

GITA CLASS – CHAPTER 2, PART 12

Remembering the Guru Parampara, we begin our discussion on the Bhagavad Gita, Shankara Bhashya, Chapter 2, Verse 38.

There is a question. If a person who doesn't believe in God performs selfless action, is it possible to call that as 'karma yoga?'

Several people ask this question. This is about the relationship between faith in God and karma yoga. Here, what is meant by faith in God? What is an important facet of karma yoga? It is to perform action as an offering to the Lord. Renouncing ahaṁta, the ego, one performs karma as an offering to God. That is Karma Yoga. That is only possible for a person with īśvara bodha, God-awareness. A person without this īśvara bodha cannot perform Karma Yoga.

Thus, it is not faith in God that is needed, but God-awareness. This īśvara bodha can even be seen in the most uncultured and simple man, in an undeveloped form. This is what is called faith in God. There is a difference between faith in God (īśvara viśvāsam) and īśvara bodha. What is faith? When someone tells us something, about which we have no knowledge or awareness, and we think according to that, that is faith. We don't have to have bodha, awareness about something to have faith in it. That is faith, no matter what faith it is. This is the same with faith in God.

Without having real knowledge or awareness of God, we believe that He exists. That is ordinary faith in God. This can be natural. Otherwise, the person may not have a firm conviction about it, but will have to have faith. That is what happens. However, this kind of faith is not what we are discussing here. When the scriptures speak about God, īśvara, there is no place for mere belief. Here īśvara bodha, God-awareness, is necessary.

Through the instructions of the Guru, and our studies of the scriptures, it is not faith in God that we must develop. Instead, it is īśvara bodha that we must gain. What do the scriptures say about this? They say that some people may have this īśvara bodha from birth itself. Others, who have a strong spiritual samskāra, when they hear or know about God for the first time, from the Guru or the scriptures, they

gain God-awareness. That is the reality. A person who seeks this īśvara bodha, when he hears the instructions of the Guru or the scriptures for the first time itself, this īśvara bodha is born within him.

Then we may ask, 'if that is so, what is the point of all of the striving after this?' This is because even though this īśvara bodha comes to the sadhak, it is again veiled by the śakti of Māyā. Therefore, a person without īśvara bodha cannot travel on the path of spirituality. It is after gaining this awareness that one turns to the spiritual path. After this awareness, one strives to remove the ignorance that again veils one's God-awareness. That is what happened to Arjuna.

When the Lord instructed Arjuna, he became free from doubts. His mind became clear. However, later, he again forgot. In the end of the Gita, Arjuna says, 'naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir lābhdhvā.' 'My delusion has been destroyed, and my memory regained.' When the Lord instructed Arjuna, he grasped this Reality of the Self. He says that his delusion was destroyed. However, this is not like other subjects. With other subjects, as soon as we gain understanding of them, we will be able to remember them after some time. This is not like that. It will be immediately forgotten.

The Lord instructed Arjuna about his dharma, his duty. Arjuna didn't forget that. He followed his duty by fighting the war, and didn't forget. But when the Lord spoke to Arjuna about īśvara, the Lord, he forgot. Arjuna says this in the following section of the Mahābhārata, the Anugītā. Arjuna doesn't say that he didn't understand. He doesn't say that he didn't understand the Lord instructions. He says, 'I understood, but have forgotten. I am unable to remember.'

Thus, Arjuna asks the Lord to again instruct the Atma Tattva, the reality of the Self. The Lord scolds Arjuna, saying, 'Your intellect is weak! You have no intelligence. What a shame! How have you forgotten? You can't have forgotten!' Like this, īśvara bodha will be gained in the first hearing of the Truth, itself. This is an important idea of the Advaita philosophy. This awareness will occur in the very first hearing. It is because one experiences this awareness that one begins the search. Thus, this God-awareness is an important part of Karma Yoga. We said before that one path of the Karma Yogi is to have the identification, or bhāva, with the true nature of the Self. Even though the feeling that one is the doer and enjoyer is conditioned in the mind, one has the bhāva that in truth, 'I am not the doer, nor

the enjoyer.’ That is īśvara bodha. As one performs worldly actions in this world of plurality, he sacrifices the ego. This is the bhāva, ‘I am performing all actions for sacrificing the ego.’ Otherwise, one acts to please the Lord. ‘May this action I am performing be an offering to God.’ This is the most important part of Karma Yoga. Therefore, it isn’t possible for us to call someone without God-awareness a karma Yogi. For such a person, Karma Yoga is impossible.

That’s not all. Why does a person perform Karma Yoga? It is for attaining chitta śuddhi, mental purity. What is chitta śuddhi for? It is for attaining īśvara bodha, God-awareness. It is for the perfection of that īśvara bodha. When a person performs an action, there will always be an intention, a goal. What is the goal of the Karma Yogi? His or her goal is perfect awareness of God. He performs Karma Yoga for the perfection of his awareness of God, of his experience of God. Then how will it be possible to perform Karma Yoga without īśvara bodha? It isn’t possible.

Then perhaps, the questioner has another intention. What about a person who doesn’t understand any of these principles, and performs sadkarmas, good actions? That is possible. This īśvara bodha is a principle. Without knowing this principle, one can perform good actions. Such people are numerous. They follow good customs and actions. However, we cannot simply call them a Karma Yogi, just from performing good actions. Both of these are different.

Suppose a person performs karma without īśvara bodha, awareness of God. Great examples of this are the followers of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, the section of the Vedas dealing with rites and rituals. As far as these people are concerned, ‘devaḥ,’ or God, is a separate object. These people perform acts ordained by the Vedas. These are sadkarmas, good actions. The basis of their faith is the Vedas. After a long time, the philosophy based on this part of the Vedas has expanded, and become modernized to put more emphasis on the Lord.

However, for the original followers of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, God was not a subject of their thoughts. They were preoccupied only with the Vedas. At the most, they would think about a devata, a deity, such Indra. What is it said about these devatas? It says that they are in the form of mantra. The very form of Indra is mantra. Thus, the deities, or devatas, are considered to be the embodiment of mantras. This is the most ancient view of the followers of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā.

After this philosophy was developed more, forms were accepted for these devatas. 'Vajrahasta purandaraḥ.' This means, 'he who holds the thunderbolt in his hand, who destroys enemies.' This part was then accepted. Then, after some more time, the followers of this philosophy began to accept God, īśvara.

However, the most important conviction of this philosophy is, 'God isn't needed. Perform karmas. Don't perform prohibited karmas; only sadkarmas, good actions.' These are the karmas ordained by the Vedas. What will be the fruit of these karmas? This is because there is an intention behind every action. We discussed this before. Along with every karma, there will be a desire, a will. According to that intention will be the fruit.

So, the fruit of these karmas is punya, merit. If a person performs karma selflessly, the modification of merit is born in the antaḥkaraṇā, the inner instrument. That modification of punya will give the result according to the practitioner's intention. What happens when punya is accumulated? One goes to heaven, svarga. That is not the same as chitta śuddhi, mental purity. We have discussed this.

A person who performs sadkarmas, the actions ordained by the Vedas, will gain the modification of punya, merit. In Advaita, this is also discussed. The Vedas speak of sadkarmas, such as 'iṣṭapūrta.' These don't require awareness of God. Such a person who performs sadkarmas may not have īśvara bodha. What is the result of such karmas? 'Punya vṛtti,' the modification of merit within the inner instrument (antaḥkaraṇā). After this punya vṛtti is accumulated, he attains to heaven. That is what happens to a person who merely performs sadkarmas. He will go to heaven.

However, the Karma Yogi doesn't desire to go to heaven. He doesn't perform karma for that kind of punya vṛtti. Merit is one thing, and mental purity another. These are separate. A person who performs karma for mental purity will gain merit. However, that merit destroys his likes and dislikes. That merit will create a pure samskara in the aspirant's mind.

What about the other person who performs sadkarmas without this awareness? He will gain punya, merit. That merit becomes a cause for rebirth. The greatest example of this is the followers of Pūrva Mīmamsa. They performed good actions only, not bad ones. They perform the good actions mentioned in the Vedas, such as 'iṣṭapūrta,' which are performed for the good of the world. However, they don't have true īśvara bodha. Otherwise, they don't perform karma for mental purity. They

don't renounce attachment to the fruits of their actions. Because of this, what happens?

They attain the modification of merit within the inner instrument. That is the primary distinction from the Karma Yogi. Thus, it's not enough to merely perform good actions. If one merely performs good actions, merit will be gained. Once merit is attained, one will have to be reborn. What does one do to avoid this?

The only desire of the Karma Yogi is for chitta śuddhi, mental purity. That is the desire of the Karma Yogi; chitta śuddhi. For gaining this mental purity, he performs actions as an offering to God, sacrificing the ego. That is the heart of Karma Yoga. That's not all.

Here is a specialty of the mind. The mind can function only by relying on the ego. Ahaṁta, the ego, is the basis for all karmas. All karmas are performed on the basis of ego. Even for a person practicing Karma Yoga, all of his actions will be centered in his ego. He tries to destroy that ego, by developing God-awareness to replace it. If there is no īśvara bodha, what happens? Then, no matter how many good actions one performs, the mind can only do 2 things; one is to be centered in the ego, and the other is to be centered in God.

Therefore, if the karmas must be moved away from the ego, one must put īśvara bodha in its place. It's not possible to act without a base. If the base of ones actions is the ego, then there is no place for God. When the base of actions is awareness of God, then the ego becomes sacrificed. Without either of these two bases, action cannot take place. Therefore, īśvara bodha is given importance in Karma Yoga.

Suppose a person doesn't have God-awareness. Then where will his awareness be? If it is not in God; it will be in the ego. It's not possible to avoid both of these. There is no third option. Thus, if someone must sacrifice the ego, something else is necessary. Then what does he do? He develops awareness of God, to replace the ego. In that way, the ego is sacrificed. Therefore, īśvara bodha is not necessary for the performance of good actions. This is in relation to the īśvara bodha we are discussing.

A person can perform good actions from any other external cause. However, that action won't help to develop mental purity. The fruit of good actions is merit. The modification of merit is created within. This will produce a result, according to

the intention behind the action. This is because there is always an intention. The cause of karma is Will, intention. What is the cause of performing good actions? A cause, or intention is needed. The law behind all action is 'knowledge, intention, action.' Thus, this person has an intention. A person who performs karma as an offering to the Lord also has an intention. He has a desire; Liberation, mental purity.

All of this is within in subtle form. Even if we act otherwise externally, this intention exists subtly within. A person accepts the philosophy behind Karma Yoga and practices it. He believes that if actions are performed without desire for their fruits, he will gain mental purity, Self=knowledge, and awareness of God. By accepting this concept, a person practices karma Yoga. Thus, īśvara bodha, awareness of God, is a part of Karma Yoga. Without it, it is not Karma Yoga.

If a person performs good actions without this awareness, that action will give certain benefits. He will gain honor on Earth, and heaven after death. That will happen. Here, we are discussing true God-awareness. It's not enough to simply say 'God-awareness.' Here, true awareness of God is being discussed. Only if actions are performed with this true īśvara bodha does it become Karma Yoga. This is a rule. If a person doesn't have true awareness of God while performing good actions, these will again produce merit.

Normally, why do believers in certain faiths perform good actions? It is to go to heaven. This is not in the circumstance of the Gītā, but in other religions, believers are encouraged to perform good actions for attaining heaven. There are numerous such people, who perform service to the world. What is in their mind, while performing good actions? Or, what is it that their religious books teach them? 'If you perform good actions here, after death, you will sit at the right hand of God.' That is how it is. They imagine God in a royal throne. Thus, God will call the person and sit him by His side, after death.

Several religions have this idea. That is the same concept that we have of heaven in India. These people also have īśvara bodha, God-awareness. They also perform selfless service, and perform certain spiritual practices. However, their God-awareness is not correct. Thus, what happens from their actions? Like this, after death, they go to heaven. They accumulate merit through their actions. According to Indian philosophy, they accumulate merit, and this gives the attainment of heaven after death.

Whatever they expect through their actions is what they gain. They are unable to understand things beyond this from their religious books. This is because their religious leaders are unable to interpret the scriptures to show what is beyond this. That is what happens. This idea is also contained in the scriptures of other religions. However, their religious leaders lack the ability to convey that meaning to the people. They will simply say, ‘if you perform good actions, serving the Lord, you will go to heaven after death.’ Thus, those who perform good actions for attaining heaven also have īśvara bodha, God-awareness. This is similar to the followers of Pūrva Mīmamsa. They also performed karmas for attaining heaven. Therefore, īśvara bodha is not the same as faith in God. Faith in God and awareness of God are separate. These people who perform good actions on the basis of religious texts have faith in God. They also have awareness of God; but it is not correct awareness. Only a person with correct God-awareness, the awareness described in the Gita, can be called a Karma Yogi.

The fruit of Karma Yoga is mental purity. Such a person will thus gain this. This doesn’t become a cause for rebirth. That is the specialty of this. Some religions refute reincarnation, but accept that one goes to heaven after death. They don’t believe one can again accept a human body. However, they believe that after death, one can be born in heaven. Thus, in the final judgement, God will judge all the souls, and those who performed good deeds will go to heaven, while those who did not go to hell. They say that this is a kind of birth, birth after death.

Here we are not speaking about that kind of awareness, or faith in God. There is no Karma Yoga there. This is because no one there performs karma for purity of mind. They all perform karma for going to heaven. The Yogi acts for chitta śuddhi, mental purity. That can never become a cause for rebirth, in any way. He thus obtains Self-knowledge, and becomes Liberated. If this doesn’t occur in a single birth, he has to continue to perform Karma Yoga, until he attains perfect purity of mind. In the perfection of chitta śuddhi, he attains Jñāna Prāpti, Self-knowledge.

Thus belief or disbelief in God, etc., are very gross matters. Sometimes, when a person who knows God talks about faith in God, he says, ‘there is no God.’ This is just to refute the word, ‘God.’ “Those that refute God as a tattva, a principle are very rare. Suppose we have a discussion with an atheist about the īśvara tattva, or principle of God that we have discussed. An atheist can never refute his own

existence. If it is said that that existence is God, no one can refute it. Instead of this, some Mahātmās have refuted the false interpretations of God. They refute the way the word 'God' is used.

Everyone accepts his or her own existence, because no one can refute that. Otherwise, it is said that īśvara is Jñāna, knowledge. Who can refute knowledge? That isn't possible. God is 'ananta,' infinite. Who can refute this? Therefore, wherever we think God has refuted by a mahatma, it is the word 'God' that is being refuted, the misinterpretation about God. They do not refute God. If one refutes God, he refutes himself. This is according to Advaita. Therefore, no one can refute God.

Therefore, the 'refuting of God,' means refuting the false identifications and ideas of the people. This doesn't mean to refute the īśvara tattva, the Reality, or Principle of God. It is because the real principle of God is unclear to people that this word is refuted. If the true principle of God is explained to a rationalist, they will have to accept. They will say, 'if you describe God in this way, I cannot say that that doesn't exist.' I have talked with people who are rationalists, and refute the existence of God. If someone says, 'this is the principle of God,' then they will say, 'then, we are not opposed to that. Then God is just that. If God is only that, then there is no need to oppose.'

So, when we talk about faith in God, we should know that God is not like other objects that we believe in. He is not something that a child has to imagine to have faith in. Īśvara, or God, is a person's experience. There is no benefit in anyone refuting that experience. This is the kind of God-awareness that we are discussing. Without that Īśvara Bodha, one's actions cannot be called Karma Yogi.

You can still call one's actions as sadkarmas, good actions, or good conduct. All of that can be said. However, these two are different things. Therefore, there is no karma Yoga without īśvara bodha, God-awareness.

Like that, a person asked me something today. This is, 'Swami Vivekananda speaks about Karma Yoga. Amma talks about Karma Yoga. I feel like the Karma Yoga Swami is discussing is something different. That is my doubt.'

All of these are the same; there is no difference at all. Here, we understand this through Shankara's commentary, about Karma Yoga. Through the medium of the commentary, we are gaining understanding of Karma Yoga. When we discuss in this

manner, we will discuss the many different facets of Karma. What Swami Vivekananda and other Acharyas say is the same Karma Yoga. That same Karma Yoga is what we are discussing here.

However, Shankara is explaining some parts of Karma Yoga that we haven't paid attention to. I am not saying these myself. I do not specially direct these discussions. I said this from the beginning of these classes. I said that I don't speak any personal philosophy. What does Shankaracharya say? What happens is that we think, 'Shankara's commentary is like this.' That is when we feel there is a contradiction in our mind. By reading any kind of book, we will think, 'this is what Shankara meant.' However, we should understand Shankara directly. We should understand through the words and sentences Shankara used. That alone is enough to understand the difference.

It is the same with Karma Yoga. What does everyone say about Karma Yoga? 'Perform action as an offering to God.' 'Perform action, sacrificing the ego.' That is the same here. Here, we are explaining the background behind that karma, the difference between worldly karma and Vedic karma, the conditions in which karma is performed, etc. These matters are further discussed here. When we examine certain sections, we will feel that they are very difficult to understand. Therefore, a doubt comes.

Such a doubt comes naturally. If that is so, when Amma gives simple instructions, then why do we need the Shankara commentary, if it is so difficult? If both are the same, then why is Swami making it so difficult through the commentary? When the instructions were simple, there was no problem. Then, there was no mention of Shrouta and Smārta karmas. Then aren't those simple instructions, enough?

That is enough. It's not my opinion that that is insufficient. Simple instructions are enough. Some say, 'Swami Vivekananda has explained simply, as well as Amma, and Ramakrishna Deva. Then what is the use of this difficult bhāṣyā? Several people have said this to me. 'Before, only our bodies sweated. Now, our intellect is sweating.' They have said this. They ask, 'why?' My answer is that 'yes, it is difficult.' When people take the pilgrimage to Shabarimala temple, women are not allowed to enter. Then let's leave that place. I have seen people who go to the Himalayas. In the Himalayas, in Kedari, Bedari, Amarnath, and such steep places, it

isn't possible to go by foot for ordinary men. There is a vehicle that brings people to these places. In their language, this is called 'haccha.' In Shabarimala, there is also such donkeys, to bring people. Or it may be a yak. That will support the people and take to these places. There is a specialty about this animal.

So, having seen people traveling to Amarnath, I have felt that it is very difficult. There I saw a yak, lying in the snow, like in meditation. It didn't even move. There, on top of the yak were tied two big sacks. Big stones would be stuffed inside these. In this way, the yak was motionless, lying down. I was curious to know why they placed such a load on the yak. I went to the person who was traveling and asked, 'why have you tied such a big burden to it?' He said, 'if I remove the weight, it will go run here and there in the mountain. You must either give it some work, or tie it up to the heavy load.' Do you understand where I am going with this?

Therefore, it is enough if you think that Amma is doing this. It's not my responsibility. I don't have any responsibility for this. That is how the Shankara Bhashya came. Otherwise, you will run hither and thither, grazing. I think that this program is to avoid this grazing. Now we can go to the next shloka, the 38th shloka.

**Sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābau jayājayau
Tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivaṁ pāpam avāpsyasi. 2.38.**

Before this, the Lord told Arjuna that if he fought in this battle with Karna and the rest, being slain, you will attain heaven. 'Hato vā prāpsyate svargaṁ.' And what about if you win? 'jītvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm,' you will experience the Earth. This was covered in the last class. Then the preface to this shloka says, 'Listen to the instruction of Mine addressed to one who fights with the resolve, 'fighting in my svadharma.'

This is said as, 'tatra,' there, 'yuddhaṁ svadharmam ityevam,' 'acting in war is my inherent duty,' for one who thinks this, 'yudhyamānasya,' who is fighting,' upadeṣam imaṁ śṛṇu,' listen to this instruction. I am going to say this.

Then Shankara comments on the shloka. It says, 'Viewing with an equal eye' on pleasure and pain, i.e., without attachment to the former or aversion to the latter.'

This is said as, 'sukhaduḥkhe,' in pleasure and pain, 'same tulye kṛtvā,' having made equal, what is this like? 'Rāgadveṣau,' both attachment and aversion, 'akṛtvā ityeta,' not doing, is the meaning.' This is an important matter discussed.

It says here to make pleasure and pain equal, and then act. This is the instruction for a Karma Yogi. The introduction to the Lord's instruction in Karma Yoga begins with this; 'make pleasure and pain equal.' How can these be made equal? Pleasure and pain are created by the mind.

When the mind is active in experiences, it produces either pleasure or pain. Then, how can one make these equal? Is it to imagine that both are the same? No. Both of these are opposites, so even if you imagine so, they won't become the same. Pleasure will be experienced as pleasure alone, and pain as pain alone. Then what does the phrase, 'same kṛtvā,' having made equal, mean? Shankara says this clearly, 'tulya kṛtvā rāgadveṣau akṛtvā.' Having neither attachment nor aversion. That is the meaning. That is what making them even means.

We previously discussed the beginning shlokas of this chapter. 'Nānuśochanti paṇḍitāḥ,' The wise grieve neither for the living nor the dead. So, here it says 'rāgadveṣau akṛtvā,' having neither attachment nor aversion. This means to not be attached to pleasure. This means that once pleasure is experienced through an action or naturally due to samskaras, one should have control over it. This means to not create more pleasure from that experience. Consciously, do not allow the pleasure to be repeated in the mind. Like that, when pain is experienced, if one reacts with aversion, the pain will increase more. Therefore, one should avoid that. This is what is called the even state of the mind.

Suppose a person is in pain. We console him and make him peaceful. What happensthere? The process of repeating the pain is finished. He doesn't return back to the original pain. That pain is then finished. That is what we are trying to do by consoling others. We are then able to avoid the chain-reaction of suffering. This is what happens through consoling. That consoling comes from outside. One person consoles another. Here, it says that a Karma Yogi must console himself. He must not allow that pain to continue in the mind. How? Through his mental strength, which is gained through Karma Yoga, and all other spiritual means. Through all sadhanas, one gains mental strength, which allows one to not allow the experience of pain to spread. It is stopped there.

The same applies for pleasure. What are both pleasure and pain? They are both modifications of mind. They are a transformation of the antaḥkaraṇa, the inner instrument. Here, in the language of Advaita, it is said, 'sukha kāra pariṇāma, duḥkha kāra pariṇāmam.' The inner instrument transforms in the form of pleasure, or of pain. How? Take still, motionless water. That water will have different kinds of vibrations. Sometimes these vibrations will be big waves, or they may be subtle vibrations on the water's surface. From the reflection of light, the water may appear either dark or light. There will be different colors. This is similar. Similarly, in the mind, all of these emotions and modifications are composed of different colors and moods. One of these is pleasure, and another is pain. The modification of sattva is experienced as pleasure. Pain is experienced through the rajasic guna, or through a mix of rajas and tamas. This is experienced through anger. The Yogi doesn't allow these modifications to continue in the mind.

How is this? It is through understanding the insignificance of these changes. It is through understanding the tattva, the Reality behind these experiences. The most important thing for a Karma Yogi is this Tattva Bodha, awareness of the Reality. We discussed earlier about īśvara bodha, God-awareness. That is the most important facet of Karma Yoga. If that is not there, then it is not Karma Yoga. Then how does that Tattva Bodha help us? It gives strength to the mind. If any kind of action must be performed firmly and decisively, strength of mind is necessary. Firmness of the mind is needed. Īśvara Bodha, awareness of God, is for giving this firmness to the mind. How does God-awareness give one firmness? That Īśvara Bodha reveals to one the insignificance, the triviality of these experiences. Just from thinking that these experiences are insignificant and small, won't necessarily make them so. This is because the effect of these experiences in the mind is strong. The mind is in the strong grip of likes and dislikes, and pain and pleasure. If we merely imagine in the mind that these experiences are insignificant, they won't become so. They will become stronger than before. Then what is needed?

Something stronger than these likes and dislikes, etc., must replace them. That is Īśvara Bodha, awareness of God. When this God-awareness becomes firm in the mind, then in comparison with that, these experiences become weak. Then one gains the firmness to not allow them to continue in the mind. Normally, after performing practices, such as meditation, mantra japa, prayer, worship, etc., and we come to the

worldly experiences, they experiences affect us. We become controlled by these situations because we haven't developed strength of mind. This is seen in several people. Why? It is because along with their sadhana, they never had true Iśvara Bodha, awareness of God.

They never made their minds firm in this Iśvara Bodha. That is why it is a modification of mind. However, it is firmer than the awareness of any other object. That is the foundation of the mind. Only that foundation can give the mind the necessary strength. This kind of strength is not just for spiritual practices. That helps one in worldly life, and in worldly actions. That is what is called the evenness of the mind. There is no other kind of evenness of mind. The mind is something that constantly transforms. Evenness, samatvam, is not possible in any other way. Otherwise, it must be destroyed. We can say that the destruction of the mind brings evenness.

So, Shankara says that the shloka means to not have attachment or aversion to anything. In the world, we feel either attachment or aversion to all dualistic objects. All experiences are of the nature of duality. There is no experience that has only one side to it. This is why the Universe is called as, 'dvaitam,' duality. This doesn't exist as One, but as two. Thus, attachment and aversion have a great relevance to all these dual experiences. Wherever it is, attachment or aversion will be there.

Otherwise, all experiences will cause either attachment or aversion within us. The Lord says to not make these attachments and aversions grow. Then the mind attains samatvam, evenness. This is the evenness that the Lord urges Arjuna to practice. After the Lord spoke to Arjuna about his dharma, Arjuna understood. He became ready to act. It is true that this understanding didn't last. In this way, the Lord is using Arjuna as an example. This is to show that one may again forget the Truth, and fall from the path. The Lord says the instruction here in several parts of the Gita.

In gain or loss, 'lābhālābhau,' in victory and defeat, 'jayājayau.' There will be many things that the Lord will say after this. 'In fame of dishonor, 'mānāpamānau.' In this way, the Lord will say a lot about these dual experiences. 'tat same kṛtvā,' making these equal.' In all of these examples, we experience attachment and aversion.

We are attached to gain. In loss, we become angry. In victory, we gain, and in defeat, we lose. This creates anger. Then what does the Yogi do here? He doesn't allow these experiences to continue, and thus gains evenness of mind. That is the firmness of the mind, the firmness of Knowledge. 'Having done this, 'kṛtvā.' This means that this is something that must be practiced mentally.

This is something that the mind should accept with great discrimination. It is not something that should be approached with one's emotions. Instead, this is something that should be accepted with discrimination, viveka. The Gita is an awesome scripture. There are many matters that it speaks of. It is very great, worthy of worship. This is all a kind of bhāva about the Gita. It is emotional.

I have seen in several places in North India; an altar neatly decorated with a ghee lamp, incense, etc., with the Gita lying in front. They will wave camphor to the Gita on this altar, 3 times a day. I'm not telling a joke. This really happens. They light a lamp before the Gita 3 times a day. However, they have never opened and looked inside.

I'm not saying that that is wrong. In whatever way, their minds gain a pure attitude. They don't refute the Gita; instead, they worship it. But that is just an emotional attitude. This is not what the Lord instructs here. Here, the Lord says that after accepting the instructions of the Gita with discrimination, practice them for attaining evenness of mind. This is done through discrimination, not through the emotions. This firmness of discrimination is needed. Only after this firmness of discrimination is gained will the sadhak truly benefit from the Gita.

Even if we don't gain this firmness, we listen to the Gita. We need not think of other people, like, 'He studied, then how did he end up like this?' This is a matter that we normally think about others. We think, 'they studied the Gita and other books, but ended up like that.' Why? It is because this evenness was never attained by the mind. The ideas may have somewhat been grasped. However, this evenness was never experienced in the mind. That is why this happens.

After doing all of this, 'tato yuddhāya yujyasva.' Arjuna, become ready for war. This word, 'yujyasva,' is imperitave, asking Arjuna to do this action. What action is this? It is war. Therefore, you become prepared. In this way, you must have perfect readiness to perform your svadharma. That is why the Lord is saying this.

Here, the Lord is again strongly encouraging Arjuna to perform his duty. 'Naivam kurvan yuddham pāpaṁ avāpsyasi.' 'Evaṁ kurvan yuddham,' fighting in this way, 'pāpaṁ,' sin, 'na avāpsyasi,' you will not be affected by sin. This is in response to the previous doubt of Arjuna. Arjuna said in the 1st chapter, 'pāpameva aśrayed asmān.' 'If we fight in this war, I will attain sin.' This is refuted by the Lord, by saying, 'sin will not affect you.' 'Pāpaṁ na tvaṁ avāpsyasi.'

This is said in order to destroy the awareness of sin in Arjuna. Wherever there is papa, sin, there is not merit, punya. Lord Krishna says here that neither sin nor merit will be gained through the war. War is an action full of violence. Arjuna thought that from that violence would come sin, which would become a cause for rebirth in samsara. However, here the Lord says that when a kṣatriya acts in war as his inherent duty, even though it may involve violence, sin won't be created. Instead, when a kṣatriya fights for the protection of the citizens, he attains merit. If it performed in Yoga, as Karma Yoga, then that action will neither produce merit nor sin, which cause rebirth. That is what it says here.

How is it that the karma doesn't produce sin or merit? We can understand this through any action. In whatever action it is, whether through mind, speech, or body, that action will produce a samskara, a mental impression. We may ask, 'if a mental impression is created from every action, then won't those actions produce merit or sin?' That is true for ordinary karma, but here we are discussing Karma Yoga.

The samskara that produces results is not gained through Karma Yoga. We may ask, 'then if one performs Karma Yoga, won't it produce a samskara?' Yes, it will. That samskara is one that will aid in the attainment of mental purity, chitta śuddhi. Why is this? The Karma Yogi performs actions consciously. What is his resolve about that karma? It is, 'I am performing this karma as an offering to the Lord.' He will pray for the Grace of God mentally. That kind of prayer is in the mind of the Karma Yogi. God's Grace then comes to the sadhak, in the form of chitta śuddhi, mental purity, as Jñāna Prapti, the attainment of Self-knowledge, etc.

Shankara said before, 'the fruit will be according to a person's resolve.' In another circumstance, Shankara says, 'yad bhavayati, tad bhavati.' Whatever we have a bhāva about, whatever resolve we have about the karma's result, that is what we get. It says next in the Gita, 'yoga karmasu kauśalaṁ,' Yoga is dexterity in action.'

These karmas give results of their own accord. To make these same karmas fruitless is what is called Karma Yoga. Then neither sin nor merit will be attained.

We gave an example before, of a person who in the middle of performing a sacrifice, has his desires destroyed. For whatever reason, his desires leave, or he has no interest in the karma. After this, he finished the karma, but that karma will not produce a fruit for him. That was said earlier in the commentary. When karma is discussed in the scriptures of Pūrva Mimamsa, the philosophy based on the rites and rituals of the Vedas, they say, ‘whoever desires the fruit of karma, is a suitable aspirant for karma.’

There the desire, or intention behind the karma is primary. And what about a Karma Yogi? He has no desire. There is also a reason why there is no desire. The Karma Yogi is not someone who merely performs karma. We said before, the Karma Yogi is someone who has renounced the Kāmya and niṣidha karmas. After renouncing these, he continues to perform the nitya and naimitta karmas, as an offering to God, while sacrificing the ego. For a kṣatriya, fighting in a righteous war is neither a kāmya nor niṣidha karma. Even though the Lord reminds Arjuna about attaining heaven, this action is a nitya karma for Arjuna.

Shankara says that the Lord says this to urge Arjuna to action. This action is in the category of nitya and naimitta karmas, not that of kāmya and niṣidha karmas. Therefore, a person may ask, ‘if we unattached mentally, can’t we perform any kind of bad action? Isn’t it enough to simply imagine being unattached mentally?’ That is another question. This is asked normally. If we must answer this, what can we say? We can say that if the action is performed unattached, then that action won’t affect one. Then they will ask, ‘Then isn’t it possible to perform bad actions as Karma Yoga? This is asked frequently.

That’s not possible. Why? This is because the Karma Yogi renounces kāmya and niṣidha karmas, performing the other daily karmas as Karma Yoga. Prohibited actions are impossible in Karma Yoga. Why is this? We said before that actions become Karma Yoga, only when they are combined with īśvara bodha, awareness of God. Then there is no place for prohibited karmas in God-awareness. Then there is only a diving bhāva. There is no place for a demonic bhāva. In that divine bhāva, a person can never perform evil actions. If a person claims this, then you handle that in the same way as I described earlier.

That is never possible. There is no place for Adharma in Karma Yoga. That's why the Lord constantly repeats the word, 'svadharma,' your inherent duty. That is the subject of Karma Yoga. This doesn't mean to pretend to be unattached and commit prohibited actions. Karma Yoga never accepts that. How can a person with awareness of God perform prohibited actions? That is never possible. What is it that binds a person to karma? First is samskara, mental impressions. These are either sin or merit. Here, in Karma Yoga, because there is no desire for the fruit of karma, there is no punya, merit, or papa, sin.

Then what is the second factor that binds one to Karma? It is ahamta, the ego. Ahanta, the ego, is what binds one to the fruits of karma. The Karma Yogi sacrifices the ego, through bhāvana. How is this? The Yogi has the bhāvana, or identification, as, 'In the Truth, I am the embodiment of the Supreme Self.' In this way, the Yogi renounces the ego. Otherwise, he imagines, 'I am not performing this action. The Lord is the doer.'

The Lord says in the Gita, 'bhrāmayan sarva bhūtāni tantrarūdhāni māyayā.' 'I make all beings act through My Māyā.' The Yogi practices remembrance of this while performing karma. Because the Lord is situated in all beings, He is the doer. He makes everyone act.' Therefore, I have no doership in this karma.' In this way, the Karma Yogi performs good actions with this bhāvana. Otherwise, the Yogi performs actions, considering himself as subservient to God's Will.

This is through devotion to the Lord. 'I am the Lord's servant. I perform action as a servant of the Lord.' In whatever way, whatever mental attitude, the Karma Yogi sacrifices the ego. Because the ego is renounced, there is nothing that can bind him to the fruit of karma. Ahamta, the ego, is what binds one to the fruits of karma. Because there is nothing else that can bind one to karmic results, the Karma Yogi avoids being bound to these fruits.

How will a person who has no belief in God have this kind of bhāva? If he doesn't have any of these bhāvas, then how can he perform Karma Yoga? Therefore, Karma Yoga is only possible through God-awareness. Therefore, the Lord tells Arjuna, 'pāpaṁ nāvāpsyasi,' you will not attain sin.' Nor will you attain merit. You will gain mental purity, chitta śuddhi.'

Then Shankara says, 'this counsel is incidental.' This is, 'eṣaḥ upadeṣaḥ prāsangikaḥ.' In other words, after speaking about the Atma Tattva, the Lord

abruptly changed course to talk about Karma Yoga. Thus, Shankara says that these previous shlokas are not the primary instructions of the Lord. Instead, they are said to inspire Arjuna to act. These are not the Paramārtha, the Supreme Truth. This is not the Lord's instruction of the Supreme Truth.

The instructions of Gurus will normally be in two ways. First, they will say the paramārtha, the Supreme Truth, what must be grasped. Sometimes, the Guru will understand the maturity and abilities of the disciple and instruct accordingly. That is not the Supreme Truth. Here, the disciple, Arjuna, is in a particular situation, out of which he is unable to escape. Thus, the Lord accepts that condition of the disciple while giving instructions. That can happen, but that isn't the instruction of the Supreme Truth. This is the kind of instruction that the Lord gave to Arjuna here.

The Lord says, 'perform karma! Perform karma for attaining heaven.' This is not the instruction of the Supreme Truth. That is not Karma Yoga. The Lord says, 'having been defeated, you will attain heaven. Having won, you will you enjoy the Earth.' That is the condition of those in Samsara. However, that is what the Lord had to say. This is because that was the condition of Arjuna. In whatever way possible, the Lord had to change the condition of Arjuna. Sometimes, some desirous promises will have to be told. In this way, the Lord says these desirous promises to Arjuna, and then shifts immediately back to the spiritual principles. These keeps changing. That is why Shankara says that these words are 'incidental', 'prāsangikaḥ.' This is how this instruction came.

These instructions are separate from those said in the beginning of chapter. This part consists of the Lord's encouragement to Arjuna to act, through telling of desirous results. We normally say to a person, 'don't do that.' Suppose a person, who is a drunkard, approaches the Guru for obtaining freedom from his addiction. If the Guru merely says, 'don't drink,' it won't be possible. Otherwise, suppose a person who eats meat approaches a Guru to get rid of this habit. He says, 'I desire to be free from this habit, but am unable to.' What will be the ordinary instruction? He will say, 'then you do one thing. You go buy wine from the liquor store. Go to the Shiva temple, worship it there, and then drink it in your room, where nobody can see.' If this is said, then the drinking the person does can at least be avoided a little. In this way, the Guru doesn't refute actually drinking or anything. This isn't said for others to accept.

The Vedas speak about eating meat. They say that if you must eat meat, you should take a piece, worship it, and then eat it. That is what the Vedas say. Meat is allowed in some parts of sacrifices. However, the person isn't allowed to eat meat in any place other than the place of the sacrifice. These kinds of ordinances are discussed in the Mīmamsa philosophy. What is it that decides these? In truth, these are never an encouragement to eat meat. Instead, it is aimed at avoiding eating meat in other times. It is the same with wine. Instead, the use of these is regulated to a specific time and place. Then, gradually, the people will think for themselves. They will think, 'is this needed? Can't I go without these?' In this way, these are gradually avoided.

The Lord's instruction to Arjuna is similar. 'Die and go to heaven. Win and enjoy the Earth.' This isn't Karma Yoga. The Lord is trying to make Arjuna fight in any way possible. The first step is to prepare Arjuna for karma. Only after that can Karma Yoga come. How can a person who isn't ready even for karma be brought to Karma yoga? Therefore, for bringing Arjuna to Karma Yoga, the Lord encourages him to perform karma, by creating desire to perform karma. The Lord thinks, 'let him first come to Karma. Then I can bring him to Karma Yoga.' That is the Lord's aim. That is why Shankara says that these instructions are 'incidental,' according to the circumstance. Now we can look at the shloka.

'Sukhaduḥkhe,' pleasure and pain, 'same kṛtvā,' having made equal, without having attachment or aversion, 'lābhālābhau,' gain and loss, 'same kṛtvā,' having made equal, 'jayājayau,' victory and defeat, having made equal, 'tataḥ,' then, 'yuddhāya yujyasva,' you get prepared for battle.' 'Evaṁ,' like this, 'pāpam na avāpsyasi,' you will not attain sin.

**Sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau
Tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivaṁ pāpam avāpsyasi. 2.38.**

AUM AMRITESHVARYAI NAMAH

Remembering the Guru Parampara, we begin our discussion on the Bhagavad Gita, Shankara Bhashya, Chapter 2, Verse 39.

There is a question. It says, 'it takes countless lifetimes of good actions to gain awareness of God, Isvara Bodha, and to perform action with that awareness. Then can't we say that these karmas are also a cause for mental purity? Otherwise, how can an undeveloped person gain mental purity, step by step?'

This is talking about good actions. The questioner is correct, that it takes countless lives of good actions to attain awareness of God. Good actions are primary. However, we cannot say that good actions alone are a cause for mental purity, chitta suddhi. These good actions lead one forward. The fruit of good actions is merit. This was said before. However, if you want mental purity, these good actions must be performed with isvara bodha, awareness of God. We have already said that a person doesn't chitta shuddhi through good actions alone.

A person performs good actions selflessly. Through those actions, he gains merit. From that merit, he attains fruits such as heaven. These are the results of merit and demerit. Therefore, it cannot be said mere good actions, that are not performed desirelessly, are a cause for mental purity. Only through Karma Yoga can a person attain chitta shuddhi. We said this the other day. Through mere good actions, a person gains merit. This creates fruits such as heaven. The Gita says, 'gatāgatam kāmakāmā labhante.' They go and come continuously, seeking desirous results. If a person desires chitta shuddhi, he must perform actions without desire for their results.

Where there is desireless, there will be awareness of God, isvara bodha. Only then does the action become nishkāma karma, desireless work. Wherever it speaks about desireless action, it indicates awareness of God. Then, will it become possible to perform desireless work, while forgetting God? How can one perform desireless work, having forgotten the instructions given?

Here, we talked before about faith in God. In Karma Yoga, it is not faith in God that is needed; rather, it is ishvara bodha, awareness of God that is necessary.

Wherever there is faith, there cannot be desireless work. How many people are there who believe in God? Are all of them performing desireless work? No. There are so many people who believe in God. However, they are not people who perform desireless work. This is because faith in God is different from awareness of God. These are two separate things.

If the fruit is needed, what is needed? Desire is needed. If there is no desire, then what? Then one is a Jnani. If there is no desire, then he is a Jnani. Then there's nothing to be done. Why is Karma Yoga performed? For Mukti, Liberation. Ultimately, this desire must be renounced. That is correct. A person desires Mukti. He understands who he is. He has obstacles. He doesn't have awareness of God, so he desires this awareness. Then, he attains mumukshutvam. What is this? It is the iccha, the desire, for moksha, Liberation. That is necessary. That desire is part of the sadhana chatushtaya, the qualities necessary for Jnana Sadhana. In two cases, one can have no desires. In one, he is completely ignorant, so he has no desires. In the other, he is a Jnani. Thus, we must understand the difference between sadkarmas, good actions, and nishkāma karma, desireless action. A person who performs good actions doesn't necessarily have awareness of God. However, a person who performs Nishkāma karma, desireless work, will have awareness of God. That work is performed for Mukti, Liberation.

Without Ishvara Bodha, awareness of God, there can be no mukti. Mukti, Liberation, is attained through awareness of God. Thus, the work performed by one who desires Mukti is desireless work. Then, we normally call someone who does good work in the society as being selfless, having no desires. That is said in the worldly view. This is said by people who don't think about these matters here. We are not discussing desireless work according to the worldly point of view. We aren't discussing about the kind of work that ordinary people describe as 'selfless.' When we talk about desireless work, this is based on the gita.

We talk about people who haven't read the Gita, as performing desireless work. They are called Karma Yogis. This is said in the worldly point of view. However, here we should look in the worldly point of view. Instead, we should see with the view of the scriptures. What does the Lord say about desireless work? That is different from the worldly view of desireless work. People normally say about someone performing any kind of work, 'he is completely selfless. He has no selfish

interest. He works without desire.' This all said about desireless action in the worldly point of view.

Here, we are not discussing that kind of desireless work. We are discussing the desireless work that was instructed by the Lord. There what is said, 'Mām anusmara yuddhya cha.' Remember Me, and fight. Remember Me, performing your svadharma.' Only if both of these factors are joined does it become selfless work. It says, 'Mām anusmara, 'Remember Me.' That is primary. In another section, the Lord, 'Mayyarpita mano buddhir,' having offered your mind and intellect in Me, act!.' 'Madiya hi Mām,' seeing everything in Me, act!' This is said repeatedly in many sections. The remembrance of God, awareness of God, and surrender to God are all discussed in the Gita. 'Manmana bhava mad bhakta,' Establish your mind in Me, through devotion.' In this way, through repetition of this concept, the Lord indicates the presence of God.

Krishna says to Arjuna, 'Tvam nimitta mātram.' You are a mere instrument.' This indicates the presence of God. Therefore, the Gita doesn't mention any kind of Karma Yoga devoid of this awareness of God. If one forgets God, then that is not desireless work. The reasoning of the world is different from this. It says even in the Vedas, that if a person performs good actions, such as the Vedic-ordained rites, he attains punya, merit. He then continues to experience birth and death again and again. By hearing this again and again, a person gains virakti, dispassion. Then he leaves behind such desire-based karmas, and performs desireless karma. Through this, he gains chitta shuddhi, purity of mind. Thus, good actions performed without ishvara bodha, awareness of God, will not produce chitta shuddhi.

Why is this? It is because this karma will create merit, which produces a result. When good actions are performed like this, through countless births, he will still be stuck in the mud of samsara. He will still have to perform desireless karma, along with awareness of God. The questioner asked how an undeveloped person can gain mental purity, step by step. This is what is said. An undeveloped person gains chitta shuddhi through the performance of desireless work. We cannot point to a particular 'turning point,' a particular space in time when this takes place. This is because time is infinite. No one can say, 'you can gain chitta shuddhi, in this birth, on this day.' The succession of births till now is infinite, as well as the future succession of births. Therefore, this cannot be determined in the succession of time; it can happen at any

time. However, when it does happen, it will be as we discussed. Then the undeveloped person gains samskara. This doesn't happen in just one lifetime, according to the Gita. The Gita says, 'bahunām janmanām ante,' after many births, he attains Me. Also, the Gita says, 'sahasrānām manushyeshu,' one among thousands, follows this path and attains Me.' This doesn't mean 1 in a 1000 men. It means in an infinite number men. In other words, through several births, a person may attain Me. This is said particularly in the Gita.

It also says, 'aneka janma samsiddhim.' Perfection is gained by the Yogi after several lives.' Thus, all of these things occur in the progression of the Jiva. First, he must perform good actions for several births. Then, comes desireless work, and chitta shuddhi, and then Karma Tyaga, the renunciation of karma. From this comes the arising of Self-knowledge, Jnana Utpatti. All of this must occur. This what Shankara says is the idea of the Gita. So a person cannot perform desireless karma by forgetting God.

Then there is another question. 'Some people have the firm faith that they are performing actions for the good of the world, while doing horrible and cruel acts. These are terrorists. Are these actions the cause of merit or demerit. If these actions are performed desirelessly, will they cause mental purity?'

The questioner is asking about the actions of rakshasas, demons. What she is referring to are what were called rakshasas in old times. The rakshasas performed cruel, and evil deeds. That is correct. Then, from these deeds, they gain merit, and Mukti. Despite this, they must be killed. What did the Lord do in His Incarnation? He killed all of these rakshasas. After killing, the Lord gave Moksha to them. However, it's not enough to be killed by anyone. You must be killed by the Lord's hands itself. If one dies like that, then it can be said that the Jiva is at once saved. Then, the questioner said that some people have the firm faith that they are acting for the good of the world, while performing very cruel deeds. Then we will have to decide whether those actions are dharma or adharma. What does the Gita say? Even though it says that war is the svadharma of a kshatritya, it also says that the war must be dharmic. Then, how can that be decided?

As far as we are concerned, our enemy is adharmic. A person who attacks the kingdom, for us, is adharmic. There are two factors to a dharmic war. A fight against attackers is called a Dharmic war. A war cannot consist of two sides that are

adharmic. The transgressors are adharmic. The fight against transgressors is called a Dharmic war. That be said to be a kshatriya's duty, kartavyam. Therefore, we should think, 'is this one's duty?' Why does a king fight a war? It is for the protection of the people. From who must the citizens be protected from? From attackers. So, here, are these terrorist people who act for the protection of the people, or are they transgressors? Which side are they on? We should step aside and examine this. If they act for the protection of the people, then we cannot call them terrorists. Then they are performing their svadharma, by fighting for the protection of the people.

If that action is performed with desire for the result, it will produce merit, not demerit. That is why the Lord says, 'sukhinah kshatriyah pārtha, labhante yuddham idrsham.' However, first we must decide if these people are acting in dharma or adharma; whether it is for the protection of the people, or if they are transgressors. If they have the vasana to commit transgressions, that is what they will do. However, if a war is performed selflessly, then it becomes a cause for chitta shuddhi, mental purity. No matter what action it may be, if it is performed selflessly, as one's svadharma, it becomes a cause for chitta shuddhi. For a kshatriya, if he fights a war for the protection of the people and the kingdom, for the establishing of dharma, that action is dharmic. If it is performed selflessly, then it becomes a cause for mental purity. This applies to any action performed as one's svadharma.

So, there are two sides here. One side is the transgressors. Committing transgressions and attacking is not one's svadharma. That is adharma. If one fights for the purpose of dharma, then that is svadharma. If that is in the form of transgression, then that is not svadharma, but adharma. The questioner says, 'I have heard that if one performs a mistake unknowingly even, it is a sin. In an action performed unknowingly, there is no doership. Then how can there be sin?' When a person acts, there will be the feeling of doership. The only difference is that sometimes, this will be intentional, and other times, unintentional. A person is called an Ajnani, because he has the feeling of doership. Shankara explains that the Ajnani performs Vedic karma with the intentional resolve, 'I am the doer, and must experience the fruit of this work.' However, this kind of intentional resolve is not needed for the ordinary actions we perform. This is because this feeling of doership has become spontaneous through countless lives.

Because this is spontaneous, we don't have to have the specific bhaava, 'I am performing this action.' Despite this, when performing actions, we sometimes have this attitude. That varies according to the importance of the action. We have the proud feeling, 'I am doing this.' During the performance of the action, or if not, afterwards, we have the proud feeling, 'I did a great deed.' Pride is the manifestation of doership. Therefore, whether knowingly or unknowingly, we are under the influence of doership. A person who has this feeling of doership is called an Ajnani.

If the action is wrong, then surely that will create sin. A wrong action will create sin. There is a difference there. If a person has the knowledge, 'this action is wrong, and should not be done,' and yet does that action, his sin will be more. AT the same time, for a person who isn't aware of what is good or bad, he also acts. He is ignorant, like an animal. He doesn't have any awareness of dharma, good conduct, or values. What is his action? It creates sin. Then that birth is for experiencing and exhausting the sin from previous births. This is like being born as an animal. All of that is said in the Dharma Shastras. An animal doesn't accumulate merit or demerit. Why? It is because the animal has no discrimination at all. The actions performed by one without an ounce of discrimination, in complete ignorance, without awareness of human conduct, is considered to not be sin. That birth is simply to exhaust that demerit from previous births. Like this, in the mind of a human animal, who is completely ignorant, there is neither merit nor demerit. He lives equal to an animal. If there is such a man, then that is possible. However, that is not possible, because man possesses discrimination. If the man completely lacks discrimination, then there will be no demerit. Such a birth will be simply to exhaust the demerit from previous lives.

However, for ordinary humans, it is generally said, 'if one performs a mistake unknowingly, it causes demerit.' Thus, there will be two kinds of demerit. First, is the sin of performing a mistake knowingly, and second, unknowingly. Because one doesn't know what one should, this causes sin. This is because even though God has given man intellect and discrimination, he doesn't use these to distinguish between right and wrong. Therefore, that is also a sin. Therefore, if one commits a mistake, and says, 'I didn't know,' you won't escape from it. You cannot escape it. You didn't know, but why didn't you know? Haven't I given you the abilities to know this?

When God created man, He gave man intellect and discrimination. If he doesn't use these to know what is dharma, he can't escape because he didn't know.

We said that if animals act like this, there is no wrong in it. This is because they have no knowledge or discrimination. There are also rare humans like this. However, when we think about normal people, there are two sins; first from not knowing that it is a sin, and second, the sin of performing the mistake. What is all of these? If it is an Ajnani, he will have the feeling of doership. Because there is doership, there will be this kind of sin. Then, what is dharma and adharma will change according to the time period and the circumstances. The person has to decide what is dharma.

Then there is another question. 'Isn't the consoling of a person who is distressed, even if he doesn't have awareness of God or the Self, an act that causes mental purity?' First we should know who is doing this. Is someone actually doing this, or is this just our imagination?' The question says a person doesn't think about God, and consoles others. Who does this? I haven't seen or heard of such a person. This is just in imagination. In other words, when a person consoles others who are suffering, he doesn't have any desire. We said before, that behind every action will be a desire. It isn't possible to act without a desire. That's not possible.

Therefore, when we say, 'a person who consoles the suffering,' there will be some satisfaction gained by the performer of that act. He desires that happiness from the action. It isn't possible to act without a desire. That is against the law of life, to act without any desire. In such actions, some kind of desire can be seen. He may act for his own satisfaction. In other words, by consoling the suffering, they are made happy, and he also experiences satisfaction. There is desire within him. He acts for this satisfaction, for happiness. For who's happiness? For his own happiness, he acts. If we really examine ultimately how one acts, we will understand this. In truth, he acts like this from svarthata, selfishness. Even though he may pretend to be selfless.

One person desires to give consoling to the suffering. Why is this? This consoling of the suffering comes from his selfishness. That is because he derives happiness from this. Some people find happiness in harming others. Others find happiness in consoling others. Here, what happens? A person consoles another for his own happiness. That is what happens. He doesn't intentionally think this. Nor

does he understand the principle behind this. However, the specific interest of that action is one's own personal happiness.

How does that happiness come? It comes through giving consolation to others who are suffering. That is a sad karma, a good deed. There is no doubt about that, but we cannot say that it is selfless. It is completely selfish. Why? It is because through that good deed, he gains his own happiness. This is not a bad act. It is a good deed. However, it isn't possible to say that it is selfless. It cannot be said that it is desireless. That is the difference between desireless karma and these kinds of action.

There are so many people in the world who perform these kinds of actions. That doesn't make them desireless. Why? It is because they themselves don't understand, that they perform these actions for their personal happiness. Why is this? This is because of Ignorance. Because of this, they don't even think about this. And what about a performer of desireless karma? The Karma Yogi doesn't desire his own personal happiness. He doesn't act for his own satisfaction. This is why Lord Krishna says, 'sukhadukhe same kritva.' Having made pleasure and pain equal.' But what do others do? They act for attaining their own pleasure. Why is this said? There is no action devoid of desire. That's not all. When people say that they act for the sake of others only, their case will be even more selfish than others. They gain more bliss from those actions.

Here the Gita doesn't say to avoid suffering only. It also says to avoid bliss. If you speak to such people, you will understand. They say, 'I gain bliss through my actions.' They find happiness through these deeds. This goes back to the first instruction of the Lord, 'na anushochanti.' This means to not continue the experience of pleasure or pain in the mind. Here, the person is continuously experiencing bliss in the mind. That is what the Lord says as, 'anushochanam.'

However, what is desireless karma like? It says in the shloka, 'same kritvā,' having made pleasure and pain equal.' This doesn't occur from the happiness or bliss experienced through good deeds. Shankara explained the Lord's meaning as when pleasure comes, don't give way to happiness.' However, it is not like that here, where the person doesn't have this awareness of spiritual principles. Why does this happen? It is because the person is Ignorant. If this kind of awareness of spiritual principles is not there, then the person will find bliss in the action. We say normally,

when we perform actions, we should find bliss in them. Acting like this and finding happiness is the right way.' This is correct about mere worldly actions. However, desireless karma is not like this.

In Karma Yoga, the Yogi rejects even this selfish bliss. Why? It is because that selfish bliss will later become a cause for suffering. Therefore, even though we perform work for other people and find happiness through this, we may end up disappointed. This is because we say that we are performing desireless karma, but we desire the happiness from that action. This pleasure becomes 'harsha,' happiness. And then if any kind of obstacle comes to that karma, if we fail to gain recognition, if anything comes, that we cannot finish the karma, the person immediately becomes sad.

A person who performs karmas desirelessly, this kind of suffering doesn't happen. Whether from not being able to finish the karma, or if there are obstacles to the karma, he doesn't suffer. Nor does he gain happiness from the karma. Therefore, this is the difference between mere good deeds and desireless work. There is a philosophical thinking behind this. In the other, there is not. Therefore, he doesn't have discrimination. He doesn't think about matters, such as, 'is this karma selfish? How does selfishness come into the karma? Am I gaining happiness from this?'

What is the thought in his mind? It is to do good to others. Why is this? It is for his happiness. 'It is because I gain happiness from these karmas.' In saying that the karma is performed for his happiness, what happens immediately? Selfishness enters. Then the desirelessness goes. That is an action performed with desire. He doesn't think about God. Therefore, simply performing actions for others doesn't make them desireless. We should pay attention to this. We may perform actions for other people. However, just performing actions for others doesn't make them desireless. That kind of action can never be desireless.

On the other hand, a person may perform an action for himself. That action may be desireless. It isn't performed for anyone else. It is performed for oneself. That action is desireless. Why? Here, a person who performs desireless action is ultimately performing the action for himself. It is for one's mental purity. Ultimately, desireless action isn't for the mental purity of others. It is performed for oneself, but through that action, he gains mental purity.

Why is this? It is because of the tattva bodha, awareness of the Reality, behind the action. He knows, 'ultimately, this action is for myself.' However, in that action, he sacrifices the ego, and makes pleasure and pain equal, like in the shloka. That action will be for the good of the society. This kind of action is not the false recognition of selflessness. This karma mentioned before, 'I am performing selfless work, 'is a false recognition. That is why Mahatmas say, 'no one can do good for world.' That is the meaning of this.

A person cannot even act for the good of the world towards an ant. Why not? It is because Creation, Sustenance, and Destruction are the job of the Lord, not man. The author of Sustenance is God, not man. Under all this action of Sustenance, is the process of protecting and securing needed things. This is called as 'yogakshemam.' Who is it that performs this yogakshema? It is God. If a person thinks, 'I am serving all of these beings, and sustaining them,' it is due to Ignorance. Therefore, Lord Krishna says in the Gita, 'yogakshemam vahāmyaham.' I perform the protection and securing of everything needed in Creation.' The Lord says, 'this is my job, the sustenance of Creation. You worry about yourself.'

That is the Supreme Truth. Not one of us can do good to another person. There is no possibility for this. We don't have the ability to decide what is good or bad for a person. In the Supreme Truth, all of the actions we perform are for ourself. Otherwise, we perform actions for others to be recognized by others. If we think again and again about this, we will understand. What is that? Yogakshemam is in the hands of God. If our own Sustenance is in our hands, then we can help sustain others. What does Lord Krishna say? He says, 'I will secure what you need, and protect what you possess, yogakshemam.'

Then what does a Karma Yogi do? He surrenders his yoga and kshema to the Lord, and acts. If the Karma Yogi cannot maintain his own yoga and kshema, how can he take on these for others? If we think in the Supreme Truth, if a person did this, he would take on the responsibility of the act of Sustenance. However, the Jiva never has the ability to do this. Then, all of the karmas that one does are service for the world in the worldly point of view. In the worldly view, one does good for others. Even if this is what we think, if we think subtle within, we find that each person acts for him or herself, ultimately.

The Jiva is bound in Samsara, the cycle of birth and death. He has been tied up with the rope of samsara. This cycle of births and deaths, is the process of the Jiva striving to become free from this bondage. Whatever action it is, it is the striving for one's freedom. It is similar to a person who has been tied hands and feet, and strives to squirm free. Ultimately, it is a struggle for one's own freedom. That is what happens in this Samsara. This is what each and every Jiva does. They perform several things for their own freedom. This can be good deeds, bad deeds, desireless work, worship of God, cursing God, etc. Whatever it is, all actions are for one's own freedom. Ultimately, that is what happens.

Then what happens? One consciously approaches the Guru, approaches the scriptures, surrenders to God, all of this happens. Why is this done? Ultimately, all of these actions are for oneself. These actions will surely give good results to others. However, that is not why the actions are performed. Ultimately, all actions are for oneself. Not thinking this is because of dullness. This is because, who is it that ultimately secures and protects all that one needs? That is God. That is why Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, 'don't think about these.' 'Perform your svadharma, your duty.' If you have awareness of God in these actions, they will help to cause mental purity.' Otherwise, one will reap the fruit of the action.'

Therefore, you must not confuse the worldly point of view and the view of the scriptures. These are two separate things. Even thinking that a person acts for the good of others is ultimately wrong. We should understand this. Despite this, Mahatmas will instruct for us to do good to others. That is for moving man from bad actions to good ones. That is not the ultimate principle the scriptures and Mahatmas reveal to us. The mind should be changed from negative tendencies. It is said that one should change from selfishness and unselfishness. However, this good and bad, selfishness and unselfishness, are all relative. In the relative view, instruction is given, and we follow this. However, what is it in the subtle view? Ultimately, everyone performs action for themselves. To say that one consoles others, is another way of consoling oneself. This is because when one gives consolation to others, one gives peace to oneself. There, what happens? He performs the action for his peace of mind. Ultimately, that is the only way an individual can act. Why? It is because that life itself is for the Liberation of the individual.

Thus, this peace, consolation, etc., are all for one's Liberation. This isn't fully experienced by such a person. Wherever our minds experience a bit of peace, happiness, and contentment, that moment, what is it? It is when we become distanced from the samsara, and move towards our inner nature. We become closer to freedom and Liberation. What is all of these actions for? They are all for the attainment of Liberation, complete freedom. That will be the first intention. After the light of this intention, this awareness, all other factors follow. If all of our doubts must be solved, we must understand this principle in its entirety. The scriptures say, 'chidyante sarva samshayah,' all his doubts are cut asunder.' Understanding this principle in its wholeness, you should then look and examine everything in this world. All of your doubts will be solved.

This is true whether they are philosophical or material problems. Only through this whole understanding will such problems go. This kind of inner vision is needed in these matters. This is because the instructions of Sadgurus will be inner different levels, sometimes. It says, 'asatye asthita ātmā.' We have discussed this before. The way to the Truth must be through the Unreal. It isn't possible to instruct about the truth through Truth. Because we are in the realm of the Unreal, they instruct in the level of Unreal. 'Tat asatyam samihate.' This is how we gain awareness of the Real. This is because it isn't possible to gain awareness of the Real through the Real, for someone who is situated in the Unreal.

Therefore, the instructions of the Gurus have different levels, all in the realm of the Unreal. To clarify this, we say that they act for the good of the society. That is correct. Believing this, we will work for the good of the world. However, if we go further in understanding, we will see that one acts for his own good, not for the good of the world. That is all a Jiva can do. However, God can do that. That is why Lord Krishna says, 'abhyudānām adharmasya, tadātmānam srijāmyaham.' When Dharma is overpowered by Adharma, I incarnate.'

The Lord can act for the good of the world. That is why Lord Krishna says, 'srijamyaham,' I come to the Earth, in human form, working for the good of the world.' That is only possible for God, not ordinary Jivas. This question here has been asked several times. A person performs good actions without thinking about God.' It is a good question, but there several matters that we must understand about this. There are many things. First, the question said that a person performs for the

good of others, without thinking of God.' In truth, that is wrong. Without thinking of God, a person cannot act. He cannot live. He cannot even breathe, without thinking of God. That is never possible. Then, what is God? We said before, the person may not be thinking of the word, 'God.' There may be some other words in that person's mind.

Otherwise, the person may have some concepts in the mind that refute God. That can happen. There are several concepts about God. We may read in a book that God is a person sitting up in heaven, like a human. We can see this kind of resolve about God in some people. This kind of God is refuted by Shankara. There is no such God. In truth, what is God? Here, that is not what the Upanishads, or the Gita says about God. Who is God? In truth, what happens is that through constantly having concepts about God, we destroy our bond with God. By thinking and thinking, we become distant from God.

Otherwise, if there is not a single person who doesn't think about God, then what is the relevance of this question? Is there a man who doesn't think about God? Can you show me such a person, who has no thought about God? Even for a person who refutes God, he is still thinking of Him. By saying, 'there is no God,' what happens? Sentence, 48:00) If one says that there is no God, it doesn't mean that they don't think of God. There is no one who doesn't have some thought of God. First God comes, then the person's refutation. Even if someone thinks like that, you won't find a person who has no thought of God.

In truth, that is not what they say. They say, 'I don't believe in God.' We said before, that God is never something that must be believed in. What is it that we have to believe in? It is in things that we have no awareness of. In these, we have to have faith, or belief. However, there is no need for anyone to believe in God, because there is nobody without awareness of God. A person may refute the false concepts of God. That can be refuted. If someone tells us, 'God is a person on a golden throne in the sky,' we will refute this. We say, 'No, God is not a person on a throne.' This is our refutation. However, there is no one without awareness of God.

Then what do we say about God? We say that He is the embodiment of sat-chit-ananda; Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss. Is Sat, Existence, something that we have no awareness of? Chit, Consciousness, is that something we have no awareness of? Then Ananda, Happiness, is that something we are not aware of? Then how can

one forget God? Who is there that acts, without knowing Him? Saying this itself is wrong. That is why I said, that these people don't have the tattva bodha of this, the True spiritual principle behind this. They know, but they don't recognize it. They all know this, but for them, God is just a name. There is not the name 'God' in the Upanishads. The name 'God' in the Upanishads is very rare. If you look in the Upanishads, they only speak about Sat-chit-ananda. There, they don't speak about God. Thus, for ordinary people, 'God,' is just a name. However, there is nobody in this world who doesn't know God. Everyone knows God. It is only by knowing Him that one performs actions.

We know, that there will be many people without this spiritual thinking of God. However, this doesn't mean that they don't know God. Everyone acts only by knowing God.

Therefore, those who have false interpretations of God, and those who refute His existence are equal. One person says, 'I perform actions for the good of the world, with faith in God.' We ask, 'who is God?' They say, 'God is a person sitting on a golden throne in heaven.' This person thinks like this and acts. In truth, he doesn't know God. He misinterprets God. Therefore, the person who misinterprets God and the non-believer are one and the same. How is it that there is no difference between them? It is because God is the embodiment of Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss. Neither of these recognizes this. As far as they are concerned, they have no awareness of God. Even while acting, he has awareness of God, but it isn't correct awareness of God.

The person who refutes God's existence is the same. He also lacks the correct knowledge of spiritual principles. This is what happens all the time. Therefore, we should think about karmas in the light of the knowledge of God described in the Gita, and the Upanishads. Is our karma along with desire or not? Is it selfish or not? Our intellect at present is not entering into that. That is why this doubt comes again and again. Otherwise, our minds will think something incorrect. 'A person can act without thinking of God.' Where are who says this? Once, the teacher said this in school. Or else, we heard this being said by the Communist party. Or we read it in the newspaper. Or in the magazine. The ideas we gather from these will be ingrained within the mind. Our thinking about the Gita will be influenced by these. However, we should imbibe the message of the Gita about knowledge of God and desireless

action. Then we should think about this. Only after thinking then will we find an answer. There is no point in me giving an answer. I have said this several times already. This isn't the first time I am saying this.

Then, if this is the first time we are discussing the subject, OK. But after discussing several times, this isn't being grasped. This is because the mind doesn't enter there. You can keep on asking, because there is no other means. We said before that the samskara in our minds now is from the newspapers and magazines. In the light of that knowledge, if a person studies the Gita, this won't enter within.' This is because of the amount of other thoughts in the mind. Then the same thing will happen. The same as before will occur. To change this, we must think about this again and again.

We are only thinking about this for 1 hour, or 1 ½ hours. How many hours have gone past in life? What did we think in those? Even now, after this, we will again forget these matters and go back to action. So, we should gain a firm determination in such matters by thinking about them constantly. Other than that, there is no way. There is no special medicine for this. We have discussed this subject several times. If you cannot understand, don't refrain from asking. Continue to ask, and I will again repeat this. There is only one thing to say. This isn't grasped because the mind lacks firmness. The questioners here are not people who are hearing this for the first time. However, the matters that they hear don't become firm in the mind.

Lord Krishna says in the Gita, 'bahūnām janmanām ante,' After many lifetimes. That must be how it is. That may be what the Lord means. Anyways, one can only constantly ask. These questions must be asked to oneself. Ask yourself. What is this? The answer will come from inside yourself. That is it. In truth, that is the answer. All of these questions are not to be asked to another person, but to yourself. When you ask the question to yourself, the answer will come from within you. All answers are lying within you. The answer to all questions is lying within. That is manana, contemplation. What is this Purva Paksha? These are the questions that we ask within ourselves. Constantly ask within yourself. From within you, from the Indwelling Self, you will gain the answer. Everything will be fine. That's why it is said, 'the Guru must come inside.'

The knowledge that solves all doubts is lying within us. Like Lord Krishna told Arjuna, 'nimitta mātram,' everything outside is just an instrument. The knowledge must come from within. The knowledge from outside won't enter. Knowledge is situated in the presence of the Atman. That knowledge will shine forth from within. Only if that happens will all of these doubts end. You must constantly ask to you yourself. From yourself, the answer will come. That is manana, contemplation. After śravaṇa, hearing the Truth, comes manana, reflecting on it. It doesn't end with just śravaṇa.

Shravaṇa is when we hear to words of the Guru. We hear from another person, or from the Shastras. Manana, reflection, is not like that. The answers to questions come through manana. The question is to oneself, and the answer comes from oneself. So here, there is śravaṇa, but not manana. That is the problem. The manana must be correct. If the manana is correct, then the things that are heard will shine forth within clearly. Because of the lack of this, this problem arises.

In manana, reflection, there are no thoughts of objects or things. When a person performs reflection, it may other things that enter the mind. All of the things that are said here end in the hearing itself. After that, there is nothing else. When that happens, one can only repeat the śravaṇa, that's all. If the mind doesn't have the strength to perform manana, then continue the śravaṇa. When the śravaṇa is repeated again and again, it will gradually be absorbed within. After that, one can practice manana. It will be possible to think about it.

Only through manana will the subject become one's own. In śravaṇa, if the person's mind is not fully awake, then the matters heard will remain the Guru's, or the scripture's. They don't become his own. In one hand, one can make it one's own through śravaṇa. After that, it must become one's own through manana. It must become one's own knowledge. Thus, the Shastras and the Guru are only an instrument, a catalyst. The knowledge is one's own. After that, to make that knowledge one's experience, there is the practice of nididhyāṣana, contemplation. This is to make it more firm, more certain. Only if this transformation takes place will our doubts be resolved.

Therefore, we will again have to discuss these matters. These questions will again be asked. With that expectation, we can now move on. This is the 39th shloka.

Eṣā tebhīhitā sām̐khye buddhīryoge tvīmām śṛṇū
Buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karmabandham̐ prahāsyasi. 2.39.

Then there is another matter here. Now, a few people asked a question, while some didn't ask. After hearing my reply to those who asked a question, those who didn't ask will feel, 'they are stupid!' Hmm. 'They merely asked. Even after hearing this much, they haven't understood!' We are intelligent.' Hmm. 'The aim of Swami was to scold them for this.' 'Fools!' They will think this, but let them. Now the Shankara Bhashya.

It says, 'śokamohāpanayanāya laukiko nyāyaḥ 'svadharmam api chāveksya' ityādyaiḥ ślokair uktaḥ, na tu tātparyeṇa.'

In other words, we have said so much about śoka and moha, grief and delusion. For removing these, Lord Krishna uses two means. The first had already been used. What is that? That is the message of spirituality, the instruction about the Self. Will Arjuna change from that? If we look, we won't find any change at all. Then what? Then there is the laukika nyayam, the worldly justification. That is what the Lord says.

It is normally said, 'there's no point in speaking Vedanta when you're hungry.' The basis of a person's suffering are these śoka and moha, grief and delusion. This is the case with Arjuna. For an ordinary suffering, the worldly solution is what is needed. In selfless service, etc., we work to try to alleviate the suffering of others. That is what happened in the Tsunami, etc. Ultimately, the cause of the individual's suffering are the grief and delusion spoken of by the Lord. But if we go at that time to give the instructions of the Gita, they will hit us. Otherwise, even, they may whack us.

This is because the average man has an undeveloped intellect. If we say, 'the cause of your suffering is grief and delusion,' they won't accept it. Some have the most undeveloped intellect. Then, such people need a worldly solution. Then what do we do? We act so that they may have peace from worldly suffering. Like this, Lord Krishna here uses worldly logic with Arjuna. Arjuna wasn't in sorrow because of food, or lack of clothes, etc. Then what does he do? The Lord speaks in worldly logic to remove Arjuna's grief and delusion.

What are we doing? We are trying to console others through worldly activities. It is like that. Why is this? It is because the instruction of spirituality wasn't fruitful. Arjuna's mind didn't have the maturity to grasp it. For such people, one has to depend on worldly means for removing their grief and delusion. Why? It is because man is that much undeveloped. Arjuna was not that undeveloped of a person. However, the minds of everyone may constantly change from being cultured to uncultured. We said the reason for this, no? It is because of the accumulation of rajas and tamas. Rajasic and tamasic modifications may suddenly enter a mind that is predominated by sattva. When that happens, and spirituality is instructed, it won't have much of a fruit. One will use worldly methods. Only then is it possible.

Lord Krishna told Arjuna, 'If you win, you will rule the country. If you die, you will attain heaven. Therefore, you must fight, and remove this grief and delusion.' Thus, in general, this worldly logic is something that must be relied by Acharyas for removing śoka and moha. That is what it said. The bhashya says, 'svadharmam api chāvekṣya' from the shloka, 'even if you consider your svadharma, 'iti ādyai,' by these, 'ślokaiḥ,' shlokas, this was said. 'Na tu tātparyeṇa.' However, this isn't the real meaning that is said.

In other words, the Lord didn't say, 'if you act like this, it will completely destroy your grief and delusion.' In saying, 'if you win, you'll gain the kingdom. If you die, you'll attain heaven,' the Lord doesn't mean that that alone will completely destroy Arjuna's grief and delusion. Thus, when Mahatmas work for the benefit of the world, it is not with the true intention. The Lord never thought, 'this will completely rid him of suffering.' They know, 'this is not the solution for the suffering of people.' They know that these actions for the good of the world won't help to completely destroy the main three types of suffering in the Jivas. While knowing this, they act. Why? For momentary relief from suffering. They act, knowing this principle.

'May there be momentary relief from suffering.' They act, with this awareness. Therefore, they know that these acts won't completely alleviate the suffering of people. That is why there is a difference between ordinary people work for the good of the world, and when Mahatmas do the same. It is because they know this principle and act. What do they do? They act, knowing the secret of the Universe. For them, the secret of the Universe is revealed. In this way, a Mahatma will go to

console others, in the same way that an ordinary man does. While doing this for the common man, he understands the secret of the Universe. He knows, 'my action is very insignificant, very small.' This is not what will ultimately save the person.' However, that is all the person is suitable for. That is how much maturity he has. He doesn't desire that.

If a person approaches a Mahatma, but lacks maturity, he will never attain God-Realization, or mental purity. He will only attain whatever he desires momentarily. He can thus gain that. A person comes near a Mahatma, praying, 'please change my disease.' Otherwise, 'I need a job, a kid, etc.' This are what ordinary people pray for. They are important. He doesn't understand the greatness of the Mahatma, or what he can really gain through Him. However, they will know. What does the Mahatma know? 'This person doesn't have the suitability, the maturity, to obtain what must be obtained.' Then what is needed for him? Food, clothes, etc. All of these things are needed. Like that, the majority goes.

Lord Krishna describes the 4 types of people who approach Him. These are the arthi, the artharthi, the jijnasu, and the jnani. The arthi is someone under the pressure of worldly suffering. This isn't the suffering from not knowing the Self. He comes to the Lord for solving his worldly suffering. Then there is no point in instructing any other kind of spiritual principle. The Mahatmas understand this. They know the secret of the Universe. They know that for these people, money is needed. They should gain what they need. Therefore, it is not that one gains Liberation by just approaching a Mahatma. However, that step of approaching a Master will help the person that moment. Even if awareness of God isn't born within him in that life, that relationship will help him in the coming time. The energy from that relationship will remain in the antaḥkaraṇa. However, at that moment, what he gains is temporary contentment.

Therefore, this can occur in two ways. For a jijnasu, the Mahatma will give instructions to awaken awareness of the Truth, the real Self. For worldly people, the Mahatma will help them gain what they need. This is how Lord Krishna is also. Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna according to worldly logic and thinking. Besides this, He also instructs according to the eternal spiritual principles. Here, in these shlokas, it is not the highest spiritual principles that the Lord is expressing. The Lord didn't instruct for everyone to attain heaven through war. In the Gita, the supreme subject

is the principle of the Supreme Truth. This is said as, ‘paramārthadarśanam iha prakṛtaṁ.’ That is what we should understand through the Guru. First, that desire for that must be there.

However, the disciple can do anything. If he doesn’t have the maturity to accept that, then what he needs will be given. That is what happens. Then the bhashya says, ‘tacchoktam,’ having said that, the principle of the Paramārtha, the Supreme Truth, upasamhriyate,’ the Lord concludes here, ‘eṣā tebhīhitā’ iti,’ with this shloka ‘What was instructed before was Samkhya. Then, ‘śāstraviśaya vibhāgapradarśanāya.’ This means the separation, ‘vibhāgam,’ of the subject of the scriptures, ‘śāstraviśaya.’ For showing that separation, the Lord says this shloka. Then Shankara explains this. It says, ‘Iha hi pradarśite punaḥ śāstra viśayavibhāge upariṣṭāt ‘jñānayogena sāmkyānām karmayogena yoginām’ ii niṣṭādvayaviśayaṁ śāstram sukham pravartīsyate, śrotāraścha viśayavibhāgena sukham grahīsyanti ityata āha.’

So, it said, ‘Iha hi pradarśite,’ Here, it was shown. What was shown? This is because this will be shown again later. In the 3rd chapter, verse 3, it says, Jñānayogena sāmkyānām karmayogena yoginām.’ This means, ‘there are two paths; the Path of Knowledge, for the Samkhyas, and the Path of Action for the Yogis.’ For making this more clear, it is explained by Shankara, ‘punaḥ,’ again, ‘śāstraviśayavibhāge,’ in the division of the subjects in the scriptures, ‘upariṣṭāt,’ later, ‘jñānayogena sāmkyānām karmayogena yoginām’ iti,’ this is the shloka in the 3rd chapter. For making that concept more clear, it is again said here. Shankaracharya says again and again, ‘Jnana and Karma can never be combined.’ Shankara is showing here that this is what Lord Krishna says. Here, Krishna says, ‘what I told you before was Samkhya. Now listen to Yoga.’ This means that these two are separated.

Then, ‘niṣṭādvayaviśayaṁ śāstram,’ the scripture, whose subjects are the two Paths, ‘sukham pravartīsyate,’ the Gita scripture will function well. In other words, ‘śrotāraścha viśayavibhāgena sukham grahīsyanti.’ The disciple, ‘śrotāra,’ will understand the scripture clearly through this division of the two Paths. This is that ‘these two are two indeed.’ These two cannot be combined together.’ ‘Iti ataḥ āha,’ therefore, the Lord says, ‘Eṣā te ‘bhīhite sāmkye.’

Then Shankara commentates on the shloka. It says, ‘Eṣā,’ this, ‘te tubhyaṁ,’ to you, ‘abhihitā uktā,’ was spoken, ‘sāmkye paramārthavastuvivekaviśaye.’ Here the

word 'Sāmkhye' is explained. 'In Samkhya, means 'in the subject of discrimination of the Supreme Reality.' What was spoken to Arjuna? It is Samkhya. Then, 'buddhiḥ jñānaṃ.' This is the buddhi, the knowledge of Samkhya. What is this knowledge like? 'sākṣāt śokamohādisaṃsārahetudoṣanivṛttikāraṇaṃ.' It is the cause for the cessation of grief and delusion, which are defects that cause Samsara. Thus, Lord Krishna says, 'I have already explained Atma Bodha, Self-knowledge to you.

Then what will the Lord explain next. It says, 'Yoge tu tatprāptyupāye niḥsaṃgaayā dvandvaprahāṇapūrvakaṃ īśvarārādhanārthe karmayoge karmānuṣṭhāne samādhiyoge cha imāṃ anantaram evochyamānāṃ buddhiṃ śṛṇu.' Now, 'yoge,' in Yoga, 'tat prāptyupāye,' a means for attaining that Atma Bodha, 'it then speaks about Karma Yoga. 'Niḥsaṃgatayā,' through non-attachment, 'dvandvaprahāṇapūrvakaṃ,' along with the renunciation of all dvandvas, or dualities. The word 'niḥsaṃgata' means 'without the desire for the fruit of karma, without attachment to the fruit of action.' By remembering the true nature of the Self, 'dvandvaprahāṇapūrvakaṃ,' along with the rejecting of all dualities. Then it says, 'īśvarārādhanārthe.' That is very important.

What happens in Karma Yoga? The action is performed as a worship to God. Here Karma Yoga is described, as being performed as worship to the Lord. Thus, if there is no worship of God, then there is no Karma Yoga. That is the opinion of the Gita. That is also what Shankara says. Thus it says, 'īśvarārādhanārthe,' for worshipping God, 'karmayoge,' in Karma Yoga. What is Karma Yoga for? For worshipping God. Otherwise, there is no karma yoga. Karma Yoga that is separate from the Lord is not Karma Yoga. Here it is clear. All of these matters are made clear in a single line of commentary. It's enough if we pay attention. It says, 'īśvarārādhanārthe karmayoge.' What is there for worshipping the Lord? Karma Yoga.

Then the bhashya says, 'karmānuṣṭhāne,' this is the performance of Karma, done in Yoga, 'samādhi yoge cha,' It is also called Samādhi Yoga. It can refer to meditation, etc. 'Imāṃ anantaram evochyamānāṃ.' This knowledge will be spoken of by me hereafter. Thus, there is a knowledge for both Karma Yoga and for Jnana Yoga. There is a philosophy for both of these. 'Arjuna, you should understand these.' Then, the bhashya says, 'tāṃ cha buddhiṃ stauti prarochanārthaṃ.' 'Tāṃ,' that, buddhiṃ,' knowledge, 'stauti prarochanārthaṃ,' for creating an interest in that

in the listener, the Lord says, 'buddhyā yayā,' by that knowledge, 'yogaviṣayayā,' the subject of Karma Yoga, 'yuktaḥ,' being united with, 'he pārtha,' O Arjuna, 'karmabandham karmaiva dharmādharmākhyo bandhaḥ karmabandhaḥ taṁ prahāsyasi.' O Arjuna, you will destroy the bond of Karma by this!

What is karma? This is explained. 'Dharmādharmākhyo.' Karma is dharmā and adharma. That karma itself becomes a bondage, a 'bandhaḥ.' That bondage of karma, you will destroy. How? Shankara says, 'īśvaraprasādanimittajñānaprāptyaiva ityabhiprāyaḥ.' How does Karma Yoga destroy the bondage of Karma? Why does the Yogi perform Karma Yoga? It is to destroy the bondage of Karma. Through Karma Yoga he gains the destruction of Karma. How does this happen? It is through 'īśvaraprasādanimitta,' that which comes through the grace of God, 'jñānaprāpti eva,' the attainment of Knowledge of the Self.' Thus, here again, it makes clear the relationship between Karma Yoga and God.

What happens through the Grace of God, īśvara prasād? It is jñāna prāpti, the attainment of Self-knowledge. How does that īśvara prasād come? It is through Karma yoga. Then how will it be possible to do Karma Yoga, forgetting the Lord? There is no such Karma Yoga, where the Lord is forgotten. Therefore, it says, the attainment of Knowledge through God's Grace. The Karma Yogi practices Karma Yoga for the Grace of the Lord. That Grace comes to the Karma Yogi in the form of chitta śuddhi, mental purity. That is how the Lord's Grace comes. It destroys all kinds of obstacles.

God's Grace can come in several ways. If there are obstacles, then the Karma Yogi will be unable to proceed. If those obstacles must be removed, God's Grace is necessary. Also, chitta śuddhi, mental purity, comes as God's Grace. Then, Jñāna Prāpti, the attainment of Self-knowledge, also comes as God's Grace. Thus, through chitta śuddhi, and then Jñāna Prāpti, Karma Yoga destroys the bondage of karma. 'Ityabhiprāyaḥ,' that is the meaning of the shloka. Now we can take a look at the shloka.

Pārtha, 'Arjuna, 'te,' to you, 'eṣā sāmkye buddhiḥ,' this knowledge of Samkhya, 'abhihitā,' was spoken. This means that it was just told. 'I just told you this.' Now I am going to tell you about Yoga. Normally, wherever it says 'Yoga,' it refers to Karma Yoga. Other kinds of Yoga are spoken of in the Gita, but what will

be said next is about Karma Yoga. Thus, 'yoge buddhiḥ,' the knowledge in Yoga, 'imām,' this, 'śṛṇu,' listen!

Then, 'yayā buddhyā yuktaḥ,' united in this knowledge of Karma Yoga. What does this mean? Karma Yoga is something that must be practiced. The tattvam or principle of Karma Yoga, is what is called as Karma Yoga buddhi. This is the knowledge of what the nature of Karma Yoga? What is Karma Yoga? How must Karma Yoga be performed? Who is a suitable aspirant for Karma Yoga? What is the fruit of Karma Yoga? The knowledge of all of these is called 'karma yoge buddhi,' the knowledge of Karma Yoga. So, to practice Karma Yoga, the first thing that is needed is this buddhi. Action can only take place where there is knowledge. Thus, this complete knowledge of Karma Yoga, when it is attained, and one practices Karma Yoga, what happens? 'Karmabandham prahāsyasi.' You will be able to completely renounce the bandage of karma.

Here, the Lord shows that the practice of Karma Yoga leads to the destruction of the bondage of karma. The cause for the practice of Karma Yoga is the buddhi, or correct knowledge, or philosophy, about Karma Yoga. Thus, a person who must perform Karma Yoga must first understand what Karma Yoga is. What is its nature, its cause, and fruit? Having understood all of this, one should perform Karma Yoga. Then the bondage of karma will be destroyed. That is what is said here.

**Eṣā tebhihitā sāmkhye buddhiryoge tvimām śṛṇū
Buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karmabandham prahāsyasi. 2.39.**

AUM AMRITESHVARYAI NAMAḤ