṣaḥ mumukṣoścha.*' The progression was given how, in the background of a *Vedic*-based society, a person can go from the performance of *karma* to *Karma Yoga*, and from this to *Karma Sanyassa*. This is the progression- *Karma*, *Karma Yoga*, and *Karma Sanyassa*. Here it says the commentator's opinion as to how a person reaches this state of *mumukṣutvam*. Thus it says, '*sarvakarmasamnyāse eva adhikāraḥ.*' This means that only such a *mumukṣu* and a *Vidvān* have the right, or obligation for the renunciation of all *karma*. That is the meaning.

We said earlier that a *mumukṣu* is himself *muktan*, Liberated. One of the main meanings of *mukti* as it is used by *Shankara* is the freedom from the cycle

of birth and death. However, the primary meaning of the word ‘*mukti*’ is the freedom from *karma*. This is the freedom from the bondage of *karma*. That is what is meant by the word, ‘*mukti*.’ That freedom becomes complete in the state of *sanyassa*. Therefore, it says that *Sanyassa* is enjoined upon the *Mumukṣu*. This is the renunciation of all *Vedic karmas*.

What does the *mumukṣu* do? He becomes freed from the bondage of *karma*, through this renunciation of all *karmas*. That is why it can be said that a *mumukṣu* is also *Mukta*, Liberated. The philosophy of *Shankaracharya* is that wherever there is the renunciation of *karmas*, there is *Mokṣa*. After this, the *sādhak* attains the arising of Knowledge (*Jñānotpatti*) and the destruction of Ignorance. However, whenever these *karmas* fall away from the *sādhak*, he becomes free of the bondage of birth and death. Then, there is nothing left to do. Everything else will happen naturally. Then the *sādhak* does not have the feeling of doership.

The state of *Karma Yoga* is in between these states. What is the specialty of a practitioner of *Karma Yoga*? He is an *adhikāri* (suitable aspirant) of *Karma*. There is a difference between a *Karma Yogi* and the *mumukṣu* described before, according to the opinion of the commentator. The renunciation of *karma* (*karma sanyassa*) is enjoined on the *Mumukṣu*, while the performance of *karma* is enjoined for a *Karma Yogi*. That is the difference between the two.

The *Karma Yogi* is one who must perform *karma*. Why is this? This is because a *Karma Yogi* still has the feeling of doership. He still has the feeling that he is the enjoyer. Because of this, he is an *adhikāri* for the performance of *karma*. Then what is the difference between a mere performer of *karma* and a *Karma Yogi*? The *Karma Yogi* knows, ‘the Self is the non-doer and non-enjoyer.’ Though he has this knowledge, he must perform *karma*. That is the condition of a *Karma Yogi*. This is not the same as a mere performer of *karma*. This person, a mere *karmi*, has the feeling that the Self is the doer and enjoyer. Such a *karmi* doesn’t have the knowledge of the *Karma Yogi*. He isn’t aware that the Self is a non-doer.

However, despite the *Karma Yogi*’s knowledge, this feeling of doership is still spontaneous within him. The feeling of enjoyership is still natural for the *Karma Yogi*, due to his *saṁskāra*. Despite this, he does know and understand

about the true nature of the Self, from the scriptures or from the *Guru*. This is the knowledge, ‘the Self is not the doer or the enjoyer.’ But that is not his spontaneous attitude. His natural feeling is that he is the doer and enjoyer. Therefore, he must remove these ideas of doer-ship and enjoyer-ship. For this, what does he do? Renouncing the ego, remembering the true nature of the Self, he performs *karma* as an offering to the Lord.

This *Karma Yogi* doesn’t belong in the same category as the *Mumukshu*. Why is this? It is because his discrimination between the Self and non-Self has not yet become firm. He knows the Self indirectly. However, his indirect knowledge of the *Ātman* has not yet become firm. In this way, every stage of the *sādhak* is shown in the commentary. Then what does the *Karma Yogi* do? If it is in the background of a *Vedic*-based society, he performs the *nitya* and *naimitta karmas*. If we are speaking about our society, the *Karma Yogi* performs the actions that come to him naturally. Because we are not in the same society as the society of *Shankaracharya*, these *nitya* and *naimitta karmas* have no relevance to us. These are now gone. These *karmas* have disappeared from our society.

Therefore, in today’s society, the *karma yogi* performs the *karmas* that come naturally to him. He cannot avoid *karma*. That is what the Lord tells Arjuna. ‘*Prakṛti Tvām Niyokṣyati.*’ *Prakṛti* will make you perform *karma*.’ The prompting behind the *karma* of a *Karma Yogi* is this *Prakṛti*. This also shows a difference in the times. If it is a *Vedic*-based society, the *Vedas* also become an prompting. The *śrutis* and *smṛtis* prompt the individual to perform *karma*. However, if it is a person without this *saṁskāra* of the *Vedas*, it is *Prakṛti* which prompts one to perform *karma*. In that case, the prompting of the *Vedas* is not needed.

Nature will drive such an individual to perform ordinary *karmas*. Therefore, it is not possible to stand aside and avoid *karma*. Even if you go hide in a cave, what will happen? Nature will drive you to perform *karma*. Even if you can avoid actions of speech and the body, Nature will make the mind active. If a person proudly considers himself a *sanyassi*, a *mumukṣu*, or a *yogi*, and tries to not perform actions, he will be made to act. It isn’t possible to avoid action. Instead, such a person will be more active in areas such as food, etc. That’s what may happen.

I'm not telling a joke. This is the truth. I have seen some people like this. They consider themselves as having renounced all *karmas*. They feel that *sanyassis* cannot perform any actions. That is what they say. They do this due to lack of true awareness. They may have heard what *sanyassa* is, but they haven't gained true awareness of *sanyassa*. They have *samskāra*, impressions from previous lives, and this prompts them to act in this way. However, they fail to gain anything in this life. These people simply sit like this without the proper awareness gained from the scriptures or the *Guru*. They lack the true *vijñāna* (practical knowledge) described by the commentator. However, they consider themselves as having renounced all *karmas*.

To learn what this kind of renunciation is, I have observed the lifestyle of such people. I am not blaming anyone. They wake up in the morning. They think for an hour, 'should I bathe, or should I not bathe?' This is because they cannot have any other job except for *sarva karma sanyassa* (renunciation of all *karmas*). Then they will think, 'should I use hot water or cold water?' They will think like this.

I have seen several of these in Northern *Kashi*. They will take one hour to reach such a decision. They have performed '*sarva karma sanyassa*,' so they don't have to do anything else. After that, they will think about food. 'Should I go beg for food, or should I cook?' 'What should I eat?' 'How should I eat?' In this way, he will continuously think about such *karmas*.

In this case, *karma* exists in its entirety. The *Samsāra* exists in its entirety. The only thing that has changed is the realm of *karma*. Such a person continuously thinks about alms and food, and dwells in that realm of *karma*. He respects himself as a *sanyassi*, as someone who has renounced *karma*. When we think in line with the scriptures, even in that state there is *karma*. In truth, they completely destroy their lives. They do nothing of benefit to themselves, or to others. They are not *Karma Yogis*, and they are not *Karma Sanyassis*, either. This is not the type of *Karma Sanyassa* spoken of here.

In truth, here, a person who is suitable for performing *Karma Yoga* goes straight to *Karma Tyāga*. That is why the *Sanyassa* is a failure. Such a person doesn't understand the effect that the difference of time has given to *Sanyassa*. *Sanyassa* is spoken of in the *Smṛtis*. If we look at the descriptions of *sanyassa* in

these books, we will realize that no one today is a *sanyassi*. Why is that? It is because nobody performs the kind of *sanyassa* that is described in those days. It's not possible today to perform that kind of *sanyassa*. Why isn't this possible? This is because the times have changed.

It is not possible to practice the *sanyassa* that was followed in those days. When we talk about *Sanyassa*, we are primarily referring to the life-stage *dharma* of *sanyassa*. Today, this is not possible to practice. There are so many differences in the *sanyassa* of today and back then. In the *Smṛtis*, it says that a *sanyassi* should go to 7 houses to beg for alms. This is a rule, given as an example. The rule is that a *sanyassi* can only beg at 7 houses. He can only enter the house if the stove is lit in the house. If there is any kind of sorrow in a house, he cannot enter it. If a death has occurred, he cannot enter. If he goes to one house and cannot receive alms, he has to count that as one of the 7 houses. This is a rule. He can't think, 'I didn't get any, so I can go to one more house.' If he goes to a house, and doesn't get *bhikṣa*, he must still stop at 7 houses.

Then the *sanyassi* must eat whatever he gets. He cannot think about the taste. This is said to be the life-stage *dharma* of the *sanyassi*. Today, this is something outlawed by the government laws. The law says in certain places, 'alms are prohibited.' Then how can one get alms today? If one lives in that way, he will end up in jail. There the *sanyassi* will get real alms. Then there will be no need to go outside. He will have to eat, not thinking about the taste. Therefore, the *sanyassa* that is described in the *Smṛtis* is not something that can happen in today's society.

Without understanding this, some people set out for the kind of *sanyassa* described before. That's not all. Because of this lack of understanding, some *sadhaks* become more lazy. What does everyone think? They think, 'I am better than everyone else.' No one has any doubt about their own abilities. When it comes to other people, we think, 'are they suitable?' But when it comes to our own suitability, we never have any doubt. All *sādhaks* think of themselves as *mumukṣus*. Because of this, what happens? They decide by themselves that they are suitable for the renunciation of all *karmas* (*sarva karma sanyassa*).

However, it is not like that. In that case, such people reject even the *dharma* of the life-stages. They reject the *dharmas* of the life-stages and the classes. This is

not what the commentator says. Before reaching the state of *mumukshu*, *Shankara* says that one must perform *karma yoga* for renouncing the sense of doership. For this, one must understand the true nature of the Self, as the non-doer. In this way, the *Karma Yogi* performs *karma* to become rid of these notions of doership and enjoyership. Because his *saṁskāra* is to perform *karma* with the sense of doership, he performs *karma* to get rid of this notion.

If we are speaking about the past society, the individual then performs the *karmas* of the *śrutis* and *smṛtis*. If we are speaking about today's society, the person performs ordinary, worldly actions. This is *Karma Yoga*. All of our ordinary actions can therefore be performed as *Karma Yoga*. When *these karmas* are performed by renouncing ego and desire for the fruits, they become selfless service to society. That is the way of today. All of the *karmas* we perform for the benefit of society are included as part of *Karma Yoga*. Through that *Karma Yoga*, according to the mental purity gained, awareness of the *Ātman* shines clearly within. Then one gains the discrimination between the Self and non-Self. Then one gains the 4 qualities of a mature *sādhak* (*sādhana chatuṣṭaya*), and then becomes a *mumukshu*.

Some people will have a doubt. This is, 'I came to the *aśram* many years ago, and have performed *Karma Yoga* since then. Have I become a *mumukṣu* or not? Can I now enter *Karma Sanyassa*?' Some may have this doubt. However, in the *aśram*, you get food for free, without doing any work. In that way, there is *Karma Sanyassa*. Otherwise, it is difficult. We will immediately think like that. 'I must be a *mumukshu*.' How can a person know this? It's not something that needs to be asked to others. These are matters that a person must realize for his or herself. It should be realized without a doubt.

Some people wake up in the morning and think, 'I am a *mumukṣu*.' Then after sometime, they think, 'no, I'm not a *mumukṣu*.' It's not correct if there are doubts. This awareness should be without a doubt. This is true especially after the work for the Tsunami is finished. We may think, 'I have attained purity of mind.' This attitude must be there every day. Then we are ready for *Sarva karma sanyassa*. We can sit in some room. If not, this work will have to continue.

It says in the Gita, '*Aneka Janma Saṁsiddhi*.' This is not a problem that is simply solved by some Tsunami work. It says that this perfection is attained

through several births. A person must go through several births to reach that state. If this is a person's final birth, then fine. If not, the person will again have to enter the field of action.

What does this mean? This means that through several births of performing selfless *karma*, a person can attain the supreme perfection indicated in the Gita. '*Saṁsiddhiṁ labhate paramaṁ.*' This is the supreme perfection (*saṁsiddhi*). This is the suitability of the *sādhak*. The *sādhak* gains the 4 qualities (*sādhana chatuṣṭaya*) and the condition of a *mumukṣu*. For this, *karma* had to be performed selflessly for several births. For such a *sādhak*, having gained purity of mind (*chitta śuddhi*), he experiences the arising of Knowledge within (*Jñānotpatti*). In that circumstance, this quality of the *mumukṣu* becomes complete.

Through firmness in *Ātma Niṣṭhā*, this *mumukṣu* becomes *Muktan*, Liberated from *Samśāra*. This firmness in *Ātma Niṣṭhā* comes from the constant practice of hearing, reflection, and contemplation, and by identifying with the Self with the knowledge that the Self is a non-doer and non-enjoyer. Therefore, the progression is; *karmi*, *Karma Yogi*, *Mumukṣu*, and *Sarva Karma Sanyassī* (renunciation of all *karmas*). That is how we should understand these stages. We should also understand the differences caused by our time and that of *Shankara*.

For such a *mumukṣu*, it says in the *bhāṣyā* next, '*saṁnyāse eva adhikāraḥ.*' Only such a person has the right to *sanyassa*.' Now, when we perform our ordinary actions, we can practice contemplation on the Self, and we can practice renunciation of the ego, mentally. We said in the previous class, that identification with the Self can be through *manana* (contemplation) or through *bhāvana* (imagination). These are two kinds of contemplation on the Self.

A person who doesn't have the strength to perform *manana* performs *bhāvana* (imagination). A person with mental strength can avoid the interference of ego in *karmas* through this *manana* (contemplation on the Self). Otherwise, this can be accomplished through *bhāvana* (imagination). Then the *bhashya* says next, '*ataḥ eva bhagavān Nārāyaṇaḥ sām̐khyān viduṣaḥ - aviduṣaḥ cha karmināḥ pravibhajya dve niṣṭhe grāhayati - 'jñānayogena sām̐khyānām̐ karmayogena yoginām̐' iti.*'

It says, ‘*ataḥ eva bhagavān Nārāyaṇaḥ*, ‘Thus, the Lord *Nārāyaṇa*, ‘*sāṁkhyān viduṣaḥ*,’ the followers of *Sāṁkhyā*, who are *Jñānis*, ‘*aviduṣaḥ cha karmināḥ*,’ as well as the *Ajñānis*, who perform Vedic *karma*. We must remember that this is what the commentator refers to by the word, ‘*aviduṣaḥ*,’ or *Ajñāni*. This doesn’t refer to a simple worldly person.

We think that we are on the spiritual path, performing *mantra japa* and meditation; so we should not be included in this category. However, what is indicated by the word, ‘*aviduṣaḥ*?’ This refers to someone who after studying the *Vedas* enters the path of *karma*. People that we consider ‘paṇḍits,’ very knowledgeable people, are called as a *Avidvān*.

Then the *bhāṣyā* says, ‘*karmināḥ pravibhajya*,’ these *Ajñānis* who perform *karma* and those who abide in Self-knowledge are clearly separated, ‘*dve niṣṭhe*,’ in two abidances, ‘*jñānayogena sāṁkhyānām*,’ this is *Jñāna Yoga* for the followers of *Sāṁkhyā*, ‘*karmayogena yoginām*,’ and *Karma yoga* for *Yogins*.

Here the word, ‘*Sāṁkhyān*,’ means ‘*mumukṣu*,’ a *sādhak* who desires for Liberation. That is the meaning. ‘*Karma Yogena Yoginām*,’ means a person who goes from mere performance of *karma* to *Karma Yoga*. This is the difference between the two. Then the *bhāṣyā* continues. ‘*tathā cha putrāya āha bhagavān vyāsaḥ*,’ in the *Mahābhārata*, *Veda Vyāsa* says to his own son, *Shuka*, what is this? ‘*dvau imau atha panthānau*.’ This means, ‘there are two paths.’ This is the same meaning as the Lord’s words- that there is the path of Knowledge and path of Action.

Then it says, ‘*tathā cha kriyāpathaschaiva purastāt paśchāt samnyāsaścha*.’ This means that there is one path, the path of *kriyā*, action. This is when the performance of *karma* is transformed into *Karma Yoga*. It says, ‘*purastāt*.’ This means ‘before.’ This doesn’t just refer to one lifetime. We shouldn’t think that. We may think, ‘I can perform *Karma Yoga*, then attain purity of mind, then become a *mumukṣu*, and renounce all *karmas*. But what if I stray away from the path? So, let me become a *mumukṣu* first. Then I will save time.’

That is not what is meant here. The journey of the *Jiva* is beginningless. This process of going from mere performance of *karma* to the *Karma Yoga* happens over numerous lifetimes. For a *sādhak*, the present birth is not the final birth. If it is truly one’s final birth, then fine. He will attain the condition of a

mumukṣu, and attain *Mokṣa*. Who decides this? The *Guru* can decide, or the Lord can decide. The *Jīvas* cannot make this decision.

Either way, this '*kriyā mārgam*,' which is the transformation of the performance of *karma* into *Karma Yoga*, takes place over countless lifetimes. Then, '*purastāt*,' this was before, '*paśchāt*,' after this, '*saṁnyāsaḥ*.' After this comes *sanyassa*, renunciation. Then the *bhāṣyā* says, '*etameva vibhāgamī punaḥ punaḥ darśayiṣyati bhagavān*.' This means that the Lord will again and again clearly illustrate this. Now, what is the benefit from hearing about *Shankara's* refuting of the combination of *karma* and *jñāna*? What is the point of hearing this over and over again? From this, a *sādhak* can understand, 'what is the spiritual path? What are the paths one can follow?' A *sādhak* can gain a clear perspective on this through the commentary. This kind of determination is needed for the individual, and this explanation is for that purpose.

Then the *bhāṣyā* says, '*Atattvavit*,' a person without this *Tattva bodha*, awareness of the Reality, how is that? This is someone who has yet to even enter *karma Yoga*. '*Ahaṁkāravimudhātmā*,' a person whose *antaḥkāraṇa* is deluded by the ego, what does he do? '*kartāhamiti manyate*.' 'He thinks, 'I am the doer.' He has the *sankalpa*, 'I am the performer of *karma*.' Then, he performs *karmas* for attaining their fruits. This is called a '*kevala karmī*,' one who merely performs *karma*.

'*Tattvavit tu*,' at the same time, what about a person with this *Ātma Bodha*? '*nāham karomi*' iti,' he feels, 'I do not act.' We said before, that this becomes spontaneous for the *Jñāni*. The *mumukṣu* is close to this condition itself, and the *Karma Yogi* is in the state of practicing this. That is the difference. This is the renunciation of the ego.

'*Tathā cha sarvakarmāṇi manasā saṁnyasyāste*' ityādi.' For explaining this matter, this *śloka* from the *Gīta* is quoted. '*Sarvakarmāṇi manasā saṁnyasyāste sukam vaśī*.' That *Vidvān* renounces all *karmas* mentally. 'Then, '*sukham vaśī navadvāre pure dehī*,' all of this is said, about *Jñāna Niṣṭhā*.

However, no matter how the *sāstra* indicates the Truth, the *Jīva* has the tendency to forget this. Therefore, the scriptures try to create this inner remembrance. What does the *Jīva's* natural *saṁskāra* do? It causes him or her to constantly forget the Truth (*Tattva vismṛti*). This happens all the time. In a pond

filled with lilies, it will appear as if there is no water. But if you throw a stone, then they will give and the water can be seen. Then again, it will close.

In other words, when we sit and participate in *satsang*, or hear about this *Ātma Tattva*, this Self-knowledge effulges within us. We will be situated in *Ātma Bodha*. However, at any time, the modifications may take over in the mind. At that time, the person again becomes an *Ajñāni*. This is what happens to ordinary people, due to the *saṁskāra* from previous births.

For those people who have a *saṁskāra* for the scriptures, it is said that they have a *śāstra vāsana*. Because of this, the scriptures themselves forbid this *vāsana* of the scriptures. How does that mainly happen? We said before, that in the *Vedic*-based society, a child begins studies of the *Vedas*, along with all of their limbs. These include astrology, grammar, etymology, etc. Only such a person becomes a suitable student of the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* philosophy. Only a person who has studied these subjects can study the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* philosophy. This is in reference to the time when the society was based on the *Vedas*.

However, today the suitable aspirants for *Karma Yoga* have a worldly *samskara*. In the days of *Shankara*, the people had a *śāstra saṁskāra*. That is why this *śāstra vāsana* is rejected in *Shankaracharya's* works. In those days, the people had studied the *Vedas*, and gained this *saṁskāra*. According to this foundation, they contemplated on both the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* and *Uttara Mīmamsa* philosophies. This *saṁskāra* of the scriptures was very active in the people back then.

Today, how is it? Today, we don't have such a study of the *śāstras*. We haven't studied the *Vedas*. Therefore, we don't have a *śāstra saṁskāra*. Therefore, there is no reason to try to eliminate this *vāsana* of the scriptures. This is because that doesn't exist now. Some people don't listen to *satsangs*. They don't read spiritual books. What do they say? 'This is to remove the *śāstra vāsana*.' But they never had one. We don't study or read, in order to destroy something that doesn't exist. People who haven't even read the Gita talk about a *śāstra vāsana*. If they must remove the *vāsana* of the scriptures, they should have first studied at least a bit of the scriptures.

This is not what the scriptures call '*śāstra vāsana*.' We don't have this kind of *vāsana*. We have a worldly *vāsana*. We have a worldly *saṁskāra*. For such a

person, there is no point in trying to remove this *śāstra vāsana*. You can only destroy something that exists. Therefore, there is no reason for such people to fear the *vāsana* of the scriptures.

The Gita itself describes those with this *vāsana*. It says, ‘*ke chit paṇḍitāḥ manyā vadanti.*’ Some scholars speak flowery words of the *Vedas*, thinking themselves great.’ That is the *vāsana* of the scriptures. This is what is aimed at when the *Advaita* scriptures describe this *śāstra vāsana*. We should not think that this refers to us. We should never think like that, because we have never attained such a *vāsana*. The chance of us having this *saṁskāra* of the scriptures is very slim.

However, it was not like that during *Shankaracharya*’s time. Why is that? At the age of 7 or 8, a boy would be given the thread ceremony (*upanayanam*). Then a child would study the *Vedas*, along with the branch sciences of the *Vedas*. That was the person’s *saṁskāra* of that time. Then one would study the rest of the scriptures in a *Gurukula*. These are *Pūrva Mīmamsa* and *Uttara Mīmamsa*, as well as the other philosophies. Thus, the person has the *saṁskāra* of all of these scriptures.

Then the person enters into the path of *Advaita*. This *śāstra vāsana* had helped him to reach that state. However, he cannot take that with him. Then what does he do? As he progresses forwards, this *vāsana* which previously helped him will become a bondage. Then he strives to become rid of this *vasana* of the scriptures. That is what happens.

This is not like our situation. We haven’t studied the *Vedas*, or received the thread ceremony. We are as if in kindergarten. These *śāstras* are not in our knowledge. Therefore, we don’t have this kind of *vāsana*. Our *saṁskāra* consists of the concepts of good and bad that we receive from society. This *saṁskāra* has no relation to the scriptures. In truth, it is this *saṁskāra* that we should strive to destroy. In the Gita it says, ‘*tatra kechit paṇḍitāḥ mānyā,*’ they think of themselves as *Paṇḍits*.’ This is aimed at the followers of *Pūrva Mīmāmsa*.

They may be a scholar. However, we previously stated the correct meaning of the word ‘*paṇḍit*.’ It said in the commentary, ‘*paṇḍā ātmaviśayā buddhiḥ asti yasya saḥ paṇḍitaḥ.*’ This was in the beginning of the commentary. It says, whoever possesses knowledge of the Self (*paṇḍā*) is a *paṇḍit*. This kind of *paṇḍit*

is not what is being spoken of in this *śloka*. ‘*Paṇḍitāḥ manyā.*’ They esteem themselves as *paṇḍits*, as scholars.

In other words, such people study the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* philosophy and gain awareness of the Self. How is this awareness of the Self? It is that the Self is separate from the body, that it is the performer of actions, and will experience the pleasures of heaven after death. That is what they think about the Self. They attain this kind of Self-knowledge (*Ātma bodha*). This kind of person is referred to in the Gita, as ‘*paṇḍitāḥ mānyā,*’ one who esteems himself as a *paṇḍit*.’ This doesn’t refer to a person with true non-dual *Ātma Bodha*. That is a true *paṇḍit*. Instead, it says, ‘one who esteems himself as a *paṇḍit*.’

For such a person, this *śāstra vāsana* is described in the *Advaita* texts. Even if the person is a seeker (*jijñāsu*), he will not grasp the philosophy of *Advaita*, no matter how much it is explained. Why is that? It is because there is this kind of *śāstra saṁskāra* within him. When the topics discussed in the commentary are explained, we won’t feel any kind of doubt. Why is it that the questions that are asked in the commentary don’t appear in our minds? It is because we don’t have that kind of *saṁskāra*. However, that will happen for those with this *śāstra saṁskāra*. These must be destroyed. That *saṁskāra* must be eliminated with a different, stronger *saṁskāra*.

Saṁskāras can be destroyed in different ways. What is one? One is to overcome a weakened *saṁskāra* with a stronger *saṁskāra*. This kind of discussion in the commentary is for overcoming the previous *saṁskāra* with the stronger *saṁskāra* of *Advaita*. What is this *Mīmāsaka* saying? It says,

(Question) *Tatra kechitpaṇḍitammanyā vadanti,
janmādiṣadbhāvavikriyārahito/vikriyo/kartaiko/hamātmēti na
kasyachijjñānamutpadyate yasmīnsati sarvakarmasāṁnyāsa upadiśyate?*

The questioner says, ‘You said before, ‘the self is devoid of the 6 modifications (*ṣaḍbhāvavikriyārahitaḥ*), the non-doer (*akartā*), and One (*ekāḥ*).’ We discussed this. Then it says, ‘no one can have the knowledge ‘I am the Self.’ ‘*na kasyachit jñānam utpadyate.*’ It is not possible to know the Self in that way. ‘*Yasmin sati*’, ‘by being possible, ‘*sarvakarmasāṁnyāsaḥ upadiśyate,*’ this

renunciation of all *karmas* could be advised. This means that this kind of knowledge cannot be attained. The commetator refutes this idea. It says, ‘*tat na.*’ That is wrong.’

*(Siddanti) ‘Na, na jāyate ityādisāstropadeśānarthakyāt. Yathā cha
śāstropadeśasāmarthyāddharmāstitvavijñānaṁ kartuścha
dehāntarasambandhijñānaṁ choṭpadyate, tathā
śāstrāttasyaivā/tmano/vikriyatvākarṭṛtvaikatvādivijñānaṁ
kasmānotpadyate iti prṣṭavyāste.*

This means, ‘if this kind of knowledge is not possible, then who could give the instructions such as in the *Gīta*, ‘the Self is never born nor dies?’ Then everything the Lord says in the *Gīta* would become a waste, according to the argument of the questioner. However, because the Lord’s instructions are meaningful, this argument cannot be correct. If it were correct, the *śāstras* would become ‘*anartha*,’ meaningless. This is because the follower of *Pūrva Mīmāṃsa* is someone who accepts the *śāstras* as a *pramāṇa*, an authority. Here, it is explaining things in the way that he will understand.

‘*Yathā cha,*’ in which way also, ‘*śāstropadeśasāmarthāt dharmād dharmāstitvavijñānaṁ.*’ So, ‘*te prṣṭavyāḥ,*’ they should be questioned. To who? To the questioner, what should be questioned? ‘*yathā,*’ how, ‘*śāstropadeśasāmarthāt,*’ from the instruction of the *śāstras*, from studying the *Vedas* and contemplating on the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsa* philosophy, ‘*dharmād dharmāstitva vijñānaṁ,*’ these *Mīmāṃsakas* gains the knowledge of what is *Dharma* and what is *Adharma*. They will say, ‘*yāgādi eva dharmā.*’ What is their *dharmā*? It is to perform *yāgas* and other *karmas*. Everything that is prohibited in the *Vedas* is ‘*Adharma.*’ In this way, they gain knowledge of both *Dharma* and *Adharma*. That’s not all. What is it? ‘*Kartuś cha,*’ they gain awareness about the performer of the *yāga*. They say, ‘the *Ātman* performs the *yāga.*’ ‘*Dehāntarādi vijñānaṁ utapadyate,*’ they gain knowledge that the *Ātman* leaves this body and accepts another. In this way, all of the correct knowledge is gained through the *śāstras* of *Pūrva Mīmāṃsa*. Through the *śāstras*, they gain

awareness of an *Ātman* that is separate from the body, and that the *Ātman* accepts new bodies after the old ones are destroyed. They agree to all of this. If that is so, ‘*tathā śāstrāt.*’ From this same *śāstra*, which is the *Vedas*, ‘*tasya eva,*’ about that same *Ātman*, ‘*ātmano avikriyatvaṁ akartṛtvaṁ ekatvaṁ ādi vijñānaṁ.*’ This kind of knowledge, ‘*kasmāt na upadyate?*’ Why doesn’t this happen?

In the same *śāstra* that you hold as a *pramāṇa*, there are matters that you haven’t paid attention to. That is *Uttara Mīmāṃsa*. They didn’t pay attention to that. They paid attention to *Pūrva Mīmāṃsa*. That was their *saṁskāra*. Because of that, they gain this kind of knowledge about the Self; ‘there is an *Ātman* separate from the body, and that is the doer and enjoyer.’ However, one must pay attention to the *Uttara Mīmāṃsa* there.

Here we are listening to a *satsang*. If a *satsang* is for 1 hour or 1 ½ hours, perhaps only 10 to 15 minutes will be impressed within us. For a long time, we will be in our own dream world. Even though our body, ears, and eyes are present, we will be in our own world. When we hear some word, we think about that word and go somewhere else. Then for some time, we will sleep. For some time, we try to prevent other from knowing that we are sleeping. Then the sleep isn’t as pleasant. Those who don’t care if others know will sleep happily. It is because we don’t want others to know that we are sleeping that we don’t get good sleep. In this way, we only enter into the topic of discussion for 10 or 15 minutes.

The rest of the matters will go through one ear and out the other. It won’t enter within. For some, even if the words come inside, the intellect won’t accept them. The intellect will reject them. It won’t allow them to stay. In this way, out of 1 hour, we will benefit from maybe only 10 minutes. Then some may think, ‘we should do some other kind of work.’ It’s not possible to blame such people.

This is what happens to everyone. This also happens to a person who studies the *Vedas*. What happens? He doesn’t pay attention to the *Uttara Mīmāṃsa*, the *Vedānta*. His attention is only fixed on the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsa*. Why does this happen? This happens because the person’s *saṁskāra* is not favorable. What is the easy way out? There is no other easy way except for repetition of these principles. There is no other easy way.

It says in the Gita, ‘*balavān indriyāgrāmo.*’ The control of the senses in today’s society requires a great amount of strength. Through the repetition of this, a person will grasp this truth. It also says, ‘*Vidvāmsapi sa karṣati.*’ This means that the senses can overcome a mature and strong mind. Then what to speak about an ordinary mind?

Because of this, it is *saṁskāra* which enables one to control the senses. What does someone with the *saṁskāra* of *Pūrva Mīmamsa* do? He comes to this path. When this *saṁskāra* becomes ripe, the person is ready to follow the path of *Uttara Mīmamsa*, the *Vedānta*. These are not the opportunities that we get today. The greatest opportunity to develop this *saṁskāra* was through the *Vedic* path followed in the old times.

We normally say, ‘if children are given a good *samskara* while they are young, this will blossom when they become older.’ Some of this is true, and some is false. It is enough if you look at these *Vaidikas*. They studied the *Vedas* from childhood. That is not their fault. They studied the *Vedas* at a young age. However, where does their attention go to? It goes to *karma*. They never pay attention to the *Tattvajñāna* of the *Vedas* itself. Then what is the use of that study in young age? There’s no use.

Some people will be benefited. They will turn their attention to the *Uttara Mīmamsa* and follow that path. And what about the others? There, the person’s previous *saṁskāra* takes control of him, and leads him to the path of the *Karma Kanda*. Even after studying the *Vedas* from childhood, he doesn’t come to the knowledge *Ātma Tattva*. In that case, what controls him? It is his *saṁskāra* which controls him.

For example, a *jijñāsu*, a spiritual seeker, approaches a great *Guru*. He is a seeker, but even after approaching a *Guru*, he doesn’t attain firmness in *Ātma Vidyā*, or the spiritual path. Because of the strength of his previous *saṁskāra*, he is driven to another path. He will think, ‘I don’t want the *Guru* or this spirituality.’ He will thus reject everything and leave. Or if he is in the presence of the *Guru*, his mind will be in other matters. Why is this? This is because of the strength of his *saṁskāra*. Because of this, we sometimes think, not about others, but ourselves, in private, ‘why was my mind lost, even though I was in the presence

of the Guru? Why couldn't I be correct?' People think like this about themselves. Why does this happen? It is because of the strength of the person's *saṁskāra*.

That is also what happens with the people who study the *Vedas* from a young age. Their thoughts will turn in that direction and they will follow the path of *Vedic karma*. That is why the commentator says, 'if the *śāstras* could make you think that you are the doer and enjoyer, why can't the same *śāstras* give you true awareness of the Self?' It's because your *saṁskāra* isn't favorable, that is why. '*Kasmāt na upadyate?*' 'Why couldn't you gain this awareness?' Why isn't this gained, after studying the *śāstras*? It is because the person's *samskāra* isn't favorable. 'Iti pṛṣṭavyāḥ te,' this is what one should ask them. This doesn't blame the *śāstras*. It doesn't blame the *Guru*. One's Ignorance isn't caused by the *śāstra* or *Guru*. It is the person's *saṁskāra* that makes that happen. Don't think that that is because of the imperfection of the *śāstra*, or the imperfection of the *Guru*.

Here, the seeker, after having received this answer, asks a question.

(Question) '*Karaṇāgocharatvād iti chet?*' (Siddhanti) Na,
manasaivānudarṣṭavyamiti śruteḥ.

*Śāstrāhāryopadeśasāmadamādisaṁskṛtamāna ātma darśane karaṇam.
Tathā cha tadadhigamāyānumāna āgame cha sati jñānam notpadyate iti
sāhasmetat. 'Jñānam chotpadyamānāṁ tadviparitamajñānam vardhate
ityabhypagantavyam. Tacchājñānam darśitam hantā/haṁ
hato/smītyubhau tau na vijānīta iti atra chā/tmano hananakriyāyāḥ
karṭṛtvam karmatvam hetukarṭṛtvam darśitam.'*

'*Kāraṇa agocharāt iti chet.*' It was said that the scriptures are a cause for Knowledge, a means to attain knowledge. Here it says that the *Ātman* is One, the non-doer, and devoid of modification, eternally free and intelligent. It says that the Self is '*agochara.*' The word '*gochara*' means an object of the senses or mind. Thus, '*agochara*' means that which is not an object. Then aren't the scriptures an object? That how is it possible to know the Self from the knowledge gained through the scriptures?' That is the argument.

This is because the scriptures cannot reveal the Self. The scriptures cannot indicate the Self, which is eternally free, pure, and intelligent. Then what? Because of this, the mind along with the *saṁskāra* gained from the study of the scriptures cannot indicate the Self also. The scriptures are composed of *śabda*, the spoken words. What do these words do? We discussed this in the first class. When it says to know through the scriptures, it means to know through the mind. However, the Self is not an object to be grasped by the mind. So, how can the scriptures help to grasp the Self, through a mind with this *śāstra saṁskāra*?

This is because the Self is ‘*agochara*,’ a non-object. It cannot become the object of the scriptures or the mind. Because of this, it cannot be known. The scriptures cannot elucidate the Self, and the mind cannot know It. Why is that? This is because the *shastras* cannot elucidate It.’ This is the argument of the questioner.

The commentator says, ‘No, that is not correct.’ Why is that? It says, ‘For the *śruti* says that by the mind alone is the Self to be perceived.’ This is said as, ‘*na, manasaivānu draṣṭavyam.*’ This is said in the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the *śāstra* itself. ‘*Iti śruteḥ.*’ This is said in the *śruti*. ‘It must be understood from the mind alone. It must be understood from the *śāstras*. Then why does a person not know the Self after having studying the scriptures? In that case, the scriptures are there, and so is the mind. The answer to this is said, ‘*śāstrācharyopadeśaśamadamādi saṁskṛtaṁ manaḥ ātmadarśane kāraṇam.*’ This means that not all minds can know the Self. Two important things are needed. One is the *Shastra*, and the other is the *Guru*. Both are needed. Why are both spoken of? Wherever *Shankara* speaks about the *śāstra*, the word *Guru* can be used instead. Whenever *Shankara* speaks about the *Guru*, the word ‘*śāstra*’ can be used instead. In truth, both are the same thing. Then why are they separated? Here, ‘*śāstra*’ refers to the teachings of previous *āchāryas*. These are the *Vedas*, etc. However, are these teachings enough? No, they are not enough. A living *Guru* is also needed. This is the living presence of a *Guru*. That is also necessary. Why is this?

This is because there are several kinds of *śāstras*. For revealing the ‘*sat śāstra*’ or true scriptures, a *Guru* is needed. For the correct understanding of the essence of the scriptures, a *Guru* is needed. A *Guru* is needed for removing the

disciple's doubts. There are countless *sādhana*s mentioned in the scriptures. There are countless fruits mentioned. To instruct what is needed out of these according to the maturity of the disciple, a *Guru* is necessary. The *Guru* gives the correct instructions, according to the maturity of the disciple. Then the disciple, following the path given by the *Guru*, will also become an *āchārya*.

The role of an *āchārya* is not just to teach the scriptures. The *āchārya* must lead the disciple forward in every way. To lead the disciple in the right path, an *āchārya* is needed. A *Guru* is needed. Without a *Guru*, it will become impossible to utilize the scriptures. Because of that, some people who rely solely on the scriptures without the aid of a *Guru* take *sanyassa* based on misinterpretations of the scriptures. Therefore, both are needed; the *śāstra* and the *Guru*. Out of these, the *Guru* is most important, because the *Guru* is the one who gives understanding of the *śāstra* to disciple. The *śāstra* is the second thing that is needed.

If the disciple studies the scriptures without a *Guru* to remove doubts, what will happen? It is said, '*śabda jālaṁ mahāraṇyaṁ chittabramanakāraṇaṁ.*' The *śāstras* become a net of words, a great forest, causing mental confusion. In other words, if there is no *Guru* to instruct, a person will have many doubts about *sādhana* and the Truth. We will be unable to reach a decision. What does the *Guru* do? The *Guru* gives the correct path to the disciple. Then the disciple doesn't have to think further about this.

Thus, it says, '*śāstrāchāryopadeśajanita,*' born from the instructions of the *Guru* and the scriptures, '*śamadamaḍisaṁskṛtaṁ manaḥ,*' how must the mind be? It's not enough to merely be in *Guru*'s physical presence and hear His words. Those instructions must be put into practice. That is the qualities such as *śama* and *dama*, evenmindedness and self-control. All of these are needed.

The other day, we discussed about the 4 qualities of a mature seeker (*sādhana chatuṣṭaya*). A mind that is cultured in this way, '*ātma darśane kāraṇaṁ.*' This kind of mind sees the Self. This is the means to attain realization of the Self. In such a mind, Self-realization will occur. That is the meaning.

The person mentioned before, who studies the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* part of the *Vedas*, also studies the scriptures. But, he did not have a *Guru* to instruct in the correct way. This person may have had a *guru*, but that *guru* did not impart the

essence of the scriptures. He did not teach the knowledge of the Oneness of Self, that the Self is a non-doer, and so on. Therefore, the student never gained this awareness. Instead, he sees the Self as the doer of *karma* and the enjoyer of the fruit of *karma*. That is not the fault of the scriptures, or the *Guru*.

Therefore, the mind that is cultured through instructions of the *Guru* and *śāstras* gains this true Self-realization. That is the meaning of the quotation, ‘*manasā eva anudraṣṭavyam.*’ The Self must be perceived by the mind alone.’ The scriptures speak about this in two ways. The spiritual scriptures speak about a subject in its entirety, whether it is the *Gita* or the *Upaniṣads*. The partial knowledge of a subject will cause a defect for us. What does it say in the *Upaniṣad*? It says, ‘*yato vācho nivartante ‘Aprāpya manasā saha,*’ It says that That is something that cannot be attained by the mind. The mind can never know That.

In another place, it says, ‘*dṛśyate tu agniyā udyā sukṣmayā sukṣmadarsībhiḥ.*’ Here, in this place in the *Upaniṣads*, it says, ‘the Self must be perceived by the mind.’ If we don’t have the proper understanding of this concept in its entirety, we will feel that this is a contradiction. It says in one place that the Self cannot be known by the mind, and in another that That must be perceived by the mind. These two statements are a contradiction. This is what we will feel.

When we view only one side of the scriptures, we will feel there is a contradiction. Because of this, in *Uttara Mimāmsa*, it is called ‘*virodha parihāram.*’ The answer is resolved by two opposing ideas. If we look in all of the *Upaniṣads*, we will see these contradictions. Those must be solved. This means to take the essence from them. This contradiction exists in the *antaḥkaraṇa* of every *Jiva*. These contradictions are natural for the *Jiva*. In other words, there is a mind with *samskāra* within the *Jiva*. In another *Jiva*, the mind won’t have that much *samskāra*. When the *śāstra* gives instructions, both minds are taken into consideration. It says for the mind without *samskāra* to gain *samskāra*. It gives one instruction for a matured mind, and a different instruction for an uncultured mind.

All of these contradictions in the scriptures must be solved by bringing them together. We should not reject them, because they are a contradiction. For

example, in one place, it says that the Self must be perceived by the mind, and in another, that the mind cannot perceive the Self. Therefore, both are not correct.' This doesn't mean that they are rejected. Instead, they should be understood by bringing them together. This is the concept we discussed before, of *samānādhikaraṇam*.

Both statements have importance. What do all of these contradictions depend on? They depend on the *adhikāri*, the aspirant. Even when we study the Gita, what should we understand when we see such contradictions? We should know that the instructions are given for different levels of aspirants. If we don't consider in this way, we will think that it is wrong.

We will think that the scriptures are wrong, the spiritual path is wrong, and the *Guru* is wrong. We will think in this way. If this must be solved, this must be understood. Because of this, while reading the scriptures, we will think, 'It said this before, and now it says this, which is different. Why?' This is because the instructions are given for different levels of aspirants. All of this is not for a single aspirant. There is an endless amount of *Jivas*. The scriptures are instructed to an endless amount of aspirants. That is why there are an endless amount of instructions in the scriptures. There are endless ideas in the *śāstras*.

When one person can utilize an instruction, while another cannot, a contradiction will come. When this happens, we must understand by bringing the two opposing statements together. It is said that the scriptures are complete. This means that we must understand the scriptures in their entirety. We should not understand them partially. That is why it is said that the *Pūrva Mīmamsa (Karma Kanda)* and *Uttara Mīmamsa (Vedānta)* form a single scripture, the *Vedas*. This is a single scripture, not 2.

Only when the *Pūrva Pakṣa* (opposition) and the *Siddhānti* (the person expressing the philosophy) are combined is the scripture complete. What do we say? We say that we should reject the *Pūrva Pakṣa*, and accept the *Siddhānti*. That is what is normally said. However, that is not the ultimate view. When does the *Siddhānti* become complete? It is when this is combined together with the *Pūrva Pakṣa*. When both are combined together, the scripture becomes complete.

That is the entirety of the scriptures. If the scriptures are accepted in their entirety, then there will be no doubt. A person who holds on to this

understanding of the scripture's entirety will not have any doubts about the scriptures. They will have no difficulty in understanding the essence of the scriptures. Some people find it very difficult to hear the *Shankara Bhāṣyā*. They don't understand it.

The word for 'understand' in Malayalam is '*manasillakkunu*.' This means to be in the mind. So in the case of these people, the matters don't go within the mind. They stay outside. They don't go within the mind. Why is this? If we can accept the entirety of the *shastra* while hearing a section, we won't have any kind of doubt in the mind. Here in the commentary, it talks about '*saṁskṛtam manah*,' a mind that is cultured. That mind attains the sight of the Self, *Ātma Darśanam*.

The scriptures are never aimed at making our doubts grow. The scriptures are for removing all of our doubts. However, we must use them in the correct way. When we buy some kind of machine, we have to know how to use it. Only then can we benefit from it. So, if we must benefit from the *sāstra*, we must understand the entirety of the *sāstra*. Thus, these contradictions are solved by bringing both sides together. That is what is said here, when it says, 'it is the mind alone which must know the Self.' This is '*Ātma Darśane kāraṇam*.' This is where the commentator ends this matter. This was that the mind, or scriptures are an aid for attaining *Ātma Bodha* (Self-knowledge).