

GITA CLASS- CHAPTER 2, PART 13

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

**Naihābhikramanāśosti pratyavāyo na vidyate
Svalpam apyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayāt.**

Now, the Shankara Bhashya. ‘Kim cha anyat.’ That’s not all, the Lord speaks more about the unique characteristics of Karma Yoga. We have discussed this subject in depth. Now the bhashya, ‘Neha mokṣamārgē karmayoge, abhikramanāśaḥ abhikramanam abhikramaḥ prārambhaḥ tasya nāśo nāsti yathā kṛśādeḥ.’ The shloka begins with, ‘na iha.’ ‘Not here, in the path to Liberation, in Karma Yoga, ‘abhikramanāśaḥ na.’ The words used here are generally used in reference to Vedic karmas. It then says, ‘prārambhaḥ tasya nāśo nāsti yathā kṛśādeḥ.’ What happens in farming (kṛśi)? A person farms, and if the work is left incomplete, the result will be destroyed. Suppose he sows the field, but doesn’t plant the seeds. Then the farming will be wasted. If the crops are then not taken care of in the proper manner continuously, they will also be destroyed. Thus, if the farmer performs the act of farming only partially, the crop won’t survive. His work won’t bear fruit. It won’t give the correct result.

Thus, this abhikramanam, occurs in both worldly karmas and Vedic karmas. Suppose a person begins the performance of a Vedic rite, but doesn’t complete it. He is unable to complete all of the necessary parts of the Vedic rite. He thus has to stop midway. That is where this abhikramanāśam occurs. This is what happens when the person begins the rite and stops it midway through. Like this, the Lord is speaking about this destruction in relation to the practice of Yoga. ‘Yoga viṣaye prārambhasya na anekantaram phalam ityārthaḥ.’ What was described above is the defect of karmas. The result of such actions is undecided, unsure. If the karma is not completed, it won’t bear fruit. However, that doesn’t happen in Karma Yoga. ‘Yoga viṣaye,’ in Yoga, ‘prārambhasya,’ of effort, ‘na anekantaram phalam,’ the result is not unsure. Why? It says next,

‘Nāpi chikitsavat pratyavāyo vidyate.’ Pratyavayo is when the result opposite the desired result is attained. Generally, all karmas are performed for the attainment of merit. This pratyavayo is when the result opposite the expected one happens. Demerit is then attained. However, in the realm of Karma Yoga, this doesn’t occur. ‘Nāpi chikitsavat.’ Chikitsa is medical treatment. That is a karma, an action, performed by a doctor. In this, pratyavayo may occur. The result opposite the desired one may occur. It may happen that the treatment given to weaken a disease may make it more intense. That is the opposite result. That can always happen in medical treatment. However, that does not happen here. Here, there is no pratyavayo, the opposite fruit. Then what happens, in Karma Yoga?

‘Kim tu svalpam api asya dharmasya yogadharmasya trayate rakṣati mahataḥ bhayāt saṁsāra bhayāt janmamaraṇādilakṣanāt.’ This is the part of the shloka, ‘svalpam apyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayāt.’ This is an important message. In Yoga, what is unique? Lord Krishna says, ‘mahato bhayāt,’ this Yoga protects one from great fear. A doubt may come, because the Lord speaks later about the Yoga Braṣṭan, one who falls from the path of Yoga. A person performs karma as Yoga, and while practicing in this way, he is unable to attain mental purity (chitta śuddhi) or Self-knowledge (jñāna prapti) in this life. He dies. If that happens, what will be the fruit of his efforts? That is what is said here. ‘Svalpam apyasya dharmasya,’ even the slightest practice of this Yoga Dharma.’ This can be in two different ways.

The first is when a person enters the practice of Karma Yoga in this life, and continuously practices it. However, the remainder of his life is short. He dies. Then, whatever practices he followed will continue to help him in the next birth. Thus, that effort is not destroyed. The remaining steps of Yoga will be continued in the next birth. That happens to one group.

For another group, they enter karma yoga and continuously practice it. However, either due to vasanas from previous lives, or from prarabdha karma, they fall away from the path of Yoga. They move away from the practice of Karma Yoga. They come to the ashram, and perform Karma Yoga with great enthusiasm. They also leave with the same amount of enthusiasm. We can see this. It happens all of a sudden. Those who show more intense enthusiasm in

the beginning will show the same enthusiasm while leaving. This can also happen. This is called a Yoga Bramshan, one fallen from Yoga.

Why does that happen? It is because of vasanas. In the Sāmkhya and Yoga śāstras, it says that merit is a mental modification of sattva, purity. The gunas are in a constant state of flux. This flux of gunas happens continuously in the antaḥkaraṇa, the inner instrument. This is called karma vipakam, the accumulation of karma. This occurs in the antaḥkaraṇa according to one's karma vipakam. Thus, merit and demerit constantly fluctuate within the antaḥkaraṇa.

When a person's merit becomes manifest, he develops spiritual interest. He gains inquisitiveness in spiritual matters. However, even when that happens, because the modifications are constantly fluctuation, the modification of demerit is always lying, ready to become manifest. In the antaḥkaraṇa are both merit and demerit from previous lives, waiting to become manifest. Thus, a person may be under the modification of merit for some time, and then under the influence of the modification of demerit. A person cannot hold onto only one of these. In this way, within the sadhak, the modification of demerit becomes manifest strongly, and he loses his taste and interest in spiritual matters. He falls from this path. This can happen in an individual's life, but that's not all. Vyāsa says in the commentary of the Yoga Sutras, that this occurs moment to moment. In the mind, this transformation occurs every moment, according to the accumulation of karma. If merit is modified in one moment, demerit may become manifest in the next. That possibility exists. According to that, all thoughts and emotions continuously change. Therefore, for anyone, a fall can occur, at any time.

We say about a certain person, 'he is very sattvic. He is extremely sattvic.' Even in such a person, the tamasic and rajasic gunas are within, hidden. In any moment, they can become manifest as modifications. Then why do people call someone as being sattvic? It is because of a majority of that quality. 'Pradhānam vipariṣa bhavati.' What does it mean when we say a person is sattvic? Does it mean that he only has the sattva guna? No. There is not such a person. You cannot find a person with only sattva. There will not be a being like that. There can not be a living being whose mind contains only the sattva guna. When we

talk about the antaḥkaraṇa, it consists of all three gunas, sattva, rajas, and tamas. Then why do we call a person as being sattvic? We will also discuss this in the 14th chapter, which deals with the divine and demonic qualities. So why is this? It is because there is a majority of that guna, that we call a person sattvic. In the mind of a sattvic person, the sattva guna has more importance. That is why this is said.

This doesn't mean that there are no rajasic or tamasic qualities within such a person. At any time, this may come. A person gains mental purity through sustained practice. However, the rajasic and tamasic qualities within the mind may overpower that modification at any time. That is what happens in truth. Through practice, the accumulation of sattva prevents the expression of the other gunas. At that time, the person develops interest in spiritual matters. We have discussed before, that merit is of two kinds. Merit is the sattvic modification of the antaḥkaraṇa. The first kind of merit is that which causes one to attain worlds such as heaven. This is produced from good actions performed with desire. When dharmic actions are performed with awareness of Yoga, merit is also produced. That merit will prevent the tamasic and rajasic gunas, and sustain the modification of sattva in the antaḥkaraṇa. Even so, these gunas are still lying within. The rajas and tamas gunas are within, in an inactive state.

Where there is the antaḥkaraṇa, there are these qualities. Then we may ask, 'what about the antaḥkaraṇa of a Jnani?' Don't be afraid. They are also there. They will even be there. How do we think? We think the mind of a Jnani is pure like a mirror. Will everything from outside come within it? However, the rajasic and tamasic bhāvas will enter there. But, these are rajasic and tamasic bhāvas that are not an obstacle to Jñāna. So that is a dangerous question. Then we will ask, 'then can a Jnani experience sorrow?' Is this something that can cause sorrow for the Jnani? You can say that there is, but one has no choice but to say. The Jnani will have sorrow, happiness, everything. Where? In the antaḥkaraṇa.

That doesn't affect the Jnani. However, wherever the antaḥkaraṇa is, these will be there. That is different from the sorrow and happiness of a worldly person. However, all of that has a place. That doesn't affect the Jnani, but wherever the antaḥkaraṇa is, these will also be. However, we don't have to say

any of this. The Jnani has no antaḥkaraṇa. We said before that the actions seen being performed by the Jnani cannot be called karma. Then what will we have to say? There is no antaḥkaraṇa for the Jnani. There is neither the mind, intellect, or anything. There is only the Self.

When that happens, we have to say that all of these don't exist. However, when these are superimposed onto the Jnani, then we have to say that they exist. All the features of the worldly antaḥkaraṇa will also be there. Therefore, even the mind of the Jnani is composed of the three gunas, which constantly modify. If that is so, what can we say about the mind of a sadhak? There, whenever the sattvic quality is modified, the rajasic and tamasic gunas are lying, waiting to spring forth. This is discussed later in the chapter, when Lord Krishna describes the condition of the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom. The Lord says,

‘Indriyāni pramāthīni haranti prasabham manaḥ.’ This is said about the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom, the Sthita Prajnan. ‘Indriyāni pramāthīni.’ The nature of the senses is to cause disturbance. This applies to everyone. This remains for whoever dwells in a body. Through mere strength, the senses take away the mind, dragging it to the sense objects. By describing the state of the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom in this way, the Lord is implying that a sadhak may fall at any time. One group of sadhaks may fall from karma yoga. Another group is unable to reach the goal before their life span. In both cases, these sadhaks continue to possess the merit gained from Karma Yoga. Then what happens? This is discussed in the Yoga Shastras. A person gains merit in this birth. Then how will his next birth be? Here, the doubt of previous births is accepted. But what determines how a person's next life will be?

Suppose a person accumulates demerit in this birth. How will the next birth be? Will the birth be according to the merit gained, or the demerit gained? To explain this, the concept of karma vipakam is given. It is not just this merit and demerit. There is a law for this, a Divine law. This is that the merit gained from previous lives is counted along with the merit gained in this life. The same is true for the demerit gained in this life and previous lives. According to that, a person receives a new birth.

That is why Lord Krishna says here, ‘svalpam api.’ If one practices even a small amount of this Karma Yoga, which is instrumental in bringing about

mental purity, it will create merit. That merit will be of benefit in future births as well. 'Mahato bhayāt.' That will rescue one from great fear, the fear of saṁsāra. And what about for the Yoga Brashtan, one who has fallen from Yoga? That can be in two ways.

Suppose a sadhak goes from performing his duties dharmicly, to performing adharmic actions. What about when that happens? If that happens, then he gains more demerit in this life than the merit that was gained. Then, even if the Lord says that this dharma protects one from great fear, he won't be rescued the next time. Time will grab him. This is because a person attains the fruit of whichever is accumulated more. This is because the merit gained and demerit gained are both combined. According to that, will be the next birth.

Suppose a person performs Karma Yoga, and then slips from the path. He goes away from Karma Yoga, and away from performance of Karma, dharmic actions. He goes to akarma, prohibited actions. He goes to vikarma. Normally, when a person goes away from Karma Yoga, he goes to vikarma, actions opposed to dharma. When that happens, he will immediately accumulate demerit. Before he accumulated merit, but now he accumulates demerit. That will affect the next birth, no matter who it is. This is said in the Smritis, and the Dharma Shastras. If such a person goes this path, it says that he is born as an insect in the mud, for an extended period of time. This is said here in the bhashya itself. This applies to someone who goes to the wrong path. He goes to the opposite path. In this way, after several births, the merit he attained helps to lead him to the virtuous path again. What are those births in between? They are solely to experience the fruits of karma. In the births of birds, animals, insects, and worms, it isn't possible to accumulate merit. Thus, the Jiva takes several such births to experience the fruits of karma. Even then, this merit is still remaining. Once the karma of bad actions is exhausted, it will become active again.

In these births, it isn't possible to gain merit. The Jiva must simply experience the result of bad actions. After experiencing the fruits of bad actions for several births, the demerit is exhausted. The demerit is destroyed through experience, and remorse. There are several types of way demerit is said to be destroyed. This is according to the intensity of the vice. An intense vice can only

be destroyed through experience. A light vice may be destroyed through repentance. Sin can be destroyed through worship of God. Thus, there are several ways of destroyed sin. If the sin is strong, it must be experienced.

Thus, when a person falls from the path of Truth, and performs bad actions, that vice is very strong. We said before that there are two kinds of demerit; that from acting unknowingly, and from acting knowingly. There is a difference for demerit gained from action performed unknowingly. For a person who should know better, but does not, his demerit will be more. Birds and animals perform sin unknowingly. This doesn't produce the fruit of sin. There is neither sin nor merit there. If the most undeveloped man commits sin, it doesn't cause a fruit, because he doesn't know anything. However, for a person who is suitable to know, who should know better, the strength of that sin will be more.

There are 3 types of people which karma affects. This is said in the Upanishads. 'jāyasya mriyasya ityetaḍ tritīyāṁ.' There are three. Such a person is born, dies, and in between doesn't accumulate either sin or merit. There is such a birth. However, once a person goes from the path of Truth to the wrong path, that sin becomes double. Scriptures speak about the dharma of a Yati in this way. How is the Niti, the justice in the worldly level? This is in two levels. According to the worldly level, the king has the authority to punish a Sanyassi. We think that a sanyassi is above everything. It is impossible to throw a sanyassi in jail. That's not true. Our Dharma Shastras say that the king has such an authority. If a sanyassi strays from the path in such a way, if the king becomes aware that he has fallen away from dharma, he can punish him. He may exile the sanyassi from the country. He can give a severe punishment. That is one thing, on the worldly level.

It is said that the king should worship a sanyassi. The king may worship and respect the sanyassis. However, if a sanyassi goes wrong, the king has the authority to punish. We ask, 'is it right for the king to jail a sanyassi?' If the sanyassi goes wrong, then he may. There is no doubt. Thus, no one has the right to say, 'I am beyond,' and perform bad actions. Instead, this is only if the sanyassi has done wrong. If the king jails a sanyassi without this, that is a

different matter. Here we are talking about the subject, 'abhikramanāśam, pratyavāyo.' This is an important matter for a sadhak.

If the sadhak goes to the wrong path in this way, the sin he attains is very great. This is because he is a person with discrimination. He comes to this path, the path to Liberation, of Karma Yoga, because of discrimination. What does he do? He leaves this discrimination. The sin that he gains is very large. Then, if he says, 'I acted unknowingly,' he won't be saved. Even if he didn't know, his sin will be double. Why? It is because he should have known better. If one performs bad actions unknowingly, where one should have used his discrimination to know, the sin gained will be more.

Despite this, the good acts performed will still manifest for the sadhak, but only after the experience of sin. After experiencing the results of sin, and the sin being destroyed, that merit will manifest. It is said that remorse and repentance will destroy sin. All of that is true. All of that will destroy sin. Like that, there are stories of disciples who unknowingly offended their Guru. There are several stories of disciples who offended the Guru unknowingly, and then went to repent for their action. They didn't do this knowingly, but unknowingly. Then, they searched in the Dharma Shastras for the appropriate repentance. There are stories Some disciples went so far as to stand in burning fire as repentance. If it is true that there is no result for sin committed unknowingly, then they wouldn't have had to perform repentances. Therefore, what is it? That sin must be exhausted through experience. All of that sin must be destroyed through experience. Then, one's merit will become active in the next birth. Thus, some have performed repentance for deeds committed unknowingly. And what about if they are performed knowingly?

When we discuss Karma Yoga, Lord Krishna says, 'svalpam apyasya dharmasya.' When the Lord says that even a little of this Dharma will protect one from the fear of Samsara, many people have a misconception about this. They think, 'I will just practice a little of this. Then, I won't have to practice. I can do anything.' Some will think like this. There are even people who commentate on the Gita like this. They say, 'just a little is enough, then one can do anything.' It's not so.

Therefore, Shankara says, 'svalpam apyasya dharmasya yoga dharmasya.' When Karma Yoga is discussed, it says that even a little practice of this Dharma, 'trayate rakṣati mahataḥ bhayāt,' will save one from great fear. What is this fear? It says, 'saṁsāra bhayāt,' from the fear of Samsara. Then what is the fear of Samsara? It says, 'janmamaraṇādilakṣanāt,' indicated by births and deaths. So why is this fear of Samsara mentioned? This is because we don't have such a fear. We are born, and live for some time. Then we aren't afraid of being born. We are afraid of dying. However, what does it say here? It says that both birth and death are fearful. We have never felt afraid of being born. Once we are born, we don't think about it again. We are afraid of death. Nobody like to die. Everyone is afraid of this.

Here it says, that both birth and death are fearful. Who does this apply to? It applies to a Viveki, one with discrimination. He is afraid of birth. Why? Everyone fears death, but another birth will become cause for death again. Then life will become a cause for suffering. This logic is said here for the Viveki, not for one without discrimination. Some people commentate on this differently. They say, 'birth and death are nothing to fear. Life is very beautiful.' The Gita speaks about such people. Because the world is so beautiful, they like to be continuously born and die. They say, 'I am not afraid of birth and death.' There are some who say this. The Gita talks about them.

Why do they speak like that? It is because they lack discrimination. What they consider as discrimination is really not discrimination. In truth, this is a fearful thing. If there is a condition of Moksha, Liberation, then this is indeed fearful. If you think that there is no Moksha, that the pleasures of this life is Liberation, fine. For them, because they have no discrimination, there is nothing fearful in this. The Upanishads speaks about such people as, 'tritiyam janmana.' They are continuously born and die, without ever yearning for Liberation, or distinguishing the Truth. There are some like that. However, here it is not speaking about them. For a discriminative person, these must be ended. Only then can he attain Moksha.

For such a Viveki, not just suffering, but pleasure also inspires him to strive for Liberation. For a person who thinks in this way, this samsara is fearful. In that way, from this fear of samsara, 'trayate rakṣati,' he is protected. Some are

like this. Some people perform Karma Yoga for a long time. They come to the ashram, and practice Karma Yoga. Actually, we cannot say that one performs Karma Yoga. One performs karmas as Yoga. Karma Yoga doesn't refer to any particular action, or practice. It means to perform actions as Yoga. That is what is said. No matter how much faith one has in the Guru, I have seen this happen. When they perform Karma Yoga, they don't have a doubt in the Karma Yoga. They have a doubt in the Guru. They think, 'the Guru being clever, using me to do work.' There isn't anyone who hasn't seen disciples who doubt in this way. You can even say that I have doubted like this.

That is the first doubt that comes to the mind. 'The work of the ashram must be done, to sustain the ashram. So, the Guru gets some people to perform that work. The Guru can't perform all of it by himself.' Everyone in this Karma Yoga has this doubt. They ask, 'why don't you ask us to meditate?' This is because the Guru has an interest. If we meditate, we will be saved. But the Guru doesn't want that, because if we are Liberated, there will be no one to do the work here.' I'm not telling a story. Several people have asked this to me.

Once, I asked an inmate why he was meditating midday. I asked, 'can't you do some work during this time? This isn't a possible time to meditate.' He asked me,, 'I thought that we would be saved if we meditate?' This was the same question as before. 'You asked me to work, because I will be saved if I meditate, isn't it? You don't want that to happen. I understand.' He asked this. This kind of thought can happen. Some people have talked to me about Karma Yoga. They say, Karma Yoga is a form of exploitation. They say, it is a means to find workers, without paying wages. That is how the ashram keeps bringing people in. This isn't speaking about a worldly person, but a sanyassi. I have had long conversations about this.

This is a mental attitude. What is the proof of this? A person says, 'I have performed Karma Yoga for the past 12 years, yet haven't gained anything from it.' This Karma Yoga has been a waste for me.' A disciple stays with the Guru, performing Karma Yoga, for 12 years, working in the kitchen, cooking. Finally, he lost his patience. The disciple took a piece of wood and gave a whack to the Guru's head. The Guru lost consciousness and fell down. This is a real event, not a story. Then the disciple left before the Guru regained consciousness. Such

an event has occurred. The Guru was a very well-known one.. If you ask, I can say secretly, but not openly, This has happened. Then, this is the doubt that comes to people who perform Karma Yoga. The scriptures say, and the Lord says, ‘śāstramārgē yoga mārge,’ in this path of Yoga, even a little bit of effort will save you from destruction. However, when this Karma Yoga is performed with such a doubt in the mind, it won’t be effective.

Then there is another thing. Karma Yoga has become somewhat of a ‘fashion’ nowadays. People accepts Karma Yoga as a ‘fashion.’ That is how it is with some. Then, they will do some action, and have 10 people say that it is karma yoga. He gains happiness from having them say this. ‘I’m not an ordinary person.’ He tries to make people know this. In this way, they accept Karma Yoga as a ‘fashion,’ without real understanding of its essence and principles. There are people who act like this. That is not the Karma Yoga described here, ‘mokṣa mārge,’ the path to Liberation. Here, it says in depth what Karma Yoga is. If that kind of Karma Yoga is performed, sacrificing the ego, and performing Karma Yoga with surrender to God, then it is Karma Yoga.

We said the other day that without Awareness of God, Karma Yoga is impossible. The Karma Yoga of these others is like a ‘fashion.’ It is not true Karma Yoga. If a person performs real karma yoga, with sacrifice of the ego and surrender to God, then it won’t be destroyed. With Vedic karmas, there is this pratyavayo, where the performer receives the opposite result. That doesn’t happen here. When performing Vedic karmas, one has to be very careful. If any part of the ritual is left incomplete or improperly done, it will produce the opposite fruit, the fruit of demerit.

That is the danger of these karmas of the Shrutis and Smritis. They may yield the result opposite then what was intended. Shankara gave the example of a doctor performing medical treatment. It is like that. However, Karma Yoga is not like that. If one really performs Karma Yoga, it will not yield the opposite result. If one thinks one performs Karma Yoga, but performs something else, then he won’t get the fruit of Karma Yoga, but demerit. That is another matter. Karma Yoga can only give punya, merit. Therefore, a person can never perform adharmic actions as Karma Yoga. People ask, ‘can’t we perform anything we like if we are detached?’ That isn’t possible. That isn’t possible for a sadhak.

Therefore, 'svalpam api asya dharmasya,' if one practices even a little of this Yoga Dharma, he will be saved from the fear of Samsara, consisting of birth and death.' This same subject will be covered in the coming sections. Now we can look at the shloka.

'Naiha,' not here, in the Karma Yoga, 'abhikramanāśaḥ,' the destruction of what one has done, or performed, 'na asti,' does not exist. 'Pratyavāyaḥ,' the opposite result, 'na vidyate,' doesn't exist. 'Asya Dharmasya svalpaṁ api,' even an ounce of this Karma Yoga, 'mahataḥ bhayāt,' from great fear, 'trāyate,' saves one.

'Naihābhikarmanāśosti pratyavāyo na vidyate
Svalpaṁ apyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt. 2.35.

Now what is said next, is most importantly, according to Shankara, is revealing the insignificance of the karma section of the Vedas. This is the Karma Kanda. Shankara says that it is insignificant. We should pay close attention to this. This is how Shankara commentates on the next shloka.

The previous section was about Karma Yoga. When we speak about Karma Yoga, we cannot say that all actions have the suitability to become Karma Yoga. This is a big subject of discussion in Advaita. We know, there was a person 'Mandala Misra. He was a great performer of karma. He was defeated in argument by Shankara and accepted sanyassa. That was Sureshācharya. Sureshācharya has written an extensive commentary of Shankara's bhashya of the Bṛhadāranyaka Upanishad. That is called, 'Bṛhadaraṇyakām Bhāṣyā Vartika.' This work created a whole lineage, the Vartika Sampradaya. Because he was a performer of karma, his thinking connected karma and Advaita sadhana more. There, he discusses the subject of 'vididusha,' a sanyassa with the desire for Self-knowledge. He discussed how these karma aid in this, for the vividusha. How does karma help the mumukshu, one desirous of Liberation, and the vividusha? He discussed the Karma Yoga we are discussing here.

Will kāmya karmas help? Or will nitya karmas help? In Sureshācharya's works, these subjects are explained in philosophical depth. If a person doesn't

have a good familiarity with the Karma Kanda, he won't understand anything from reading it. That is why no one has translated it into Malayalam. If someone had translated this into Malayalam, it would have been very good. Many people would be saved. There, subjects are discussed, such as, 'can kāmya karmas aid the sadhak?' Thus, there is one side that uses the Karma Kanda as a means to attaining Moksha.

However, here Shankara completely refutes the performance of kāmya karmas, those which are performed with desire for their fruits. Shankara says that kāmya karmas must be completely rejected. Even now, people perform kāmya karmas from the Vedas. Some of these karmas produce rain, or sons, etc. Even now, people perform these. However, Shankara refutes these karmas. He says that one shouldn't try to make such karmas into Karma Yoga. The mind should go to those karmas.

That is the primary philosophy of Shankara, that the Karma Yoga should only perform nitya and naimitta karmas. It is enough if one performs these as Karma Yoga. For example, take the Agnihotra, the fire sacrifice. There are two types of this; the nitya agnihotra, and the kāmya agnihotra. Both of these are in the Vedas. Sri Sureśācharya discusses whether these kāmya karmas can be performed as nitya karmas, and if they can aid the sadhak. What is the primary philosophy of Shankara? He says that a Karma Yogi may perform nitya karmas. One shouldn't perform the kāmya agnihotra. This is another subject.

Like this, all of the kāmya karmas should be renounced. They should be rejected. Then, without performing karmas aimed at attaining heaven, etc., one performs nitya karmas. These aid in destroying the Karma Yogi's demerit. If they are performed in Yoga, such karmas aid in the destruction of vice. Like this, also, we can consider ordinary actions performed in Yoga in the same way. Worldly actions, refers to ordinary actions such as farming, cooking, etc. These are actions that we all performs. All of these are laukika, worldly karmas. We don't perform these because they are ordained in the Vedas. Instead, we perform such karmas through our worldly knowledge.

For us today, these actions are our nitya karmas. This is because we are unable to avoid such actions, so we have to perform them. Perform such karmas, with discrimination between dharma and adharma. There, also, perform these

karmas with Yoga. That is the essence of Karma Yoga in today's world. Some people ask, 'why does it speak about homas and yagnas?' We should think, 'what is it like now? What should we do in today's society?' There is no Vedic karma here before us. Therefore, for us, Karma Yoga only refers to worldly karmas. Those karmas should be performed with the attitude of desirelessness. They should be performed with surrender to God.

For that purpose, the coming sections point out the insignificance of kāmya karmas.

Vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kurunandana
Bahuśākhās hyanantāś cha buddhayovyavasāyīnām. 2.41.

WE can look at the Shankara Bhashya. It says, 'yā eyaṁ sām̐khye buddhiruktā,' the understanding of Samkhya, which was spoken of before. The section beginning from, 'Nānuśochanti paṇḍitāḥ,' discussed Samkhya. Then it says, 'yoge cha vakṣyamāṇa lakṣaṇā sā,' now, the parts to be spoken are to distinguish the characteristics of Karma Yoga.

Then to Shankara's explanation of the shloka. It says, 'vyavasāyātmikā niśchayasvabhāvā ekā eva buddhiḥ etaraviparītabuddhiśākhābhedasya bādhikā, samyakpramāṇa janitatvāt, iha śreyomārghe he kurunandana.' In Malayalam, the word 'vyavasāyam,' means, 'trade dealings.' In Samskrit, it means, 'niśchayam,' decision. So, Shankara says, 'niścharyasvabhāvā,' of a decisive nature, 'ekā eva buddhiḥ,' this understanding is one, the understanding of Jnana Nishta, or of Karma Yoga, of Bhakti, of Dhyana, etc. The understanding through all of these is of a decisive nature.

Here, as we are discussing about this decisive understanding, importance is given to Karma Yoga. Then it says, 'itara viparītabuddhiśākhābhedasya bādhikā.' This refers to others kinds of buddhi, or understanding. 'Itara,' others, 'viparītabuddhi,' understanding of an opposite nature, 'śākhābhedasya, those with many branches, 'bādhikā,' these others forms of understanding are eliminated by the decisive understanding of Karma Yoga. This decisive understanding destroys all other forms of understanding. How? It says, 'samyak pramāṇa janitatvāt.' It is because this understanding is samyak, true. This is

samatva buddhi, understanding of oneness. Here, the pramāṇa, or source of understanding, is the words of Lord Krishna. That is how we come to know about Karma Yoga. Thus, this understanding comes from the pramāṇā of the Lord's words. This can also mean the words from the Vedas, etc.

Then, 'śreyomārgē,' in this path to Liberation, one's understanding is decisive. This is the buddhi, the understanding gained when we hear the decisive words from Mahātmas, which lead us to Liberation, śreyas. Thus, this decisive understanding, in the path of Liberation, 'he kurunandana,' O Arjuna, instead of this, it is said; yāḥ punaḥ itarāḥ viparītabuddhayaḥ, yāsāṁ śākhābhedaprachāravaśāt anantaḥ apāraḥ anuparataḥ saṁsāro nityapratato vistīrno bhavati.' This is, 'Many branched are these opposed notions. Because of the pursuit of this play of multiplicity has arisen the infinite, shoreless, and ceaseless transmigratory life, Samsara.' This 'viparita buddhi,' the understanding opposed to this, is many. Here, this primary refers to the understanding of ordinary men which forces them to act for the fulfillment of desires.

'Yāsāṁ,' in which, 'śākhābhedaprachāravaśāt,' there are numerous shākhās, or branches, numerous divisions. Just like a tree is composed of countless branches, it is similar here. This buddhi, or intellect, acts in different ways. This buddhi takes the mind to different karmas. It makes one act for the fulfillment of different desires. That is the buddhi that is referred to here. This buddhi, intellect, which drags the mind to seek bad desires,' that is what is meant. This kind of buddhi takes possession of man and with bad desires, takes him to the sphere of prohibited actions. That is 'śākhābhedaprachāravaśāt.' What is that buddhi? It is endless, 'anantaḥ.' It is shoreless, 'apāraḥ.' Then it is explained more, as being ceaseless, 'anuparataḥ saṁsāraḥ.' This is Samsara the ocean of transmigration. What is the meaning of saying that this buddhi is ananta, infinite? This means that the Samsara, transmigration of birth and death, that follows that buddhi, is infinite, endless.

Then Shankara says, 'this Samsara is perpetually spread out before us.' This is nityapratato vistīrno bhavati.' This Samsara is vistīrna, extensive, having no end. Thus, this Samsara does not end for one who performs karmas prompted by desire. His births and deaths have no end. What about the others? This is said next. 'But upon their cessation, due to the discrimination that the

right means of cognition engenders, transmigratory life comes to a halt.’ This is, ‘pramāṇajanitavivekabuddhinimittavaśāc cha uparatāsu anantabhedabuddhiṣu saṁsāro ‘pi uparamate.’ So, from the viveka buddhi, the discriminative intellect, ‘pramāṇajanita,’ born from correct cognition, or pramāṇa, which can be the words of the Guru, or the scriptures. How is this buddhi? This is born from the words which indicate the renunciation of desire-based actions. From this is born this buddhi. Then, ‘nimittavaśāt,’ from this cause, from this buddhi, what happens to Samsara?

‘Uparatāsu,’ the Samsara withdraws. Why? ‘Anantabhedabuddhiṣu uparatāsu.’ These buddhis with infinite branches are destroyed. Desire prompts man to different kinds of actions. These are desire-based actions. There, when the desire behind these actions is destroyed, man withdraws from the desire-based actions. Then, ‘saṁsāro ‘pi uparamate.’ Then, the Samsara, births and deaths, are finished. Therefore, it is not karma that creates the defect. That is made clear here. Instead, it is the desires behind those actions.

When desires prompt one to perform certain actions, and one allows the intellect to simply follow these, the performance of that action results in rebirth. Then it says next, ‘The differences among them being a legion, those opposed notions are many-branched. Each branch gives rise to infinite notions.’ This explains the part of the shloka, ‘bahuśākhā,’ many-branched. Shankara says, ‘Tā buddhayaḥ,’ those understandings, or convictions, ‘bahuśākhāḥ,’ are many-branched. ‘Bahvyaḥ śākhāḥ yāsāṁ tāḥ bahuśākhāḥ.’ That which has many shakhas, or branches, is called many-branched. Then, ‘bahubhedā ityetat.’ These convictions have many differences, or bheda. Thus, this is many-branched buddhi, or buddhi with many divisions.

This is the buddhi of plurality. The buddhi that prompts one to act for desire is in plurality. The major part of Vedas speaks about these kinds of desire-based karmas. That is indicated here. Now we don’t have Vedic karma, no? Still, today, worldly people become engrossed in countless karmas due to the prompting of desire. The ordinary person or creature, performs each and every action due to the corresponding prompting of desire. Thus, this is endless. For the Jiva who acts in this way, the buddhi is ananta, endless. Because of this, his

Samsara will be endless. Why? It is because every moment he accumulates samskaras from those actions. Those samskaras become a cause for rebirth.

Then Shankara says, 'Pratiśākhābhedenā hi anantaś cha buddhayaḥ.' 'Pratiśākhābhedenā,' becomes of the differences of all of the branches, 'anantaḥ,' endless, 'buddhayaḥ,' are these convictions. Each and every desire will take hold of the buddhi and take it away. 'Keṣāṁ,' of whom is this? 'Avyavasāyinām,' of the irresolute. Why is this? 'Pramāṇajanitavivekabuddhirahitānām,' This is for those who lack the discriminative intellect born from correct cognition. Therefore, it is only the discriminative intellect that has firmness. The worldly intellect never has firmness. What is worldly intellect? It is the natural intellect one has. This is the buddhi we gain from the worldly objects. That is not correct cognition, 'pramāṇajanita' buddhi. What is a pramāṇa, the means of correct cognition? It is the śāstras, the scriptures.

This will be made clear later by Lord Krishna. 'Tasmāt śāstram pramāṇam te.' Therefore, may the scriptures be your guide. The words of the Guru are this pramāṇa. What is the pramāṇa, means of knowledge, for worldly people? For them, the world is the pramāṇa. Whatever one sees and hears is a pramāṇa. Therefore, what does the worldly person do? He accepts the pramāṇa of the world and acts according to the world. People say, 'think according to the time, and act according to the times.'

However, this world doesn't have a stable nature. That is the nature of the world. Then what about the śāstras? They have a nature of stability. They were spoken thousands of years before, about Karma Yoga, etc. 'Perform karma without desire; that is Karma Yoga.' There is no change for that. For however long the Samsara continues, for that much time this will be said. That is the decisiveness of conviction, buddhi. However, the worldly buddhi isn't like that. This is because the world continuously transforms. The convictions of the world change. Ideas change. Desires change. According to that, the karmas will continuously change.

One gains new and newer knowledge. All of that is along with desire. According to that, man acts. This doesn't have a decisive nature. So, for a person whose buddhi is not born from the pramāṇa of the Guru or scriptures,

his buddhi will not have any stability. It will continuously fluctuate. That buddhi will be active in numerous objects. Here it is not like that. Here, there is only one buddhi, one conviction. There is no change for the buddhi. There may be a change for the action, but not the buddhi. Why is this?

It is because each and every action is performed with awareness of God. Each actions will be performed by sacrificing the ego. Then the buddhi has only one nature. Then there is no change for it. The stage of karma will change. However, others aren't like that. Those without this buddhi have no stability, in performing worldly actions. There, the buddhi is determined by the actions and the actions are determined by the buddhi. These will constantly correspond with each other. Through each action, there will be different results.

Here it is not like that. Here, each action has only one fruit. For a Karma Yogi, whatever karma is performed, there is no change in the fruit. The fruit is chitta śuddhi, purity of mind. And what about a worldly person's karmas? A fruit will be obtained, according to each karma. According to the action, merit and demerit are accumulated. Therefore, that buddhi has no stability. It changes from object to object. It thinks of the object, and then prompts action. The buddhi there changes constantly, according to the objects. That is instability.

Here it is not like that. There is sthira, stability. Only the Karma Yogi has stability of conviction. That is what is said here.

'Pramāṇajānitavivekabuddhirahitānām,' of those who lack discriminative intellect born of correct cognition, this Samsara is endless. For one with this buddhi, he is always aware of Principle of Oneness. Therefore, there is no other object for that buddhi. There is no object besides that tattva, or principle. The other kinds of buddhi are not like that. They make one aware of numerous objects. Then the buddhi will constantly change according to the objects. That is the difference between the two.

What does a sadhak think? 'I am different from a worldly person.' If he wants to think this, what is needed? We think like this. We think, 'they are worldly, but I am not worldly.' This is what we say. If there must be a difference, what is necessary? The sadhak must have a decisive buddhi. Only then can we distinguish between a spiritual person and worldly person. Here, this is firm, stable, decisive conviction. The buddhi controlled by objects can

never be stable, because the objects are endless. Then where should the buddhi take support? The buddhi should take refuge in God. The buddhi that is directed to God has stability. That is why we said that only a person with awareness of God can perform Karma Yoga.

We normally say, ‘people who perform good deeds are not necessarily Karma Yogis.’ We cannot call them a Karma Yogi if there is not stability of conviction. When an ordinary person does good deeds, his buddhi will be according to the karma. This is because karma is numerous. There is not a one-pointed subject there. So because the karmas are of a numerous nature, there will be no sthirata, no stableness. The action may be a good deed, and they will attain merit according to the karma. However, the buddhi is not one-pointed there. This is because the ordinary intellect constantly changes, according to the objects.

Here it is not like that. There is only one subject for the Karma Yogi. This is *īśvara smarana*, the remembrance of God. His buddhi, or conviction, is in the remembrance of the Lord. It is one. His remembrance is in the principles of Karma Yoga. Remembering this principle, he performs action. Because of that, there is no change to his conviction, his buddhi. Even when he is thinking about the karmas he performs, the basic mental determination will remain constant. Therefore, that is ‘*vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ*,’ resolute conviction. It is decisive conviction, buddhi.

Therefore, how can we distinguish a Karma Yogi? What is the indication of a Karma Yogi? It is the same as a Sthita Prajna, the Man-of-Steady Wisdom. The description of the Sthita Prajna comes in this chapter, from the 54th shloka. This description also applies to the Karma Yogi. If a person practices Karma Yoga, his buddhi, conviction must be resolute. The mind must be still. He must be decisive. The coming shloka will say, ‘*samatvam yoga uchyate..*’ The Karma Yogi has this evenness of mind. This means that the Karma Yogi is not affected by likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain, in the same way that worldly people are. That is the purpose of Karma Yoga.

How is a worldly person? He is affected by likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain. A Karma Yogi’s mind doesn’t become controlled by these like the worldly person. He will have firmness and peace of mind. That is the sign of a Karma

Yogi. If the mind becomes disturbed, then one hasn't reached Karma Yoga yet. He has only heard about Karma Yoga. For a true Karma Yogi, there isn't 1 hour for Karma Yoga, and the rest of the time for other kinds of Yoga. It isn't like that. What do we say? 'I will do Karma Yoga for an hour, and then go eat.' This means that eating food isn't Karma Yoga. This isn't how it is for the Karma Yogi. His Karma Yoga isn't for an hour or half an hour. What is said for him? 'Indriyāni Indriyārtheṣu Vartante iti Dhāraṇa.' The senses act within the sense-objects, but the Self is unattached. Also, 'Guṇā Guṇeṣu Vartante,' the Gunas act within themselves. For him, all actions, even actions for maintaining the body, are Karma Yoga.

Ordinary people make Karma Yoga artificial. Set aside some time during the day for Karma Yoga. The rest of the time is not Yoga. Then, that isn't Karma Yoga. We will discuss this more, in the next shlokas. For the Karma Yogi, all actions are Karma Yoga. It is not, 'one hour for karma yoga, then the next hour for something else.' Even some ashrams are like that. What kind of Yoga is there the rest of the time? That's not it.

In all actions, even the natural actions for maintaining the body, there is no change for Karma Yoga. This is resolute conviction, 'vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ.' One performs actions with this awareness. That is the Karma Yoga discussed here. For that, what is needed? It said, 'viveka buddhiḥ,' discriminative intellect, born of the words of the Guru and scriptures. What is it that takes us away from Karma Yoga? It isn't the actions. Instead, it is the lack of viveka, discrimination, that takes the karma away from Karma Yoga. It is the lack of firm determination about Karma Yoga. That is why we have different kinds of doubts about Karma Yoga.

A person who practices Karma Yoga doesn't have a doubt about Karma Yoga. This is because there the buddhi, or conviction is only one there. This is 'vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ.' In a unified buddhi, there cannot be any doubts. Doubts can occur only in a buddhi that is numerous. 'Is it like this? Is it like that?' That is numerous-buddhi. Doubts do not come in the mind of someone with unified buddhi. So, there is never any doubt in the mind of the Karma Yogi about Karma Yoga. If there is any doubt, than he hasn't become a Karma

Yogi. He is preparing to become a Karma Yogi. He is going to become a Karma Yogi.

We said before, the greatest sign of the Karma Yogi is this resolute conviction, 'vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ.' This is decisiveness. There is no doubt for the Karma Yogi. He stays in unified buddhi. He stays constantly in this eka-buddhi, oneness of conviction. For him, even his breathing in and out are a karma. For that, he has a clear determination, this discriminative intellect. This discriminative intellect can be explained in several ways. The most important parts of this are shlokas like, 'samatvam yoga uchyate,' and 'yoga karmasu kauśalam.' 'Yoga is evenness of mind.' 'Yoga is dexterity in action.'

Only if a person has this clear mental determination and discriminative intellect will Karma Yoga be possible. Otherwise, he will only perform mere karma. There won't be Yoga. That is what we will discuss. Now we can look at the shloka.

'Kurunandana,' O Arjuna, the descendant of the Kuru dynasty, 'iha,' here, in this path to Liberation, in Karma Yoga, 'vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ,' decisive conviction, 'ekā,' is One. 'Avyavasāyinām,' for those who merely perform karma, those without decisive conviction, 'bahuśakhā,' with countless divisions, 'anantaḥ,' infinite, 'buddhayaḥ,' convictions, knowledge. This means that their knowledge has desires directed towards several karmas. According to those desires, the buddhi, or conviction, follows. The buddhi then goes to numerous different karmas. It goes to plurality. Here it is not like that.

Here, for whatever karma it is, the buddhi, the conviction stays in the same form. That is what is called decisiveness. Ekam, or oneness, means that the buddhi remains in a single process. This is because the mind of the Karma Yogi is decisive. Then in whatever action he performs, his mind will be one-pointed. This decisiveness can be seen in the action. Sentence 1:14) In whatever action it is, there will be a single determination. This is the discrimination of karma Yoga. That is the one determination that must be accepted by the buddhi. This is said as 'viveka buddhiḥ.' This means a single determination.

There is also a determination for karma. Anyone can have a determined conviction, a determined mind. However, that determination will be in a plural

form. That determination will constantly change according to the karma. That is not how it is with the Karma Yogi. In whatever action, the buddhi, the conviction will be only one. This is the buddhi of surrender to God, the buddhi of sacrificing the ego, of renouncing attachment, or remembering the detachment of the Atman, etc. This buddhi is one form. This can be the buddhi of the true nature of one's own Self. Like this, the buddhi in Karma Yoga will be in a single form. It will not change in any action.

The ordinary person doesn't have a buddhi that is in a single form like this. According to the accumulation of desires, the mind enters into various objects. That is what we discussed.

Vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kurunandnana
Bahuśākhās hyanantāś cha buddhayovyavasāyīnām. 2.41.

Yām imām puṣpitaṁ vāchaṁ pravadyantavyapaśchitaḥ
Vedavādarataḥ pārtha nānyadastīti vādinaḥ. 2.42.

Here the next 3 shlokas speak about the same subject. The Preface says, 'for those who don't have this decisive conviction, it says, 'yām imām,' etc. This is said as, 'yeṣāṁ vyavasāyātmikā buddhi nāsti te.'

For them, Shankara explains, 'They utter speech pleasant to hear and splendid like a tree in flower.' This is said as, 'yām imām vakṣyamāṇām puṣpitām puṣpita iva vṛkṣaḥ śobhamānām śruyamāṇaramaṇīyām vāchaṁ vākyaalakṣaṇām pravadyanti.' So, it said, 'Yām,' which.' Then it should read, 'yām vāchaṁ,' which words. The first four words of the shloka describe these words. 'Yām imām puṣpitaṁ vāchaṁ.' How are these words? 'Yām imām vakṣyamāṇām,' these, which I am going to say, puṣpitām,' which are flowery. What are these? These are words spoken by those with desire. If it is about the Vedas, it refers to the Karma Khanda. In the world, this refers to words which are said by those who perform desire-based actions.

Then, 'puṣpita iva śobhamānām,' splendid like a flowering tree. Why does it say that these words are flowery? In the same way that it is splendid to see a fully bloomed tree, the Vedas speak about numerous karmas which give desirous

results. So, in the way that it is pleasant to see a bloomed tree, 'śrūyamāṇāramanīyām,' these words they speak are pleasant to hear. When the Vedas speaks about karmas, there are numerous passages that make one desirous of performing it. What does it say? 'If you perform this karma, you will gain wealth, and sons here. After death, you will enjoy the pleasures of heaven. That is supreme bliss.'

In this way, 'śrūyamāṇāramanīyām.' They are pleasing to the ears. They give great bliss to hear, 'vācham,' these words. 'Vākyaalakṣaṇām,' these sentences, 'pravadanti,' they speak. Having giving desires to the mind, these words inspire one to perform karma. Here there is one thing to pay attention to. There is no refuting of karma. This is to refute the desires behind the performance of the karmas. The Gita says to perform karma with an even mind. Therefore, it says to avoid hankering for results. Why? It is because those desires will destroy the peace of the mind. 'Perform karma with even mind.'

When we speak about refuting karma, some people will think, 'everyone in the world is immersed in karma. The world moves forward only through karma.' This is what we call progress. Thus, if we destroy the inspiration to perform karma, won't the world be destroyed? Some ask this.

Here that is not what is said. Here it says that man must never run away from karma. That is the primary meaning. Karma itself is the primary interest. However, the hankering for results in man's mind is what destroys his evenness of mind. This is said here to avoid such desires. Then perform karma. In other words, the Lord is requesting to perform karma peacefully. Perform karma in ease, in harmony. Normally, man steps into karma with eagerness for results. When this happens, his peace is destroyed. His balance is lost. It only says here to please not destroy that. Otherwise, spiritual scriptures do not make man run away from karma. There doesn't come a need to retreat. This is because karma will retreat of itself in the needed time. There is no need to make it retreat.

Here, it says, 'śrūyamāṇāramanīyām.' This indicates the hankering for results. These desirous results constantly create disturbance in the mind. They destroy the evenness of mind. They create likes and dislikes. Here, it is requesting to make this part of karma clear. All of these results are said in the Vedas. 'You will attain heaven if you perform this.' This is how the people are

attracted to the karma. Who is it that quotes these flowery words? ‘Avipaśchitaḥ amedhasaḥ.’ These are the unwise. They have no medha, intelligence. They are ‘avivekinaḥ,’ those who lack discrimination. Here, who is it primarily speaking to? We said this in the beginning of our discussion. When karma is discussed, primarily, the subject is going to the Vedas. Then, there are some parts that indicate ordinary karma.

Even though we aren’t familiar with these, it says, ‘vedavādaratāḥ.’ Shankara comments as, ‘They are addicted to the Vedic words which glorify or condemn and set forth works as well as modes of their implementation.’ Here, we are discussing the parts of the Vedas that speak about karma. That is what is primarily being criticized. Then it says, ‘bahvarthavādaphalasādhanaprakāśakeṣu vedavākyeṣu ratāḥ.’ It is said clearly here. Once karma is said, this is where it reaches. Therefore, once karma is spoken of, Shankaracharya immediately goes to Vedic karma. First, it says, ‘bahvarthavāda.’ These words both praise and condemn certain karmas. For the kāmya karmas, the Vedas use praising words, speaking about fruits such as heaven. They speak about certain sacrifices such as jyotiṣom, etc. Thus, ‘phalasādhana,’ the means for attaining fruits such as these, ‘prakāśakeṣu,’ revealing these fruits, ‘vedavākyeṣu ratāḥ,’ they delight in the words of the Vedas, in the Karma Khanda.

Then, Shankara says, ‘They maintain that there is nothing in the Vedas other than rites that promise heaven, cattle, wealth, and the like.’ This is, ‘He Pārtha,’ O Arjuna, ‘na anyat svargapaśvādīphalasādhanebhyaḥ karmabhyaḥ asti iti evaṁ vādinaḥ vadanaśīlāḥ.’ So, ‘svarga,’ heaven, ‘paśu,’ cattle, ‘ādi,’ and so forth, ‘phalasādhanebhyaḥ,’ from the means to attain these results, ‘karmabhyaḥ,’ which are Vedic karmas, ‘na anyat asti,’ there is nothing else beyond these. ‘Ityevam,’ thus, ‘vādinaḥ vadanaśīlāḥ,’ they are accustomed to speaking like this. ‘Vadana,’ means to say.

These are people who are dedicated to the Karma Khanda of the Vedas. They say that the entire Vedas speaks only about karmas. Even some followers of the Vedas are like this. They interpret the Vedic mantras, such as ‘aham brahmāsmi,’ ‘tattvamasi,’ etc., in relation to these karmas. They speak nonsense. They say that the highest puruṣārtha, goal of life, is to perform sacrifices which are said in the Vedas. Even now there are some like this. The world is like that.

That which inspires man to act in the world are the desirous results. That creates desire. Then this Karma Yoga buddhi will not be there. How does the Karma Yogi perform karma? He is inspired to act from this conviction of Karma Yoga. It doesn't say to merely act, or not act. It says to act with decisiveness and understanding of Yoga.

There is a part in the Vedas that speaks contrary to this. The world also has this way. What is the fruit of that? Man loses his peace of mind. This is because there is never a decisive relationship between a karma and its result. There is not a relationship according to the freedom of man. Therefore, what happens? One may either gain or not gain the expected fruit of karma. When it is attained, one is happy, and when not, one is sad. The mind becomes disturbed. What is the cause? It is because the action was prompted by desire.

Then there won't be the evenness of mind that the Gita instructs, the peace of mind. Therefore, Arjuna, don't fall into the karma that the indiscriminate perform, prompted by desire. That is what Lord Krishna says. This shloka is connected to the next, but it is still complete of itself. We can now look at the shloka.

'Pārtha,' O Arjuna, 'anyat,' without these desire-based karmas, 'asti na,' there is nothing else, 'iti pravadanti,' they speak this, 'avipaśchitaḥ,' the indiscriminate. Who are they? 'Vedavādaratāḥ,' they delight in the words of the Vedas, the Karma Khanda. They, 'yām imām puṣpitaṁ vācham pravadanti,' they speak these flowery words. What is the pleasure of hearing these? These words speak about desirous fruits, such as heaven. First they hear about these, then act. They will never have one-pointedness of mind like this. They won't have peace of mind. They won't have the decisive conviction of the Karma Yogi. That is what is going to be said. This means that whoever gives his ear to these words will lose his mental peace. Now we can end today's class. This is connected with the next shloka, so we can chant both.

**Yām imām puṣpitaṁ vācham pravadantyavipaśchitaḥ
Vedavādaratāḥ pārtha nānyadastīti vādinaḥ. 2.42.**

**Kāmātmānaḥ svargaparā janmakarmaphalapradām
Kriyāviśeṣabahulām bhogaiśvaryagatiṁ prati. 2.43.**

