

AUM AMRITESHVARYAI NAMAH

Swami Kaivalyanandaji's Talks on Bhagavad Gita, Part 30

Remembering the Guru parampara, we begin our discussion on the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 49.

**Dūreṇa hyavaram karma buddhiyogād dhananjaya
Buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ. 2.49.**

The meaning is, 'work impelled by the desire for the fruit is indeed far inferior, evenness of mind being above it. O Arjuna, take refuge in the evenness of intelligence. Pitiful are those impelled by the desire for the fruits of works.'

Now we can look at the bhāṣyā, in the preface. It says, 'yat punaḥ,' however, 'samatvabuddhiyuktam īśvarārādhanārthaṁ karmoktaṁ, etasmāt karmaṇaḥ.' Here, in the previous shloka, it spoke of karma performed as worship of God, with evenness of intelligence. That is karma yoga. This karma yoga is described as 'samatvabuddhiyuktam,' with evenness of buddhi, or intelligence, and 'īśvarārādhanārthaṁ,' performed as worship of God. That is what we discussed. 'Etasmāt karmaṇaḥ,' from this karma, the shloka continues, 'Dūreṇa hyavaram karma.'

The words of the shloka are explained in the bhāṣyā. It says, dūreṇa ativiprakaṣeṇa atyantam eva hi avaram adhamam nikṛṣṭam karma phalārthinā krimāṇam buddhiyogāt samatvabuddhiyuktāt karmaṇaḥ, janmamaraṇādi hetutvāt.' Here it is distinguishing and showing two different kinds of karma. One is called, 'avaram karma.' This karma is inferior, 'adhamam,' low, 'nikṛṣṭam,' undesired.' How is that karma? It is 'dūreṇa,' very far away, 'ativiprakaṣeṇa atyantam.' So this base form of karma is very far away. This base, low form of karma doesn't mean prohibited karmas. Here, all karmas that are performed with desire for their fruits are 'avaram,' low. In the view of the adhyātmā śāstras, the scriptures of spirituality, they are low.

This is said relatively, when these are compared to karma yoga. These are adhamam, low karmas. It is true that good actions are great, if they are compared with bad ones. In contrast

with bad actions, good deeds, sadkarmas, are great. However, if these are compared with karma yoga, these are very base. Why? ‘Phalārthinā kriymāṇaṁ.’ These are performed with desire for the results. If these good actions are performed with desire for the results, then that is adhamam, low. That is what Shankara says. What is this compared to? ‘Buddhiyogāt samatvabuddhiyuktāt karmaṇaḥ.’ When we look and compare these good actions with the karma performed in Yoga, with evenness of intelligence, then these are low. Here it is speaking about karma that is united with samatva buddhi, evenness of mind. This is praising the karma of a karma yogi. That is great. In contrast with that, all other karma, no matter how great, are low.

Why? ‘Janmamaraṇādihetutvāt.’ These kind of karmas, performed along with ego and attachment, and desire for the fruits, become a cause for janma and maraṇa, births and deaths. That becomes a cause for births and deaths, along with the experiences of pleasure and pain in those lives. That is why if those karmas are contrasted with karma yoga, they are low, base, and inferior. That is why it is said that papa and punya, merit and demerit are equal. Through the performance of good actions, one accumulates merit. Through performance of prohibited actions, one gains demerit. Here, in the view of spirituality, both of these are low, punya and papa.

Why is that? ‘Janmamaraṇādihetutvāt.’ These become a cause for another birth and death. After birth, these become a cause for the experiences of pleasure and pain again. ‘He Dhananjaya,’ O Arjuna, ‘yataḥ evaṁ tataḥ yogaviṣyāyāṁ buddhau tatparipākajāyāṁ vā sāmkyabuddhau śaraṇaṁ āśrayam abhayaprāptikāraṇaṁ anviccha prārthayasva, paramārthajñānaśaraṇo bhava ityārthaḥ.’ Therefore, Krishna tells Arjuna, ‘buddhau śaraṇaṁ anviccha.’ Take refuge in buddhi, true understanding.’ Here, Shankara explains this.

Even the good actions you perform are a cause of bondage. ‘Yataḥ,’ because of this, ‘evaṁ.’ When we say that good deeds are a cause of bondage, that is said in the view of spirituality. When it says that doing good deeds for others are a cause of bondage and low, that is not said in the worldly level of experience. In the worldly level, these good deeds performed for others are indeed great. Here, it isn’t speaking from that level. When we speak purely from the level of spirituality, these karmas are low. Why is this? It is because there is no Yoga there. That is why. There is no Yogabuddhi there. ‘Yataḥ evaṁ tataḥ,’ because of that, ‘yogaviṣyāyāṁ,’ in the subject of Yoga, ‘buddhau,’ in this intelligence. Here, the knowledge of the karma yogi about karma yoga is Yoga buddhi. ‘Take refuge in the understanding of Yoga.’

This means, 'know what karma yoga is, and then perform karma.' That is what is said. And what about the state where karma yoga becomes completely matured? 'Tat paripākajāyām sām̐khyabuddhau.' 'In the Sankhya buddhi, which comes from the maturity of that.' 'In ātmā bodha, Self-knowledge, 'śaraṇām,' surrender.' You take refuge in that.' Either gain the correct knowledge about Karma Yoga. This is said according to the suitability of the aspirant. Otherwise, if that has been perfected, take refuge in Sankhya Buddhi, the knowledge of Sankhya.

There, there is no importance in karma. 'Abhayaprāptikāraṇam.' That is the cause for attainment of fearlessness, abhaya. That which causes fearlessness, from the attainment of Mokṣa, in that, śaraṇam anviccha,' you must take refuge in. 'Paramārthajñānaśaraṇo bhava.' Become surrendered in the Knowledge of the Supreme Truth. Become one who has surrendered to the Knowledge of the paramārtham.' That is the instruction given to Arjuna. That doesn't occur from karma. It doesn't happen from good actions. That doesn't happen from performing any amount of actions for the good of others. Instead, it is 'paramārthajñāna,' Knowledge of the Reality. Accept that.

So, through the maturity in Karma Yoga, the karma yogi accepts the Knowledge of the Paramārtha, the Supreme Truth. That is what he surrenders to. Surrender to that.' Here, what is shown? It shows the importance of Tattva Bodha, the Knowledge of the Supreme Truth. What is important isn't 'what karma is he performing?' Instead, it is, 'with what bhāva is he performing that karma?' That is primary in karma yoga. That is why the Gita constantly repeats, 'buddhi, buddhi, buddhi.' Why does it say this again? 'Yataḥ avaraṁ karma kurvāṇaḥ kṛpaṇaḥ dīnaḥ phalāhetavaḥ phalaṭṛṣṇā prayuktāḥ santaḥ.' So it says, 'Yataḥ,' because of which, 'avaraṁ karma kuvāṇaḥ.' They perform inferior karma, the karma of ordinary people. These are karmas performed without the understanding of karma yoga. These are 'avaraṁ,' inferior. These people perform karma without awareness.

Otherwise, they mistinterpret karma yoga and perform karma. How? 'I am performing karma for the good of others. I act for the service of the world. This is karma yoga.' They think this and perform karma. 'Avaraṁ karma kurvāṇaḥ,' performing these inferior karmas, who are they? 'Kṛpaṇaḥ dīnaḥ.' They are to be pitied. A person with discrimination feels bad for them. They are worthy of pity. Why? 'Phalāhetavaḥ.' These people become a cause for the fruits of karma. How? 'Phalaṭṛṣṇāprayuktāḥ.' They have cravings for results. Within them is the craving for the fruits of karma.

They say, 'I am acting for the good of others. I have no expectation for any fruit from this karma.' Even a person who says this has craving for the fruit. It is this 'phalatr̥ṣṇā,' the craving for karmic fruits that prompts him to act. How is such a person? It may be that the person doesn't accept the secondary fruits of the karma. It may be because those fruits are unnecessary to him that he doesn't accept these. However, within him, he will have an interest in the endless fruits of that karma. This is because he lacks the discrimination that destroys that interest. That is inactice in him. Because this kind of buddhi, he will be attracted to the endless amount of fruits from the karma. That is 'phalatr̥ṣṇāprayuktāḥ.' He has craving for the results. That is what prompts him to act.

Without the correct awareness of karma yoga, the inner desires for karmic fruits won't leave. In these people who perform great deeds, this kind of discrimination won't be seen, which understands, 'what is karma? What are the fruits of karma? How does desire come into those fruits?' Therefore, even people who perform selfless work have cravings for the fruits of karma, 'phalatr̥ṣṇāprayuktāḥ.' That is how they perform karma. Through the performance of karma, they desire several things. If someone explains a little about karma yoga to them, they will say, 'without desire, it's not possible to act.' Without some kind of desire, it's not possible to perform karma.' That is what they say. 'All karmas are performed with some desire as their basis.'

Then what does the karma yogi do? He has the awareness, 'never become a cause for the fruit!' If one must not become a cause for the fruits of karma, awareness is needed. This person says, 'desire is needed.' Here, awareness is enough. What does an ordinary person do? He accepts desire as a prompting to perform karma. That can be big or small, but it is desire that he accepts. And what about the karma yogi? It is buddhi, awareness. That is the difference between the two. Desire is one, and awareness something else. He accepts awareness and performs action.

What awareness is this? He knows the fruit of karma yoga is chitta śuddhi; from that is Jñāna prāpti, Self-knowledge, and Mokṣa, Liberation. That is the awareness of the karma yogi. That awareness is what prompts him to perform karma. And what about the mere karmi? When he performs karma, he says, 'I renounce the fruit. The fruit of this karma isn't for me. I'm doing this for others.' Saying this, even when he imagines renouncing the fruits, what happens within him? 'There will be many other desires. There will be some desires that prompt him to perform karma. What does he do? He becomes a cause to the fruits of karma.

Therefore, from not understanding the principles of karma yoga, even if he doesn't intentionally desire the fruit, he will have to accept the results of the karma that one must accept. We discussed before, that just from not desiring them won't keep one from experiencing the fruits of karma. Even without desiring, karma will give fruits. He has to accept those results. However, the karma yogi never has to accept those. That's not all. A mere karmī can never renounce the ego. No matter how great and divine karmas he performs, there will be ahanta, ego. That isn't karma yoga. When we say 'divine karmas,' we mean even worshipping God. We say that that is a great karma, 'worship of God.' That is a karma of the Brahmins, the priests. That is generally considered to be a very great karma.

However, what is seen in such a person? There will be *tr̥ṣṇā*, craving for the fruits. There will be pride, etc. All of these will be very strong. There will be no difference in these from those who perform ordinary karmas. The same things will be seen in them as well. Those who are priests, who perform worship of God, can be seen to have negative desires. They may have more desires than ordinary people; in money, in compensation, etc. They will have strong desires in these. What they are doing is a *sadkarma*, a good action; worship of God. However, what is seen in the fruit? They will have strong negative desires. For them, the intention of the karma will be to obtain money. They perform worship of God for gaining wealth.

Why is this? Isn't that a good action? There is no greater action than worshipping God, is there? However, even there, what happens? He is *kṛpaṇa*, pitiable. He is a *dīnan*, weak. This is because the greatness of an action doesn't make it karma yoga.

We pray, '*lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu*,' may all the worlds be happy.' Desire can come, even in the action based on this prayer. The person may expect things from the world. One prays for the good of the world. Maybe the person doesn't want wealth from the world. That may happen, but then they may desire to be worshipped by the world. One may desire acceptance by the world. This bondage of karma is very subtle. They will become bound there. Thus, they are called, '*kṛpaṇā*,' pitiable. They don't understand the principle of karma yoga. Such a person cannot avoid becoming a cause to the fruit of karma. Therefore, that is why it says again and again, '*kṛpaṇāḥ phalāhetavaḥ*.' 'Those who cause the fruits of karma are pitiable.' That is the meaning.

Therefore, if the good actions we perform must not become a cause for bondage, one must accept the understanding of Karma Yoga, Yoga buddhi. That is said here again. Here, Shankara gives a quotation from the Upanishads. '*Yo vā edad akṣaram gārgy aviditvā*

‘smāllokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ’ iti śruteḥ.’ So, it says, ‘yo vā etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvā,’ whoever doesn’t know This, the imperishable, asmāllokāt praiti,’ and dies, ‘sa kṛpaṇaḥ.’ He is to be pitied. This means that an Ajnani, one under the control of Ignorance, is a kṛpaṇa. He is completely helpless. This is said in the Shrutis, the Upanishad.

Here also, what happens? The person perform this karma because of Ajnana, Ignorance. Even one who performs great actions is an Ajnani. The karmas he performs are very low. He is to be pitied. That is what is said here. Now look at the shloka.

‘Dhananjaya,’ O Arjuna, ‘avaram karma,’ worldly karma, inferior karma, ‘buddhiyogād dureṇa,’ this is very far away from karma yoga, therefore, ‘buddhau śaraṇam anviccha,’ take refuge in the discrimination of karma yoga. Otherwise, ‘take refuge in the Knowledge of the Supreme Truth.’ This was explained in both ways. In the coming section, Shankara will explain that this second meaning can also be accepted. ‘Kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ.’ Those who become a cause to the fruits of karma through their actions are pitiable. One should feel sad for them. That is the meaning.

**Dūreṇa hyavaram karma buddhiyogād dhananjaya
Buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ. 2.49.**

**Buddhiyukto jahātiha ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte
Tasmād yogāya yujyasva yoga karmasu kauśalam. 2.50.**

The meaning is, ‘With the intelligence of evenness one discards both good and evil works. Therefore, strive to secure this Yoga; Yoga is dexterity in action.’

We can look at Shankara’s preface; it says, ‘samatvabuddhiyuktaḥ san svadharmam anutiṣṭan yat phalam prāpnoti taccṛṇu.’ Here it says, ‘a person who has evenness of intelligence, ‘svadharmam anutiṣṭan,’ who practices his inherent duty. This is given importance. It’s not enough to do anything. One must perform one’s svadharma. ‘Yat phalam prāpnoti,’ what result does he obtain? ‘Tat śṛṇu,’ listen to this, in the shloka.

Here, about svadharma, the Gita discusses svadharma, one’s inherent duty. However, in the old days, one’s svadharma was determined by two things; the dharma of the life-stages, or aśramas, and the dharma of the classes, or varṇas. This was based on the dharma of varṇas

and aśramas. A person accepts a dharma according to his life stage. These are brahmācharya, gr̥hastha, vanaprastha, and saṁnyāsa. Thus, the people accepted their svadharma according to their position in the life-stages. That is why it says, 'Tasmāt śāstram pramāṇam te.' There are śāstras about one's svadharma. These are primarily the Smṛtis. These define the duties of each svadharma. However, today, what is it? The environment has changed. The dharmas of that time don't exist now. The realm of karma for people today has changed.

To decide one's svadharma today through the śāstras is difficult. If try to determine our svadharma by going and looking in the Manu Smṛti, the Gautama Smṛtis, the Lakṣa Smṛti, or the Avasthānamba Sutras, we won't be able to decide what our svadharma is. It will be difficult. This is because the karmas that are described in these don't exist in today's society. The values described may exist, but the karmas performed as one's duty have all gone. None of that is here now. That's not all. It is very difficult for a person to decide how to accept a svadharma.

In all of our spiritual scriptures, when the word 'dharma' is defined, this refers to a purely individual abidance. When the situation now has changed, 'dharma' doesn't just mean an individual practice. Instead, it has become connected to the society. Today, a person who travels on these paths faces a lot of confusion. In everyone's mind, there is a 'confusion' when we are unable to imbibe the ideals and knowledge of these.

We can take the dharma of sanyassa for example. In all scriptures, all śāstras, what is said about sanyassa? 'A sanyassi is someone who lives isolated from the society.' Sanyassa means that the person leaves society. If there is any doubt about this, you can examine Manu Smṛti, and all other Smṛtis. There are Smṛtis written only for sanyassis. There are also big sections in scriptures like the Mahābhārata describing this. There, what is it? There, it says that a sanyassi has no relationship with society. That is a purely individual abidance. Sanyassa is a process that completely isolates the individual from society.

This isn't just about society. The first thing a sanyassi does is to leave his family. He isolates himself from father and mother, or wife and children. Then, he isolates himself from society; that is sanyassa. This is to leave one's home and go.' That is first. 'nijagr̥hāt tūrṇam vinargamyate.' This is said by Shankaracharya. The first thing is to leave one's home. Then what is the beginning of sanyassa? Because it says to leave one's home, it is a must also to renounce the society. However, today's sanyasis are trapped. That they don't recognize this is a different matter. Otherwise, they recognize later.

Here, where does the sanyassi who renounces his family jump to? After renouncing the family, today's sanyassi again jumps into society. Then he strives hard to come out of it. He has reached where he started from. Where is the sanyasa that is instructed by our Dharma Shāstras and where is my sanyasa? That is what he is thinking. That creates confusion.

Most sanyasis are like this. Don't think that this doesn't apply to brahmācharis. This applies to everyone. This is the difficulty of everyone who comes to this path. Why is this? The spirituality spoken of in the śāstras is explained in such a way that as one's spiritual intensity increases, one moves away from the society and lives a life of solitude. Because of that, today's sanyassi's become frustrated, thinking, then 'where am I?' Thus, it will be a difficult task to determine one's svadharma. What is also said about sanyassa? It says, 'a sanyassi must live in solitude.' 'It's not possible for him to live with another person. That will continue the samsāra.' 'Wherever there is an opportunity to 'samsarikkan,' to speak, that causes samsāra.

The sanyassi can only live in a hut for 3 days. The very name for a sanyassi is 'parivrājika.' This means, 'sarvam parityaktvā vrajati.' That is the meaning. It means, 'someone who renounces everything and travels.' So, according to the literal meaning, sanyassi must travel. He must stay outside of the village. Then, what to say about the matter of food? It is said that a sanyassi must not enter the city for food. It is said that the sanyassi must only look at his feet while traveling. It isn't possible to look forwards. Thus, in several Upanishads, these things are commentated on in a very surprising way.

There are differences in the kinds of sanyassis. There are 'hamsas, paramahansa, bahudakam, hutishvaran,' etc. These are the different sections of sanyassis. These are in Upanishads that aren't the main 10. You can read these, and see how they describe the ways of sanyassis in different ways. A person who thinks of all of this thinks, 'sanyassa is a life of solitude.' We can only determine that it is a completely isolated, individual life. That is the kind of sanyassa that all of our śāstras speak of. Otherwise, there is nowhere in the śāstras mention of a sanyassa that works in the midst of society.

Some people will ask, 'isn't it said, 'ātmano mokṣārtha, jagadhitāya cha.' This means, for the Liberation of Soul, and good of the world.' Who can say where this is said? No one can. No one can find this. One won't find this in any book. 'ātmano mokṣārtha, jagadhitāya cha.' Where is this said? Where is this sentence said? It is said. It is in the Gita itself. It says, 'loka saṁgraham evāpi, saṁpaśyan kartum arhati.' 'Even if you think for the good of the world, you must perform karma.' That is said in the Gita. This is said in the sections dealing with

Karma Yoga. However, it isn't said in the circumstances dealing with sanyassa. In the situations dealing with sanyassa, it says that one cuts all bonds with this world. It doesn't say to become connected to anything in this world. In the Manu Smṛti, it says to renounce the home and leave, go to the forest, and die there. Thus, there is no kind of sanyassa where one again becomes connected to the world in our Dharma Shāstras, etc. Thus, the first mental confusion of a person who enters sanyassa is this; what is my dharma? That is it.

The Gita says, 'tasmāt śāstram pramāṇam te.' It says to take the śāstras as one's authority in choosing one's svadharma. If we do this, what happens? Then our mind won't be able to accept this. One becomes unable to connect one's knowledge and actions. One will feel, 'this isn't right.' This is what is in the minds of all sanyassis who act in this realm. Therefore, they think, 'we renounced karma, and are now back in karma.' Then, is what is said in the śāstras wrong? There it says that sanyassa is to become completely isolated from society. However, because this is said in the śāstras, there is way for that to be wrong.

However, after coming to sanyassa, when we have to again go to the realm of karma, we think, 'is this the fate of the sanyassi?' Definitely that is his fate. That is indeed the fate of sanyassa. How did this fate come? It is because there is no karma yoga there. That's why a sanyasi is subjected to such a fate.

No one should merely think someone is divine just from putting on some clothes, wearing a mark on the forehead, sitting down. That is the problem for the sanyassi. There are numerous problems, like the one's described here. A sanyassi who has read the scriptures which give the details of true sanyasa life can never fit his life into these ideas. This is because no where in the scriptures is it mentioned how to deal with this bond with society. What should be done to resolve this problem? Some modern people have given new definitions of sanyassa. This in on seeing the difficulties of such sanyassis. Thus a renewing of sanyassa came about. That came from several Acharyas, in recent times.

This is because what is said in the scriptures about sanyasa can't be altered. The lineage philosophies of sanyassa are not possible to do today. So what did they do? They created a kind of sanyassa that suited them. If you can't direct the horse by hitting it, then let it go its own way. That is it. Thus, renewed ideals about sanyassa came about. When that happens, what is it? This kind of sanyasa loses it's values. And if a person desires to be in that kind of sanyassa? He gains mental conflict as a result. We can always see the conflict in him..

The sanyassa of Sri Buddha, talks about ideals about sanyassa, the dharma of sanyassa, etc. 'Sanyassis should live in a community.' However, the practices of a sanyassi then were very severe. Buddha allowed only one pair of dress for a sanyassi. Then came the principle of sangham, the community of monks. Then after a long time, sanyassis were allowed two pairs of dress. This was only for the rainy season. Thus, there were very severe rules. There, also, the kind of sanyassa where one comes to the realm of external, worldly karma, and takes on worldly dharmas and acts, is not described. It is not mentioned even there. There also, the sanyassi is called 'śramanam.' This is the same as the previous sanyassis, the 'parivrajaka.'

However, when modern times came, due to all of the changes in the time period, change came in the sanyassa, the dharma of sanyassa. Here, how did this sanyassa today become connected to society? The primary cause is that sanyassa described in the śāstras is mostly impractical. Because the times have changed, it has become impossible to practice that kind of sanyassa. The ideals of that sanyassa will remain. Even the primary matters related to sanyassa, such as receiving alms, have become impractical. Today we don't eat food received from alms. The very idea of accepting alms has disappeared from society. Then, in whatever way, it isn't possible to practice the same kind of sanyassa described in the Shāstras and Smritis. That is the first thing one should understand to avoid this confusion.

Today, the external practices in the sanyassa laid down by the Shāstras isn't possible. Swami Vivekananda was someone who recognized this. That is why he created an order of monks. Then Swami modified sanyassa by giving the monks work in social service. That came according to the times. Thus, the svadharma of sanyassa changed according to the times. However, the previous ideal of sanyassa is within the mind. Thus, there is this svadharma, and the previous ideal. That is what creates conflict for a sanyassi.

The sanyassi and brahmachari needs the recognition, that in today's society, in truth a sanyassi isn't a sanyassi.. 'Today's sanyassi' in truth, is a karma yogi. Even when we say the word, 'karma,' this has also changed. The problem is not simply solved by giving the name 'karma yogi.' We have said before, that the word 'karma' in the bhāṣyā refers to the karmas of the Shrutis and Smritis. Those have gone. That has left society. Then, there is only the karmas that are before us. That's all. Then what should a sanyassi, who is a karma yogi, do? He should perform karmas for others, with awareness of dharma, and fairness. 'Perform karmas for the benefit of others.'

How must they be performed? With this kind of buddhi described. 'Act with Karma Yoga Buddhi, the discrimination behind karma yoga.' There are some rare Mahatmas who are beyond this. However, that is impossible for the majority. Thus, we need this understanding, that the dharma of sanyassa today is to perform karma in the field of action, along with this Yoga Buddhi. In today's circumstances, only that is possible. Anything else is impractical.

There also, the sanyassi will have to face several difficulties and obstacles. For the sanyassa of old times, what is it? It wasn't difficult to determine one's svadharma. This is because the śāstras gave the definition of sanyassa; 'this is what a sanyassi must do.' Today, this kind of svadharma isn't before us. That isn't in society. That realm of karma doesn't exist. Thus, what is the svadharma of sanyassa today? This has to be redetermined. Today, the difficulties a sanyassi must face are very big. It isn't making others good, but to make oneself good that is the most difficult. His karma and field of karma have completely changed. Thus, there is nothing from which to determine the svadharma of a sanyassi.

In the olden times, there were śāstras that said, 'it's enough if a sanyassi lives in this way. It's enough to accept alms.' That is not how it is today. The realm of karma today is full of adharma and unfairness. For a sanyassi to take what is needed for sanyassa is very difficult today. It isn't possible to retreat from the field of karma. To say truly, the society doesn't give any importance to sanyassa today. That is why some people have tried to completely change sanyassa, people of modern times. Because sanyassa had lost its relevance to the times, they implemented new ideas.

However, there are many people who talk about bhakti, write about bhakti, and give speeches on bhakti. There are plenty of opportunities to hear about bhakti. But have you ever read anywhere about the difficulties a sanyasi is facing? At the same time, is there anyone who does not face these problems? There is no one. That is not something we should think openly. There is not even a single sanyasi or a brahmachari who is not entangled in this problem. Thus, there is an internal conflict within everyone. This is a conflict between our life-ideal and field of action. This is the thought, 'how can the values of sanyassa be protected, while in this realm of karma?' This is in everyone's mind.

The divinity of the sanyassi which is imposed by the society does not allow him to think openly about these problems.. There are numerous things that the sanyassi imposes onto himself. Through this he has created a veil of smoke around him. This is there when we say 'sanyassa,' 'brahmacharya,'. No is brave enough to think or discuss this openly. I am saying

this because the word 'svadharma' came. Some people say this secretly. 'That is a very difficult matter. How can that be corrected? How can I determine my svadharma? In the midst of this society, full of disturbance and impurity, how can I protect my purity? The situations where one can protect that purity are very rare. What is the realm of karma today? It is full of impurity.

Otherwise, the situations that are free from this are very small. That is why sanyassa was defined like this in olden times. He becomes isolated from family and society, and lives a purely individual life. That is why sanyassa was made like that. However, what is happening today, is that the practicality of that life is lost, while the ideals remain. Even today man is attracted to this. When it comes to the practical level, though, what happens? One is defeated. Thus, karma yoga stands before us as a means to overcome this difficulty. Here, the solution is that karma yoga is needed. The buddhi, the subtle knowledge of Karma Yoga, being united with that, if he performs karma, then what? The speciality of today's sanyassa is that sanyassis live together and then enter into the realm of society. That is a specialty of today's sanyassa. However, what happens there? The sanyassa will have both bhakti, devotion, and tattvajñāna, spiritual knowledge. However, there is no karma yoga. There is karma, but no karma yoga.

When the karma yogi comes to sanyassa, when the sanyassi accepts karma yoga, that becomes a power for the sanyassi to perform action in society. This is if it is performed correctly. Then the sanyassi will be able to recognize his svadharma. This will help a lot. Thus, the most important matter, is that where 'sanyassa, brahmacharya,' etc., are spoken, what is the place of svadharma? Otherwise, it won't be possible for sanyassa to move forward, if one changes sanyassa, and forgets its ideals. Both aren't possible. This karma yoga is the only easy way before the sanyassi to cross this difficulty. Therefore, the matter being said by Shankara is relevant for us today also. So, Shankara says, 'svadharmam anuṣṭān,' one who performs his inherent duty.' What I have said isn't the end of this subject. What I have said is only the beginning. That isn't a matter that should be understood just through the class. That is something everyone must think about. The sanyassa, the society which he faces, the karmas of the sanyassi there, and how can the sanyassi move forward while performing those karmas without inner conflict? This is something that we must think about and discuss and gain perfect clarity. That is very important. Otherwise, this will create a big problem. Then the sanyassa today will have more of a downfall.

Thus, 'svadharmā,' the sanyassi recognizes his svadharmā in the realm of society. 'Svadharmam anuṣṭhān,' one who performs his or her svadharmā, 'yat phalaṁ prāpnoti,' what result does he attain? This is said in the next shloka. Shankara explains the words of the shloka. It says, 'buddhiyuktaḥ karmasamatvaviṣayayā buddhyā yuktaḥ buddhiyuktaḥ saḥ jahāti parityajati iha asmin loke ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte.' Thus, 'buddhiyuktaḥ,' united with understanding, 'karmasamatvaviṣayayā,' with the intelligence that causes evenness of mind in the performance of karma. We discussed the meaning of samatvam, evenness of mind the other day. One who is thus united with understanding, 'saḥ jahāti parityajati,' he renounces, 'iha asmin loke,' here, in this world, 'ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte puṇyapāpe sattvaśuddhi jñānaprāptidvāreṇa.'

What does the karma yogi do? 'Loke,' in this world. The word 'loke,' can also mean 'śarīram,' in this body, itself. In spiritual circumstances, the word 'lokaḥ,' primarily refers to the body. This is because the world for the Jiva is this body itself. Only after the world of this body do any other world come. This body is what accumulates merit and demerit for the Jiva. It is what makes the Jiva active in karmas. That is why the primary meaning accepted for the word 'lokaḥ' is 'body.' It says later, 'navadvāre pure dehe,' in the city of nine gates, the body. This body itself is 'lokaḥ.' Being situated in this body itself, 'sukṛtaduṣkṛte,' both sin and merit, he renounces.

What does the karma yogi do? While being situated in this body, 'sattvaśuddhi jñānaprāptidvāreṇa.' He goes that path. Through sattvaśuddhi, mental purity, he goes to jñānaprāpti, the attainment of Self-knowledge. In other words, for any karma, a karma yogi will only perform it if it aids in attaining chitta śuddhi, purity of mind. How does he become aware of that? It isn't possible for a karma yogi to perform any karma that is opposed to his awareness of dharma and what is right. Actually, a person who does like this is not a karma yogi, but a karmī. We say that our conscience will feel guilty. Thus, the karma yogi cannot perform any karma that conflicts with the inner conscience. Normally, it is mere karmīs that act like that. He perform any karma that conflicts with his conscience for some worldly gain.

Actually, there is nothing to gain for the karma yogi. Besides these two things, chitta śuddhi, and jñāna prāpti, mental purity and Self-knowledge, there is nothing else to gain. Thus, the karma yogi can perform actions in his svadharmā with awareness of dharma and right action. And what about if one doesn't have awareness of dharma and right action? Then one must obtain those. That is why the Lord mentions 'buddhi' or knowledge, repeatedly. The

karma yogi must obtain this awareness, 'what is dharma? What is Niti, fair action?' It's not possible to gain that discrimination through the śāstras today, because the karmas mentioned in the śāstras don't exist today.

One must rely on his or her own discrimination to determine that. That is the only way it is possible to know that. A person with discrimination cannot commit sin without the awareness that it is wrong. Thus, a person with discrimination only will come to this life of sanyasa. When he performs sin, he first recognizes, 'this is sin.' He has this recognition. Even before performing a sinful act he recognizes that it is a sinful act. What does the karma yogi do? Because he has the awareness that sin is coming into the mind, he is able to stop that from becoming an action. That is how the karma yogi determines his svadharma, with discrimination.

Thus, a person without the discrimination of what to accept and reject in an action isn't worthy of karma yoga. A sense of values is seen even in ordinary karmis. So a karmayogi will never lose this quality.. Our śāstras speak about this awareness of dharma as a principle. It's just that the actions of those times have lost their relevance in today's world. There are values described in the śāstras. These are said as, 'never do an action for your own good, if it causes suffering to others.' That is the definition of a value. These are said again and again in the Mahābhārata and in other scriptures. 'Never perform an action that gives you benefit at the expense of others.' We can determine whether the actions we perform now are in that category or not. This is a common rule.

Thus, whatever discrimination that we implement into action, accept that. I'm just saying an example. Like this, using discrimination, when one avoid unnecessary karmas and performs the karmas of one's svadharma, today's karma yogi, will gain this purity of mind and Self-knowledge. Then, as it says, 'sukṛtaduṣkṛte,' these merits and demerit won't be accumulated by the Karma yogi. Thus, rely primarily on discrimination, in determining one's dharma from today's society. That is what is needed. It says to perform karma as Yoga.

We said, 'there is no need for the karma yogi to search for karma. Karma is alongside the karma yogi. However, the karma yogi must use this discrimination. He must first obtain discrimination, and then use it. The karma yogi must gain for himself this awareness of dharma, of right action, of values, for that. Having obtained these, he should perform karma with great śraddhā. He thus performs action with the 'buddhi,' or knowledge described here.

First comes the acceptance of one's svadharma. From there, one must utilize viveka, discrimination. What for? For this 'sukṛtaduṣkṛte,' to avoid obtaining merit and demerit. This 'sukṛtaduṣkṛte,' represents the after effect of karma. We said before that there are endless fruits of karma. The after effect of all karmas are these, 'sukṛtaduṣkṛte.' After effect, means all of the results that come immediately after the karma. This because one fruit becomes a cause for other fruits. 'Sukṛtaduṣkṛte.' This is what we call 'samskāra,' the impressions left from karma. In some circumstances, this can also be called, 'vāsana.'

Thus, merit and demerit are created in all karmas. This is as an endless amount of karmic fruits. We said before there is a primary fruit of karma, and secondary fruits. In this way, the śāstas say that the after effects of karma are these, 'sukṛtaduṣkṛtam.' These are put into different divisions in different śāstras, such as 'seen and unseen,' 'intentional and unintentional,' etc. In general, in the adhyātmā śāstras, this is called as 'samskāra' or 'vāsana.' Thus avoiding these, 'jahāti,' renouncing these, the karma yogi performs karma.

This means that the samskaras of both merit and demerit, which are accumulated through karma, 'jahāti,' having avoided these, the karma that is performed is karma yoga. That is the meaning. Thus, to avoid merit and demerit, Shankara describes this as 'jñānaprāptidvāreṇa.' Ultimately, the cessation of merit and demerit occurs only through Jñāna Prāpti, the attainment of Self-knowledge. Krishna says later, 'Jñānāgni sarvakarmāṇi bhasmasat kuruterjuna.' The fire of Knowledge makes all karmas, the merit and demerit here, into ash.' This means that Jnana, Self-knowledge completely destroys these. For that, one must attain Jñāna Prāpti, Self-knowledge.

However, the performance of this karma yoga also destroys this samskāra. We have discussed this before. In the same way that karma yoga prevents the acceptance of karmic fruits, karma yoga also prevents the accumulation of karma samskāra. It prevents or destroys. In an ordinary karmī, the karma samskāra becomes a cause for accepting the fruits of karma. Karma Samskara works in two ways.

In one, it becomes a prompting to further karma. In the other, it becomes a cause for the fruits of karma. In the practice of karma yoga, the karma yogi avoid the karma samskaras which become a cause for further karma. 'Jahāti,' he renounces these. These can only be avoid through the practice of karma yoga. Then, there is a samskara that produces the fruit of the karma. The fruits of the karma are produces from those samskaras. We discussed earlier how one can avoid these samskaras. We discussed how one can avoid these, by practicing non-

attachment, etc. How can one avoid these through sacrificing the ego? We discussed this before. How can one avoid the fruit through surrender to God?

Thus, the karma yogi avoids this samskara, which both causes karma and the fruits of karma, and performs karma. That is the specialty of the karma yogi. For that, he must become united with buddhi, understanding of karma yoga. For worldly karmas, karma is of two types. One is mental karma, and the other is physical karma. Karma is only of these two types. All karmas related to the body are called 'kāyika,' physical. The cause behind these are mental karmas, 'manasika karma.' In all karmas, there are two kinds of samskara produced. We have discussed before, that samskara is a modification of the mind. It is modification of the antahkaraṇa itself. That is what is called samskara. This can transform in two different ways. We have said before, that one is in the gross level, and the other in the subtle level. Thus, as one performs karma, the mind transforms on a very subtle level. It isn't possible to recognize that transformation, ever.

That is why it is said that no one is able to grasp the relationship between karma and its fruit. We continuously travel through experiences of pleasure and pain. However, we are unable to recognize any of these, 'which of these is the fruit of what?' How was this sukham created? We are able to recognize some happiness, but it isn't possible to separate and distinguish between the constant experiences of happiness and sorrow we experience. Why is this? It is because when this karma produces a samskara, we are unable to recognize it. We are unable to recognize the cause of those experiences, which are samskara. Why is this? It is because they are extremely subtle.

These subtle forms of samskara, that are remaining, what happens? Then, these become a cause to further karma and the fruits of karma. Why does karma samskara become a cause for karma? It is because we have a particular affinity for some karmas. We have certain mental attraction towards certain karmas. If one person finds happiness in a certain karma, another person may not have any interest in that karma. Why is this? It is because there are separate karma samskaras situated within those individuals. Where did these come from? These come from the karma performed by one in the past. These can be the karmas performed in the present life, or in previous lives.

When these are accumulated in the antahkaraṇa, because they are subtle, it isn't possible to recognize these. We recognize the fruit of karma. Why? It is because that is a gross modification. That is how we're able to recognize it. That is a gross transformation of the

antaḥkaraṇa. Suppose we constantly perform a karma. No matter what karma it is, the attitude of 'I' will be there. This is 'aham bhāva.' However, when we enter into an action, an example taken in the śāstras is that of cooking. Everyone is familiar with the action of cooking. Before a person enters the action of cooking, a sankalpa enters the mind. 'I must do this action.'

This means that the attitude of 'I' becomes a force in that action. Thus, when we say that through the attitude of 'I,' a person enters an action, there the karma samskara that was accumulated before becomes manifested in a gross state. Through the gross modification of the karma samskara, he has the resolve to cook. 'I must do this action.' He has this sankalpa, or resolve. Thus, a samskara creates karma when it becomes manifest grossly. Then we recognize the samskara in its gross form. That recognition is the resolve, 'I must cook food!' There, in the feeling, 'I,' this becomes gross. We are able to recognize this when one has the resolve to cook food, and then the person sets out to perform the action. We may perform the in any way, but that action will continue to produce samskara. It's just that we don't recognize this.

How is that? If that person is doing that work for the first time he will do it very carefully. What will a person who is familiar with the action do? He will not need any presence of mind in the action. We can listen to a song and cook. We may cook while talking to somebody. Otherwise, we may perform that action while in our own dreamworld. We can act while remembering any kind of happiness or suffering. In this way, in all circumstance where we perform the action, there is a gross modification, but that doesn't relate to the action. There will be some other thoughts and emotions in the mind. Through practice, a person is able to do that effortlessly. There, there is no 'ahanta,' or ego in that action.

We don't constantly think while acting, 'I am doing this. I am doing this. I am doing this.' That isn't necessary. However, in any circumstance, like after the action is completed, or when we think about the action, what happens? We think, 'I do this action very well'. Otherwise, we think, 'I was able to perform that action well.' There, the 'I' comes in. That becomes connected to the action. Thus, the resolve we have about the karma in the beginning is constantly continuing in the antaḥkaraṇa as samskara, even in the time when one forgets oneself. That is why even if we don't have the feeling 'I am doing this,' while acting, we have the remembrance, 'I did that.' What does it mean that the remembrance 'I did that,' comes? It means that even while one was performing the action, there was ego, but it was subtle. Because that ego connected to the action was subtle, we were unable to recognize it. That's all.

There, the modification of ahanta, the ego continuously happens. Even if that is subtle, through the repetition of the karma, it will become modified even stronger than before in that karma. What is the meaning of saying that we are able to perform the action effortlessly, with familiarity? This means that our ego in that action is firm. That is why we are able to perform the action without using the gross form of ego, relying on its subtle form. And what about a person who isn't familiar with that action? He has to have śraddhā while performing the action the whole time. There, his ahanta, his ego, will become more manifest. Why is this? It is because the samskara isn't firm there.

Thus, according to how familiar we are with an action, the samskara related to that action becomes more firm. That is called the karmabandha, the bond of karma. There, we become aware in the end of the action of this samskara, which was really constantly active within the antaḥkaraṇa. Then what is the difference in a karma yogi? A karma yogi constantly makes firm his bhāvana, which remembrance of God. He doesn't make the samskaras firm, but his remembrance of the Lord. He has the resolve, 'I must perform this action.' He then goes to action. Even when he performs the action, he may think of something while acting, like other karmīs, or he may remember the Lord and act, or other thoughts may come to the mind, or he may have to talk with another person while acting. Different matters may come into the mind while performing the action. While having constant remembrance of God, he can have thoughts about the different facets of the action. However, even when he thinks like this, after the karma, when he remembers the karma, he doesn't have the samskara that makes his ego become connected to the action.

Why is this? It is because within him, īśvara bhāva, the identification with the Lord, the remembrance of God, is active even in the end. Because his identification with the Self is firm, or because he constantly tries to make his ātmā bhāvana firm, the resolve that he has about the action, is not 'I did this action.' Instead, this will be with his identification with God. 'Through God's Grace, I was able to do this.' That will be the kind of bhāva in the mind. 'Guṇā guṇeṣu vartante.' 'The senses act among the sense-objects, while the Self is unattached.' This will be according to whatever bhāva he practices. There several kinds of bhāvas described in the Gita. 'Indriyānyīndriyārtheṣu.' The senses act among the objects.'

There what happens? Normally, when we perform an action, the ego will be firmly behind the action, even though we may be unaware of this. However, here, the karma yogi's īśvara bodha, his awareness of God will become firm. The same action happens in both

people. We can understand these two processes through the same logic in our own case. We can see this through our experiences. When we have this awareness of God, our pride in the action will decrease. Therefore, what does he do? If the first person develops the karma samskara, the karma yogi doesn't do this. Here it says, in this shloka, 'iha sukṛtaduṣkṛte jahāti.' Even if he performs karma, he doesn't develop that karma samskara. Instead, the karma helps to develop his īśvara bodha, awareness of God. There, he renounces punya and papa, sin and merit. If we take every action we perform and consider this, we will be able to understand. This is discussed in different ways and views in the śāstras. That's what is said, 'sukṛtaduṣkṛte punyapāpe jahāti.' A karma yogi renounces both merit and demerit. How does that happen? We have discussed this. Now look at the shloka.

**Buddhiyukto jahātiha ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte
Tasmād yogāya yujyasva yoga karmasu kauśalaṁ. 2.50.**

AUM AMRITESHARYAI NAMAH