

Remembering the Guru parampara, we begin our discussion on the Bhagavad Gita, 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, 48<sup>th</sup> shloka.

**Yogasthaḥ kuru karmaṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhananjaya  
Siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga uchyate. 2.48.**

'Giving up attachment and established in Yoga, with evenness of mind in success and failure, perform karma, Arjuna. Yoga is evenness of mind.'

Here the Lord says to perform karma, situated in yoga, 'Yogasthaḥ.' Being established in Yoga, act. What is yoga? It is samatvaṁ, evenness of mind. The shloka says, 'being established in Yoga, the karma yogi performs karma, renouncing attachment.' This is said to a Karma Yogi. How far must the renunciation of attachment go? It says, 'īśvaro me tuṣyatu' iti saṅgaṁ.' 'This renunciation must even include the attachment, 'may this work please God.' The Karma Yogi even renounces the attachment, 'may God give me His Grace,' and performs karma.

There is one matter that must be made firm in the mind, where we are discussing about karma yoga. All of these matters being discussed are only for a karma yogi. This is because several questions come. One, 'in this way, is this practical? 'Perform karma without even expecting the Grace of God.' Is that practical?' That is the question. That question isn't asked on the level of a karma yogi. It is asked on the level of a mere karmī.

That question is correct. Because the questioner hasn't reached the state of karma yoga, and is still situated in the condition of a mere karmī, that question is right. Without changing one's own level, such a person can't grasp this with the mind. This is impossible in the level of a karmī. Only if he changes to the level of a karma yogi will these matters here become practical. That is the only way one will think that this is practical.

Where does a karmī change to become a karma yogi? In what time does a mere karmī change into a karma yogi? It is when the karmī grasps the 'buddhi,' the discriminative understanding spoken in the Gita about karma yoga that he changes from his state to that of a karma yogi. The primary factor, which is repeated here and there by the Lord, is 'buddhi

yuktaḥ.’ ‘United with discriminative understanding, perform karma.’ First, one must gain knowledge about karma yoga. That is what is primarily said.

Only a person who has gained this knowledge of karma yoga can change his karma into karma yoga. Only then can he perform karma, united in Yoga. Here, what is said to be an important limb of karma yoga? ‘Saṅgamī tyaktvā.’ This is the renunciation of attachment. What is this attachment? The sadhak must renounce attachment.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter, the Lord says, ‘asaṅga śāstreṇa dṛdhena chittvā.’ ‘Having cut the tree of samsāra with the weapon of detachment.’ What is this attachment that is said? This detachment cuts and destroys the tree of samsāra. ‘Saṅgamī, or attachment, is a mano vṛtti, a modification of mind. How is that? In the same way that the modifications of pleasure, pain, anger, desire, hatred, etc, occur in the mind, the modification of attachment exists powerfully in the mind.

This is a powerful transformation in the antaḥkaraṇa, which brings the mind in contact with the external objects, when in their presence. That is attachment. So it says, ‘renounce attachment.’ That is why it says later, ‘asaṅga śāstreṇa,’ with the weapon of detachment. That is why it says to renounce attachment. Then what is the renouncing of attachment, or what is detachment? This is the bhāvana of asaṅga, detachment.

In this universe, there is only one object that we can consider to be detached. There is only one object that is detached. That is the Atman. Everything else consists of attachment. They consist of relationships and mutual bonds. That which isn’t related or bound to anything is the Atma Vastu, the Reality of the Self. Therefore, it is only possible to eliminate attachment through the bhāvana of detachment. The primary means for renouncing attachment is the bhāvana of asaṅga, detachment.

In the condition of performing karma, the Jiva exists along with attachment. This Jiva Bhāva, the state of individuality, consists of the attachments of the Soul, the body, senses, and external objects, etc. Thus, the Jiva who is in the form of attachments, performs bhāvana on his true nature, of supreme detachment. Through this bhāvana, he renounces the attachment towards the external objects. The word ‘saṅgamī,’ means ‘combined together.’ What is it that is combined together? The Jiva becomes connected with the external objects. The Jiva is unable to become separated from the objects of sense. How is the Jiva combined together with the objects? It is through ahanta, the ego, and the modifications of the antaḥkaraṇa. The Jiva becomes bound to the external objects through the mental modifications, which are supported by the ego. That is what is called ‘attachment.’

For a karma yogi, what are the objects that bind him? This is attachment to the karma and to its fruit. We can use a famous example. A bee goes to drink honey. He falls into the honey. Similarly a karma yogi can become entangled in karma. That is attachment. When a person should really perform karma united in Yoga, what does he do? He performs karma as a Nisthā. He becomes immersed in karma. The mental modifications in the karma, along with forgetfulness of the Self, causes his attachment. This is said clearly. Forgetting the true nature of the Atman, all of the mental modifications turn towards karma. These may be in the karma, or the fruit of karma, or in the reactions that are caused by the karma. The mind thus becomes immersed in these. In forgetting the Atman, the person forgets themselves. However, it is never possible for the Jiva to become immersed in karma like that. Why is that? It is because the true nature of the Jiva is detachment. This is the supremely detached Self.

When these sections appear in the Gita repeatedly, the Lord constantly talks about the detachment of the Self. This is in all circumstances of the Gita. This constant repetition is for the Karma Yogi to gain conviction in his true nature. 'Perform karma, separated from the karma.' A karma yogi cannot become separated from the karma just by saying this. Instead, what is needed?. The karma yogi should think of where is this detachment? Detachment exists only in the Self. The mental modifications and ego try to make that Atman bound to karma, in the scene of action. This is when one thinks of karma. Thus, if the karma yogi sustains this remembrance of the Self, and identifies with the detachment of the Self, then he can prevent falling into the honey like the bee. He can separate himself from the karma and perform karma.

Later in the Gita, Lord Krishna will say, 'navedvāre pure dehe naiva kurvan na kārayan.' The karma yogi thinks of this and performs karma. 'In this body, composed of nine gates, even when one performs karma, 'naiva kurvan na kārayan,' he doesn't act, nor cause anything to act.' The karma yogi meditates on the undisturbed state of the Atman, makes this firm, and acts in this realm of karma, full of disturbances. In summary, the mind Similarly a karmayogi is entangled in karma .That is attachment.. The realm of karma is that of disturbance, vikṣiptam. Then what does the karma yogi do? He makes firm his meditation on the Self, through his resolute conviction and one-pointed mind.

Here, what is the definition of the word 'buddhi?' This is, 'niścayātmikā buddhiḥ.' This is decisive discriminative knowledge. So, there are two matters for the karma yogi. One is that decisiveness is needed in the karma. That is absolutely necessary for performing karma. To say, 'perform karma in detachment,' doesn't mean to not respect the laws of

karma or not accept the logic of karma, while acting. This means that it doesn't mean to perform karma with no awareness. The karma yogi is bound to perform a karma with worldly and external alertness in order to complete it. Why is that? This is a worldly law. The karma yogi has no right to avoid worldly rules. The karma yogi cannot avoid following the external rules of karma. This means that externally, the karma performed by the karma yogi will be entirely the same. At the same time, for that action to be considered karma yoga, the performer must have this resolute discriminative knowledge.

He must have knowledge about karma. He must have the knowledge, 'this is an action I must perform. This is my duty.' He must perform that karma beautifully. He must resolve the shortcomings in the karma as much as possible. What is all of that? That is the resolute conviction in the karma. However, an ordinary karmī does that also. Such a person may also perform the work beautifully. He completes the karma as he desired. He performs great works for the world. There what happens? There this resolute conviction, *niśchayātmikā buddhi* aids. However, that *buddhi* is only in the karma.

For a karma yogi, this resolute *buddhi*, discriminative knowledge, is needed in the Atman as well. The karma yogi performs karma, having the clear determination of the Atman's detachment. Because the karma yogi has this resolute conviction in the detachment of the Self, he is able to perform karma, while stepping aside from it. How does he do this? We discussed the two attitudes in karma yoga; *ātmabhāvana*, or identifying with the True Self, or *īśvara smarana*, remembrance of God. Some people may have a doubt; 'how can this be possible, identifying with the Atman, and remembrance of God?' That is only possible because the Lord instructs this. That is only possible for those with awareness. Have the *bhāva*, or attitude of the total detachment of the Atman. Perform karmas for pleasing the Lord. Some will think, 'how can these two opposing attitudes exist in one person' mind at once?'

Why do they think this? It is because they imagine that these are opposing. Any *bhāva* of the Atman is not opposing within the Atman. This opposition is merely imagined in the individual's mind. There is the formless *bhāva* and the *bhāva* with form, *nirguṇa* and *saguna*. The detachment of the Atman, refers to the *nirguṇa bhāva* of the Self. The karma yogi meditates on this. Why is this? This is because the Lord instructs to perform karma yoga in that way. Then why is there no problem with worshipping the Atman in it's *saguna* form? The Lord says, 'aham tvām sarvapapebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ.' 'I will release you from all sins.' What is this? This is the *saguna bhāva* of the Atman. This is the *bhāva* of *īśvara*, the Lord.

Thus, the karma yogi performs karma for the release from all papa, all sin. Thus, this īśvara, the Lord, who releases one from all sins, exists for the Karma Yogi. What is the opposition between these 2? Why do we think this? The opposition is in our mind. There is no opposition in the principle. The opposition comes in the mind of one who thinks about this. He creates this opposition.

What is said about this tattva, or supreme Principle. It is said that the same tattva can manifest through different bhāvas, or attitudes. When the saguna and nirguna bhāvas of God are discussed, some people think of this like two big devas fighting each other. This is between the formless deva and the form-deva. What is this hard conflict between the saguna and nirguna bhāva of God? It's not possible to think like that. Like this, most people create oppositions in the mind and imagine this.

There is no opposition in the tattva, the supreme principle. Instead, what is it? In Advaita, it is not a conflict between the saguna and nirguna bhāvas of God. Instead, these two bhāvas are combined. There are an infinite amount of bhāvas for one tattva. When that is explained, we say, 'this is with form, and that formless.' These are not things that are mutually conflicting, according to Advaita. If one doesn't think according to Advaita, then there is a conflict between these. This is because one is unable to combine these together. However, there is no conflict in the bhāva of Advaita.

Why is this? It is because if this formless, supreme principle can contain this entire universe, then there is no difficulty in containing two bhāvas. What is it that we understand when the saguna and nirguna bhāvas of God are explained? It isn't that God appears as formless in one time and place, while as with form in another time and place. God is beyond the limitations of time and place. That is why He is situated in both the formless and the form bhāvas at the same time. God exists in the saguna and nirguna bhāvas, being beyond the limitations of time and place.

Therefore, when this is instructed in the Gita, 'nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthānur achalo 'yam sanātanaḥ.' When this is said, it is the formless bhāva, the attributeless aspect of God that is described. 'Acchedyo 'yam adāhyo 'yam akledyośoṣya eva cha.' That cannot be pierced, burned, wetted, nor dried.' There, what happens? This shows the formless aspect of the Self. That is the state devoid of modification. 'Na mām karmāṇi limpanti na me karma phale sṛḥaḥ.' 'Actions do not bind Me, nor do I have anxiety in their fruits.' This is said in 100's of shlokas.

This is the bhāva of the Atman, which isn't connected to karma, which has no attachment to the fruits of karma. This is the nirguna bhāva, the aspect of the Self devoid of

attributes. 'Padma pātram ivāmbhasā.' This is said through examples. It is like a lotus floating in the water, unattached.' In this way, why does the Lord repeatedly indicate the detachment of the Atman? It is for the listener to have the bhāvana, or feeling of the Atman in that way. It is for making this bhāvana firm.

Who is it that makes this bhāvana firm? It is the individual who practices karma yoga. Thus, before asking any questions we have about karma yoga, we should first enter karma yoga. If one asks about karma yoga from the level of a mere karmī, those questions will be endless. Any answer given to those questions won't satisfy us. Therefore, the most important matter is to go from the level of a karmī to the level of karma yogi. When one enters in this way, he understands, 'this karma yoga is practical.'

Even though one may claim that he has entered karma yoga, the question is to whether or not the discrimination the Lord instructs about karma yoga has found a place in his mind. If the ordinary karmī must enter into karma yoga, his samskara must be favorable. There must also be other favorable circumstances. That is necessary. These are a must for ordinary people. Therefore, how can this be possible? If this question is asked from the level of a karma yogi, then his doubt will be resolved with the answer. Otherwise, the doubt won't be resolved with any answer.

So, when it says, 'perform karma with detachment,' this means to identify with the non-attachment of the Atman. When we say the word 'atman,' we mean 'ourselves.' Some will think this refers to some object. Thus, the karma yogi performs karma, meditating on his true nature of non-attachment, and makes this determination firm. That is how non-attachment comes within the karma yogi. Otherwise, there is no other means for the karma yogi to obtain non-attachment. Just by saying, 'I have no interest in this karma. I have no interest in its fruits,' won't take away the interest. Why is that? This is because this thought, 'I have no interest,' when we say this, is just a mental modification. The mental modifications of selfish interest, along with their samskaras, will constantly be produced. The mental modifications of attachment, towards the karmas and their fruits, will continuously flow into the mind. When these continuously flow into the mind, we chant the Gita shloka. 'Asaṅgaśastreṇa dṛdhena chittvā.' The meaning of what we are saying will never be imbibed into the antahkaraṇa.

Where is there non-attachment? The mind is constantly filled with modifications, or vṛttis of attachment. This attachment will constantly flow to the mind, in the form of vṛttis, mental modifications. What will happen by such a person saying, 'asaṅga śastreṇa,' with the axe of detachment? What will happen in particular by him saying about detachment?

Nothing will happen. Only the literal meaning of the words will be grasped. Aside from this, there is no possibility of non-attachment coming in the mind of the person, even while saying this. Instead, he must meditate on non-attachment. This means to meditate on one's own true nature. First, he must know, the person behind this karma is the non-attached Atman. Then he must strive to make that bhāvana firm. When he tries to make that bhāvana firm, what happens? Then there is a change in the mental modifications.

Then non-attachment vṛttis will come to the mind. Then the vṛttis of attachment will be destroyed by the vṛttis of non-attachment. Their total annihilation is only possible through Atma Jnana, Self-knowledge. Still, in the time when the karma yogi is practicing karma yoga, he must perform this attitude of non-attachment as a practice. that is what he does.

Then if he does that, won't he become a Jnani?' Don't go too far ahead in questioning. There is one thing that we must be sure about; the karma yogi is an ajnani, ignorant of the Self. The karma yogi has been conditioned with the awareness of doer-ship. One who has the conditioning to think, 'I am performing this karma' is a karma yogi. Such a karma yogi renounces the ego, and identifies with his true nature of non-attachment, making this bhāvana firm. Thus, because his true nature is that of non-attachment, by practicing the bhāvana of non-attachment, he becomes non-attached. This is because this bhāvana of non-attachment destroys and prevents the mental vṛttis of attachment. This works in two ways.

One is the attachment born of samskaras in the mind, towards karmas and their fruits. These are destroyed by this bhāvana. Along with this destruction, it prevents new samskaras from developing. Both of these happen. While performing karma, 'naiva kurvan na kārayan.' In truth, he neither acts nor causes to act.' He is situated in non-attachment. He remains in detachment. Through the bhāvana of this, the karma yogi becomes perfect in the Yoga of non-attachment. Otherwise, this isn't because of having studied about non-attachment. This isn't possible through reading a book about non-attachment. It isn't possible also through constantly speaking about non-attachment.

First, we must understand where there is non-attachment. This is only in the Atman, the Self. The true nature of the Self is non-attachment, detachment. Then make firm the conviction that you are that very Self. Then, what does the karma yogi do? He practices bhāvana on his true nature of non-attachment, and makes this firm within. Then he goes to the realm of karma. that bhāvana will create a firm samskara, or mental tendency. That

samskara will help him to not become attached to karma. That will protect him in the time of performing karma.

Thus, karma yoga is a serious subject. It isn't something that we can take lightly and imbibe practically. All spiritual practices have their own seriousness. That is all for karma yoga. If we step into the realm of karma otherwise, our minds will become attached. We become attached to the karma, to the realm of karma, and we perform karma, unaware of this attachment. What is the fruit of this? It is the destruction of this samatvam, the evenness of the mind. That is the difference between a mere karmī and a karma yogi. Thus, when it says in the Gita, 'cut down this saṁsāra with the axe of detachment,' this means to destroy the opposing modifications with the bhāvana of one's true nature of non-attachment, and also prevent new modifications from forming. For that the karma yogi practices meditation on the Self.

Only if that is practiced firmly and constantly will it be of real benefit. When we think about these matters, it is normally weak imaginations that come to the mind. This is in general. This may be about the Atman, or the non-attachment discussed here, or evenness of the mind, and other matters. What normally happens when a person hears about these concepts? Normally, it is very weak imaginings that come to the mind. There is a difference between a firm bhāvana and these weak imaginings. We said, even if this is said to some people, they will leave the path. What makes them leave? It isn't that we grasped this and left. It is because we only gained weak imaginings from the hearing that we leave the path. It is because those imaginings are weak that the person leaves.

There is no practice there. That is the nature of the antaḥkaraṇa. What is the nature of water? If a stone is placed in a lake, it creates ripples. That is like the nature of the antaḥkaraṇa. Through hearing, ripples will be created in the antaḥkaraṇa. The words create awareness of meaning. However, this awareness of meaning usually consists of weak imaginings. It is because these are weak that they are destroyed in the next moment.

What is sādhana? That is not weak imaginings, but firm bhāvana. There is a difference between these two. Then why do some say that the mind is unable to stay on the path? It is because there was only momentary imaginings. These aren't possible to sustain. However, for a firm bhāvana, practice is necessary. That is gained through practice; it doesn't occur by itself. When we listen and read, what occurs in the mind is spontaneous. The words are only an instrument, a catalyst. That is the nature of words, to produce awareness of meaning.

However, it is because that awareness is weak that it is not stable; it is destroyed. The karma yogi isn't like that. The karma yogi has practice; mental practice. What does he do? He accepts these weak imaginings and through constant and firm practice, makes these firm. Those won't be destroyed. There, if there is no practice, these sankalpas will disappear, and be destroyed. Why does the Lord repeatedly instruct about the non-attachment of the Self? Isn't it enough to say this once? Why is this said again and again? This is because one's practice is to be aware of this again and again. Being aware of this again and again is for practicing it. We said before, that redundancy, 'punarukti,' is not considered a defect in spirituality.

This repetition in the instruction again and again becomes a driving force for the listener to practice this. This is 'punarukti,' redundancy. Thus, through constant practice, the karma yogi makes his bhāvana of non-attachment firm and performs karma. That is the specialty of the karma yogi. Despite that, it is only a few people, enough to count with fingers, that can truly perform karma as karma yoga, with this discrimination.

The primary problem deals with this discrimination. That is the most important. Having gained this discrimination, and performing karma in the light of this discrimination, the doubts of the karma yogi about karma yoga become resolved. Only then will all of one's doubts about karma yoga leave. We study about a subject. Only then can we practice it practically. That is how it is with all worldly subjects. There are two levels of worldly practice. One is the 'theory,' and after studying the theory comes the 'practical,' where that information is used in real situations. When we learn driving, we first study about driving. This is an example. There, there is the theory, and then the practical aspect of the subject. In the subtle level of spiritual scriptures, there is no difference between the theory and practice; both of these are one. That is the difference between worldly science and spiritual science.

If you must, you can say that there is a difference in the gross level. Then, there is a 'theory,' and a separate, 'practical.' That is not there. Both exist as one thing. The two aren't separate. Here, the indicating of the true nature of the Atman, is for the listener to imbibe that awareness. The imbibing of that awareness is itself the practical application. Here, gaining the awareness, and then practicing are not separate. We imbibe that awareness. That itself is the practical application. The reason this is said is because perform karma, and then search for the theory of karma yoga.

We perform karma separately, and investigate the theory of karma yoga separate from this. However, that isn't how it says here. The Lord says to perform karma, united in

buddhi, discrimination. There, both happen in one place. 'Imbibe the discrimination of karma yoga,' and that is where the performance of karma yoga happens. We said before, the meditation on the true nature of the Atman; this isn't something that is separate from karma yoga. It is when this is combined that karma yoga becomes complete.

Thus, where it says to make firm the bhāvana of the Atman within, this is the performance of karma yoga. You must not think of these as being separate. Thus, 'I am performing karma yoga.' 'I am meditating on the Self.' These aren't two actions. Karma Yoga becomes complete only when it is combined with the bhāvana of the Self. This is the identification with the non-attachment of the Self. Otherwise, the karma yoga becomes complete only when it is combined with all sādhanas that aid in attaining evenness of mind. What does a person think is the completion of karma yoga? It is to perform that work beautifully. We think that karma yoga becomes complete when the external, worldly work we do is done in a perfect manner. Karma yoga isn't necessary for such an action. That is what ordinary karmīs do. People without any kind of awareness of the Self also do this. Then, the specialty that is in karma yoga is īśvara bodha, awareness of God. Because of not understanding this primary factor, we wrongly think, 'it is possible for a person without awareness of God to perform karma yoga. A person without awareness of God can definitely perform karma, but there won't be any kind of Yoga in that karma. That action won't become Yoga.

Thus, when these become one, the karma and awareness of God, only then can karma yoga occur. That is why when we say, 'perform karma with detachment,' there is no other place where the Jiva can imagine detachment, except for the Atman. Thus, make firm the bhāvana of the Self and perform karma. Then who is performing the karma? The Atman, which is non-attached performs the karma. Because the non-attached Atman performs the karma, the Atman has no interest towards the karma or its fruits. Then we may ask, 'how can the detached Self perform karma? That is why we said, 'the karma yogi is an Ajnani, ignorant of the true nature of the Self. It is because he is an Ajnani that he is able to perform karma with non-attachment. Until the very root of Ajnana is destroyed, he will have to continue to perform karma with the attitude of detachment. This is for the karma yogi.

The karma yogi thinks, 'I am detached,' and performs karma. Because he acts while being detached, he isn't bound to the karma. He is able to stand aside during the performance of the karma. However, because he is an Ajnani, he must perform karma. That is what happens to a karma yogi. Because he is an Ajnani, the karma yogi must perform

karma. However, because he remains detached, he is able to stand apart from the karma and its fruits. That is how the karma samskaras are not formed in the karma yogi. This karma doesn't produce vāsanās which cause rebirth. That is why, the Lord says, 'mā karmaphalahetur bhū.' The karma yogi is able to perform karma without becoming a cause to the fruit of karma. That is one 'aspect.'

Thus, through discussing different levels, this one attitude we must imbibe. A person performs karma, being situated in detachment. Then, where is non-attachment located? We should think again, 'is the detachment of the karma yogi in the antaḥkaraṇa or the Atman?' It is in the antaḥkaraṇa, the inner instrument. Why is that? This is because detachment is a bhāvana, a mental attitude of the karma yogi. This isn't a momentary imagination; instead, it is a firm attitude. What is bhāvana? Truly, that is a modification of the antaḥkaraṇa. It isn't the job of the karma yogi to make the Atman detached. That is nobody's job. This is because that is It's nature. However, the karma yogi must utilize that detachment of the Self. How does one utilize the non-attachment of the Self? By meditating on the non-attachment of the Atman; by making firm that bhāvana.

Then where is non-attachment situated? In the mind of the karma yogi. Here, the detachment in the karma yogi's mind is the samatvam, or evenness spoken of here. That is what is said next, 'siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā.' 'Having made equal success and failure.' This is explained next in the bhashya. It says, 'phalaṭṛṣṇāśūnyena kriyamāṇe karmaṇi sattvaśuddhiḥ jñānaprāptilakṣaṇā siddhiḥ, tad viparyayaḥ asiddhiḥ, tayor siddhyasiddhyoḥ api samaḥ tulyaḥ bhūtvā kuru karmāṇi.' The meaning is, 'success' here is the attainment of knowledge born of mental purity, which, performance of works without craving for their fruits produces. 'Failure' is due to works of the opposite sort. As regards both these, let there be evenness of mind, and then perform works.'

Here, it is describing the supreme state of a karma yogi. What comes before this speaks about the state of practicing karma yoga. Through practice of karma yoga, where does the karma yogi reach? He reaches samatvam, evenness, the evenness of the antaḥkaraṇa. That is what is said. 'Phalaṭṛṣṇāśūnyena,' the attachment to the fruits, being devoid of this. This attachment can also be towards the karma. It is attachment, asakti, that constantly prompts us to perform actions. However, that isn't what prompts the karma yogi to perform karma. It is chitta śuddhi, mental purity, that prompts the karma yogi to perform karma. It is the karma yogi's awareness of chitta śuddhi that prompts him to perform karma.

There are numerous factors that influence a worldly person to perform karma. These are worldly factors. What does the karma yogi do? He is devoid of craving for the fruits of

karma, ‘phalatṛṣṇāśūnya.’ He has no attachment to the fruit of karma, while performing karma. When he performs karma in this way, ‘sattvaśuddhijā jñānaprāptilakṣaṇā siddhiḥ.’ What is it that he must gain? That is sattvaśuddhi, purity of mind. What is the indication of the mental purity? It is the attainment of Jñāna. This is said in particular. ‘Sattvaśuddhijā jñānaprāptilakṣaṇā siddhiḥ.’ The indication of mental purity is Self knowledge. That is the meaning.

We sit in satsang. Some people have a complaint, that so much was discussed. Isn’t it enough if this is explained a little more simply? That is enough. This is enough for us to grasp and understand easily. We feel that what is being said elsewhere is very simple. The words that are said are simple. Some people who listen to this will feel that it is very simple. They won’t feel that it is difficult. Some will feel that this is difficult. That means that they lack a strong intellect. If this lack of intellect is there, this won’t enter. They will that it is very hard and difficult.

This isn’t because the subject isn’t simple. It is because the intellect isn’t straightforward. The subject is straightforward, and simple. Then why does this difficulty come? It is because of a lack of chitta śuddhi. It is a lack of sattvaśuddhi, mental purity. Why does that happen? One performs karma, not karma yoga. That is why that happens. Otherwise, he may have performed this in other lives. Or, he may practice in this life. Without either of these, there will be difficulty.

Something is needed; a samskara to imbibe this. If that samskara is there, then this will gradually be felt to be simple, if one feels it to be difficult in the beginning. One person experiences this as being easy. Another person feels that is severely difficult. This difference shows the amount of chitta śuddhi accumulated. That is the difference. That is why it says, ‘jñānaprāptilakṣaṇā.’

What happens through satsang? It is jñāna prāpti, the gaining of knowledge. That is the indication of mental purity. According to the amount of mental purity, the light of Self-knowledge shines within. However much this principle shines within us, that much mental purity has been attained. This is what we should understand. Some will say right away, ‘don’t we say some pandits who don’t mental purity?’ They will say this.

Memory power and mental purity are different. They are not the same. Grasping the principle, and scriptural thinking are different. These are two separate things. One thing we can keep in mind. These worldly, material things are not jñāna prāpti, Self-knowledge. The indication of mental purity is for Self-knowledge to clearly shine forth from within. Otherwise, this doesn’t refer to mere accumulation of scriptural information.

If a person memorizes these matters, gives speeches, and creates confusion for others, that cannot be considered as Jñāna prāpti. Here, we can see people who have attained jñāna prāpti without ever studying any scriptures. These are two separate things. Therefore, our memory power is not the same as jñāna prāpti, Self-knowledge. This memory power is like a tape recorder. That is what our memory power is like. If we hear satsang and then remember what was said, we will not remember some things. But if we use a tape recorder, then we won't miss a single point. Then we will be able to remember again. If Jñāna is based on memory power, then a computer must be a Jñāni. This that stores things inside in the same way.

So, Jñāna is not memory power. It isn't power of intellect. Here, what is it? In the Gita, Krishna says, 'sattva sanjāyate jñānam.' Purity leads to knowledge.' This tattva, or principle that is said here, is meant to effulge as abidance in the Self. Therefore, this has no relationship at all with memory power. If memory power is needed for Realization, then it will be that one can attain mokṣa only by studying 100's of scriptures. That isn't it. That is why it says here, 'sattvaśuddhijā jñānaprāptilakṣaṇā.' This indication of mental purity is Self-knowledge.

When we hear, 'I am non-attached,' if we cannot know this, what is being said, this creates the difficulty. Then another person's knowledge connects with this. After that, the awareness that 'I am detached' will come. That is Jñāna prāpti, attainment of Knowledge. That detachment is within me.' When we speak about the detachment of the Atman, this doesn't refer to some object. The person must become aware that this detachment is within him himself. Through that awareness, he performs karma.

According to his chitta śuddhi, mental purity, that awareness gains firmness. According to the level of mental purity, the level of awareness grows. That is the condition of a karma yogi. That is what is said here. Without attachment, 'karmāṇi kriyamāṇe,' while performing karma, 'sattvaśuddhijā jñānaprāptilakṣaṇā siddhiḥ,' this will happen for the karma yogi. He attains mental purity, which gives rise to Self-knowledge. 'Tad viparyayajā asiddhiḥ.'

A person enters karma yoga. He isn't able to perform any of these kinds of bhāvanas, nor grasp these principles. He cannot firmly gain this resolute conviction, 'vyavasāyatmikā buddhiḥ.' That is what is said, 'tad viparyayajā,' the opposite of the fruit described before, the absence of that siddhi. We said before, about the fruit of impatience. 'I am working, but not getting any result.' The person thus becomes disappointed. That is 'asiddhiḥ.' This means that a person works, and expects a suitable result. Let it be 'mokṣa' or anything.

What is it that the karma yogi must attain? It is samatvam, evenness of mind. In this circumstance, the karma yogi tries hard, and puts forth effort, but is unable to gain this samatvam. Naturally, his practice of karma yoga creates new unevenness. That samatvam had never existed.

For such a person, karma yoga itself becomes a problem. He can't sleep. When he didn't hear about karma yoga, he slept peacefully. However, after hearing about karma yoga, his sleep is never right. This is 'asiddhiḥ.' 'Tayoḥ siddhyasiddhyoḥ api.' Thus, it says that the indication of progress in karma yoga is jñāna prāpti, attainment of Self-knowledge. To say simply, a person doesn't gain clear determination about these matters discussed. This is 'asiddhiḥ,' the absence of the mental purity and Self-knowledge gained through karma yoga. Jñāna is a clear determination, a firm determination. Such a person doesn't gain this.

Then, this absence of attainment, asiddhi, makes him disturbed. Here it says, 'that's not possible.' Here it refers to becoming unsettled when one doesn't experience the fruit of one's sādhana. Thus, 'siddhyasiddhyoḥ,' both success and failure, 'api samaḥ tulyaḥ bhūtvā kuru karmāṇi.' In this success and failure, being evenminded, perform karma.' Here it doesn't say to renounce karma. That is a matter that we should pay special attention.

'Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi.' The importance is in 'kuru karmāṇi.' While acting, is the fruit of our action favorable? How much are progressing?' Without unsettling the mind with such questions, go forwards, performing karma. This is because impatience and complaining aren't possible here. That is the summary of what is said. That is what makes the mind unsettled. Some people say, 'we perform sādhana, but we aren't seeing any real progress.' Actually, these people don't do anything. They are just saying this to blow their own horn.

'After doing so much, we haven't seen any real progress!' If they do something, there will be progress. If not, it means they aren't doing anything. They just eat four times a day and sleep. Then what do they say? We are doing a lot, but not progressing. That is only proud. A person who is listening will think, 'he is doing a lot. He's doing something.' He doesn't do anything. That is why it says in the Gita, 'there is no victory nor defeat.' Some people say, 'I have stayed in the ashram for 13 years. I haven't progressed at all. I'm going to another ashram. There, there will be progress.' This is the same. So, in India, oil is made through extracting from the oil seeds, using a bull to power the process. However, the bull never known the value of the oil. Till it is given to the butcher, it won't have any idea about that. Like this, someone may feel, 'I have been a 'senior' for many year.'

‘Still, there hasn’t been any real progress.’ If a person says this, then in truth, there was no sincere effort. He didn’t do anything. The Lord Himself says, ‘svalpam apyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt.’ Even if a small part of this dharma is practiced, it will protect you from great fear.’ So if a person says, ‘I have been working in the ashram for the past 13 years,’ you can deal with him. Any kind of instruction won’t save him. Deal with him, means do what is needed with the hand. Only then will he understand. That is a mere show. There is nothing sincere.

Here it says, ‘svalpam api asya dharmasya.’ Why is it that we don’t get any result? It is because we don’t do anything. Not doing anything, we say we do something, and complain about there not being any fruit. What is the law of karma? If you act, it will make a result. Some will think, ‘what about if there are obstacles? Then one may not receive the result, no?’ Then the person should do what is necessary for destroying the obstacles. That is why it says in the Gita, ‘Íśvarārādhana,’ worship of the Lord. Why does it say that the karma yogi performs karma as worship of God? That worship of God is necessary for destroying the obstacles preventing spiritual progress. In that way, the obstacles will be destroyed.

Such a person doesn’t do this. Without doing what is necessary, he says, ‘I’m not progressing.’ There is no meaning in this. It says, the karma yogi must never leave this evenness in any situation. ‘Siddhyasiddhyoḥ samaḥ tulyaḥ bhūtvā.’ Siddhi, success, and asiddhi, failure must be equal. What does this mean, for asiddhi to be equal to siddhi? Asiddhi, or failure, is when one acts and says there is no result. How does that become equal to siddhi? It is when the person understands, ‘my action isn’t yet sufficient.’ It is because of the shortcomings in the action that success isn’t attained.

He may do something. He just does something for show. How must that be changed? That must be changed through his karma. He must change himself. When he changes, when he gains the awareness that he must change himself, then he gains his equilibrium of mind. ‘I myself must become right.’ The Gita says, ‘udaret ātmanātmānam.’ That is the ultimate instruction of spirituality. Ultimately, it is each one alone who can save themselves. Then we may ask, ‘Can’t a Sadguru save us? Let the Guru save us.’ Gurus can definitely save, but we must allow him to. That is the primary point. The person must become suitable for that, ready for that. That is the primary matter. To become receptive is to become suitable for that. How can someone else be saved? A person can only save himself.

Thus, in the level of the karma yogi’s performance of karma, he cannot become disappointed. Why is this disappointment, etc., described here? This happens from not grasping the principle of karma yoga. It is due to lack of discrimination. What happens to a

discriminative person? 'Siddhyasiddhyoḥ api samaḥ tulyaḥ bhūtvā.' In the performance of karma and in its fruits, he is even. None of these emotions discussed occur in his mind. These thoughts and emotions are what make the mind unsettled. Thus, the karma yogi, of even mind, 'kuru karmāṇi.' Perform karma, going forward. That is what the Lord instructs here.

Then a question. 'Ko 'sau yoga yatrasthaḥ.' Here, what is this Yoga being talked about? The Lord speaks again and again about yoga. This Yoga, 'yatrasthaḥ,' where is it located? 'karma kuru' iti uktam,' This is said again and again. 'Perform karma in Yoga, Perform karma in Yoga.' What is this yoga? Is this aṣṭāṅga yoga? That is the doubt. There are several meanings for the word 'yoga.' Here, Arjuna is standing in the field of action. The Lord doesn't instruct aṣṭāṅga Yoga to Arjuna. That is different. That is not here.

While performing karma, what is the Yoga that should be practiced? That is what is asked. 'Kaḥ asau yogah,' what is this Yoga, 'yatrasthaḥ,' where is it located, 'kuru iti uktam.' It says to perform karma, established in Yoga. That is the conflict here. We can understand performing Yoga, while being in Yoga. Here, that isn't what is said. Here, it says for one to perform karma, situated in Yoga. We will feel, 'a person traveling on the path of spirituality is grabbed hold of and brought to worldliness.' 'The Guru won't agree like that.' That is the complaint of some people. They won't agree to anything. We came to spirituality, but they grab our hand and drag us to worldliness. That is what is asked in the commentary.

It says, 'what is that Yoga? Why does it say to perform that Yoga in karma?' The answer is, 'idam eva tat siddhyasiddhyoḥ samatvaṁ yoga uchyate.' Here it doesn't say to perform Yoga in Yoga. It says to be situated in Yoga, and perform karma. 'Kuru Karmāṇi.' That is the first part of the shloka, 'Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi,' situated in Yoga, perform karma.' What is Yoga? 'Idam eva tat.' This is that, 'siddhyasiddhyoḥ samatvaṁ.' That's all. That is Yoga. It is to be in an attitude of evenness through success or failure, while performing karma. That is Yoga here. However, for the karma yogi, karma is a sādhana. The fruit of that sādhana is this samatvam, evenness of mind. Performing karma, while being situated in that Yoga, that is karma yoga. Therefore, the karma yogi must not destroy the fruit of his practice of karma yoga, which is evenness of mind. That is what is said. In short, it says to not leave this evenness while performing karma. Without letting go of the evenness of the mind, perform karma. Such a karma yogi has no complaint, towards anything or anyone.

What happens when we perform karma? We complain while working. 'I was pushed into doing this.' Then, sometimes one curses oneself while performing karma. 'I'm not the

person to do this. I should become a Yogi or Renunciate, but am being into this karma.’ Some think this. That is what is called the unevenness of the mind. That shouldn’t happen to the karma yogi. That can happen to a mere karmī, a person who merely performs karma. He doesn’t know the principle of karma. He has no knowledge about these bhāvas of the karma yogi, or these principles of karma. However, that isn’t the case with the karma yogi. Through being even in both success and failure, being in Yoga, he performs karma. That is what is said.

After hearing all of this, a person asks, ‘but Swami, how can we do that?’ ‘This isn’t possible. How can we perform karma without a single desire?’ Shouldn’t we at least expect some appreciation from Amma? A person asks this. Forget everything else; if there is no other expectation, there will at least be the expectation of appreciation. Can’t I at least get some appreciation from Amma? How can we perform karma without expecting this? Forget everything else. At least let me have some ‘appreciation.’ Can’t I at least expect Amma to say, ‘well done.’ Without expecting even this acceptance, how will it be possible to perform karma?’ That is the question.

Let that be. If the person insists that he must have that appreciation for the work, then let that be. However, this samatvam, or evenness must be maintained. Where? This is because a prompting for karma is the basis for a person’s actions. Let that be. However, what is primary in karma yogis? It is the evenness of the karma yogi’s mind. This isn’t evenness like digging land to make it smooth and even. We said before, this is to prevent the mind from traveling from one pole to another. This means to not make the mind modified in the pairs of opposites. This means to not lead the mind to desire and anger, likes and dislikes, and jealousy and envy. If that happens, then where is the mind? This is asked. What if the mind doesn’t go to any of these? We have never seen any other place where the mind goes. Then where does the mind sit?

Normally our minds are constantly going from one of these to another. When the mind doesn’t go to any of these, there is nothing for the mind to do but rest in evenness. If the mind goes elsewhere, it will waver. The mind experiences evenness only in Ívara Bhava, the close feeling of God. Otherwise, if it goes to any other object, the mind becomes modified in the dualities. Why is this? The objects are pairs of opposites. That is why. However, it is only through identification with the Atman that we can bring the mind into our control. Otherwise, there is no psychologist that has discovered any other way for the mind to attain evenness.

Why is this, this Atma Bhava? We said before. That is detached, even. Then what happens to the mind through this bhavana? It remains in evenness. Then a question will come. 'Ok, the mind may experience evenness while in the Atman, but what about when it comes to the worldly level of experiences? Once the mind comes to karma, all of this disappears. What is the realm of karma? That is full of likes and dislikes, competition, etc. All of these combined creates the realm of karma. When the mind goes there, there isn't any evenness, is there?' Some ask this.

Think in another way. Have we ever kept our bhavana of evenness of mind while going to perform karma?' They should then think and consider this. When we enter the realm of karma, we get troubles from everywhere. 'Then, have you ever gone to the realm of karma with this Atma Bhavana, or identification with the Atman?' Then they should consider this. When one goes like that, they will understand, 'there, this Atma Bhavana is an aid and protection.' When the mind becomes still, then this will be understood. Otherwise, when a person goes to the realm of karma with only these weak imaginings that we described earlier, he won't be able to sustain samatvam, evenness of mind. Then he can only experience these troubles in the karma, until he dies.

Without gaining what must be gained, we spend in vain. The business will fail and we will have to close the shop. We will thus become a pauper. Then destruction will come. Here what must one do? First, obtain what must be obtained. The first thing is to enter karma yoga. Then obtain this evenness of mind. We should pay attention to this. It isn't through the karma that the karma yogi gains evenness of mind. Some people say this. 'It's enough if you perform the action with alertness, and the mind will be correct.' Saying to perform actions with alertness is correct. They must be performed with alertness. However, you won't get evenness of mind from that. Evenness of mind can only be gained through Atma Bhavana, identification with the Atman. That is why the Gita instructs meditation on the true Self. This is said again and again, repeatedly.

'Nityaḥ sarvagataḥ stānur achaloyam sanātanaḥ.' When this is said, this isn't introducing to some object, the Self. There is this kind of object. There is an object, that is eternal, all-pervasive, and stable.' Become familiar with this. That is not what happens. Instead, it reveals 'this is You.' Otherwise, 'this is your true nature. You should have firm determination about this.' For imbibing that, there is Atma bhavana, identification with the true Self. A person practices that for gaining firmness in the bhavana. Because the karma yogi practices that, he is able to have evenness of mind while performing karma.

If a person goes and performs karma, just after hearing this, it won't have any special result. If a person performs karma after practicing this, that will be beneficial to him. Therefore, to avoid a misinterpretation to the meaning of Yoga, it says, 'idaṁ eva tad siddhyasiddhyoḥ samatvaṁ yoga uchyate.' That evenness comes from you, not anything outside. This is the meaning of yoga, for a karma yogi. Now we can look at the shloka.

'Dhananjaya,' O Arjuna, 'Yogasthaḥ,' situated in Yoga, 'saṅgaṁ tyaktvā,' having renounced attachment, 'karmāṇi kuru,' perform karmas. Then the next part must be combined, 'Siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā,' this is combined with 'kamāṇi kuru,' perform karmas. 'Yogasthaḥ saṅgaṁ tyaktvā siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā,' being even in both success and failure, 'karmāṇi kuru,' perform karma. 'Samatvaṁ yoga uchyate.' The evenness of the mind is called Yoga, by Jnanis, and acharyas. That is the meaning of the shloka.

**Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhananjaya  
Siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga uchyate. 2.48.**