

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

# **BHAGAVAD GEETA – 17**

*The Yoga of the  
Threefold Faith*

---

***“THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE”***

---

Reflections by

**SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA**

**TEXT**

**28.17**







**COLLECTION OF VARIOUS**  
**-> HINDUISM SCRIPTURES**  
**-> HINDU COMICS**  
**-> AYURVEDA**  
**-> MAGZINES**

**FIND ALL AT [HTTPS://DSC.GG/DHARMA](https://dsc.gg/dharma)**

**Made with**



**By**

**Avinash/Shashi**

**Icreator of  
hinduism  
server!**

 **KAPWING**

## **Sandeepany's Vedanta Course**

**List of All the Course Texts in Chronological Sequence:**

<b>Text No.</b>	<b>TITLE OF TEXT</b>	<b>Text No.</b>	<b>TITLE OF TEXT</b>
1	<i>Sadhana Panchakam</i>	24	<i>Hanuman Chalisa</i>
2	<i>Tattwa Bodha</i>	25	<i>Vakya Vritti</i>
3	<i>Atma Bodha</i>	26	<i>Advaita Makaranda</i>
4	<i>Bhaja Govindam</i>	27	<i>Kaivalya Upanishad</i>
5	<i>Manisha Panchakam</i>	<b>28.17</b>	<b><i>Bhagavad Geeta (Discourse 17 )</i></b>
6	<i>Forgive Me</i>	29	<i>Mundaka Upanishad</i>
7	<i>Upadesha Sara</i>	30	<i>Amritabindu Upanishad</i>
8	<i>Prashna Upanishad</i>	31	<i>Mukunda Mala (Bhakti Text)</i>
9	<i>Dhanyashtakam</i>	32	<i>Tapovan Shatkam</i>
10	<i>Bodha Sara</i>	33	<i>The Mahavakyas, Panchadasi 5</i>
11	<i>Viveka Choodamani</i>	34	<i>Aitareya Upanishad</i>
12	<i>Jnana Sara</i>	35	<i>Narada Bhakti Sutras</i>
13	<i>Drig-Drishya Viveka</i>	36	<i>Taittiriya Upanishad</i>
14	<i>"Tat Twam Asi" – Chand Up 6</i>	37	<i>Jivan Sutrani (Tips for Happy Living)</i>
15	<i>Dhyana Swaroopam</i>	38	<i>Kena Upanishad</i>
16	<i>"Bhoomaiva Sukham" Chand Up 7</i>	39	<i>Aparoksha Anubhuti (Meditation)</i>
17	<i>Manah Shodhanam</i>	40	<i>108 Names of Pujya Gurudev</i>
18	<i>"Nataka Deepa" – Panchadasi 10</i>	41	<i>Mandukya Upanishad</i>
19	<i>Isavasya Upanishad</i>	42	<i>Dakshinamurty Ashtakam</i>
20	<i>Katha Upanishad</i>	43	<i>Shad Darshanaah</i>
21	<i>"Sara Sangrah" – Yoga Vasishtha</i>	44	<i>Brahma Sootras</i>
22	<i>Vedanta Sara</i>	45	<i>Jivanmuktananda Lahari</i>
23	<i>Mahabharata + Geeta Dhyanam</i>	46	<i>Chinmaya Pledge</i>

### **A NOTE ABOUT SANDEEPANY**

**Sandeepany Sadhanalaya** is an institution run by the Chinmaya Mission in Powai, Mumbai, teaching a 2-year Vedanta Course. It has a very balanced daily programme of basic Samskrit, Vedic chanting, Vedanta study, Bhagavatam, Ramacharitmanas, Bhajans, meditation, sports and fitness exercises, team-building outings, games and drama, celebration of all Hindu festivals, weekly Gayatri Havan and Guru Paduka Pooja, and Karma Yoga activities.

This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace the Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal lives. Sandeepany is an all-round spiritual course that gives proper direction to the youth and to those approaching retirement. Hinduism is in dire need of a band of systematically trained teachers or Acharyas who can serve this Eternal Religion.

**– The Author, February 2019, Shivaratri Day**



Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text  
**28.17**



श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगः

## THE BHAGAVAD GEETA – 17

*“Yoga of the Threefold FAITH”*

*Sri Veda Vyasaji*

### Reflections

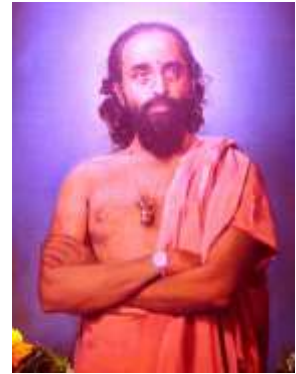
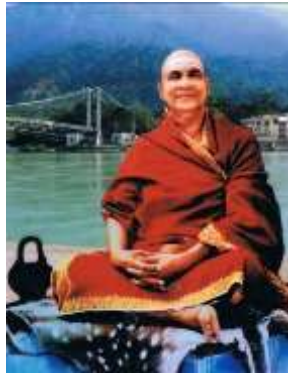
*by Swami Gurubhaktananda*

on the 6 Lectures delivered by **Swami Advayanandaji**

Acharyaji, 15th Batch Vedanta Course

at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Powai, Mumbai

**8th August – 13th August, 2013**



*Adi Shankaracharya*

*Swami Sivananda*

*Swami Tapovanji*

*Swami Chinmayananda*

**SERVE • LOVE • GIVE • PURIFY • MEDITATE • REALISE**

## **Copyright & Author's Details**

### **Author:**

*Swami Gurubhaktananda* (ex Krishna Chaitanya, born Bipin R. Kapitan in Durban, South Africa)

Email: [gurubhakta.dls@gmail.com](mailto:gurubhakta.dls@gmail.com)

© 2018 All Rights Reserved. Copyright held by Swami Gurubhaktananda.

### **About This Edition:**

Web Edition:	21 <sup>st</sup> March, 2019, Holi, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Jayanti Day
Website:	Chinmaya International Foundation: <a href="http://www.chinfo.org">www.chinfo.org</a>
Series Title :	<b>The Sandeepany Experience</b>
Series Subject:	Vedanta & Supportive Subsidiary Texts

**Declaration by the Author:** *The material in this series is under inspiration of the Sandeepany Vedanta Course, but largely consists of the Author's reflections on the Course. He is deeply indebted to the Chinmaya Mission for its excellent presentation of the Course by their renowned and dedicated Acharyas.*

---

## **Personal Dedication**

### **1. To my Parents, Smt Sharadaben & Sri Ratilalbhai Kapitan**

*who inspired me to study in life, to stick to the path of Dharma and pursue the highest ideals; and swamped me with their abundant Love;*

### **2. To Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj**

*the President of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India, who constantly encouraged and supported this effort;*

### **3. To Pujya Sri Swami Tejomayanandaji (Guruji)**

*for his boundless vision and inspiration to create a vibrant organisation;*

### **4. To Sri Swami Advayanandaji and Sri Swami Sharadanandaji**

*my Acharyaji and Upa-Acharyaji at Sandeepany, who imparted their bountiful knowledge and wisdom with rare selfless Divine Love, just as the Rishis of yore would wish to see them do.*

---

\*\*\*\*\*

# ***BHAGAVAD GEETA – 17***

***“Yoga of the Threefold Faith”***

---



॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

अथ सप्तदशोऽध्यायः

श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगः

## THE BHAGAVAD GEETA

Discourse – 17 (28 Verses)

*“Yoga of the Threefold Faith”*

### INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER SIXTEEN LEFT US with two verses on ‘Scriptural Authority’ wherein the Lord proclaimed the supremacy of the scriptures in providing guidelines for living the spiritual life. Arjuna picks up the point made there and begins this Chapter with a very appropriate question. We see from it how much he is in tune with his Divine Teacher.

From Arjuna’s question arises the discussion in this Chapter, on how one’s inherent nature determines his thoughts and actions in the absence of knowledge of the scriptures.

The subject matter is of great value, particularly to those who, for various reasons, not just laziness, have not had the opportunity to study the scriptures in depth. It is admitted at the outset that such people are disadvantaged, and we had the example of how one who has lost the instruction manual for some equipment is disadvantaged in using it. He may still use it, even though it may not be to maximum efficiency.

However, the Lord is very open-minded. He does not insist on learning the scriptures, but provides very detailed descriptions of how one would naturally act according to his inherent temperament. If his temperament is Sattwic, his actions would fall in line with what the scriptures say. If he is Rajasic or Tamasic in nature, his behaviour would depart in accordance with the degree of absence of Sattwa in him. The very Tamasic people would behave diametrically opposite to scriptural injunctions.

The Lord describes various aspects in terms of the predominant Guna in a person. This distinction itself can be taken as a “scriptural authority”. For the modern man, this detailed account of one’s behaviour according to his Guna may prove to be sufficient for him to launch with some confidence on the spiritual path.

\*\*\*\*\*





**BHAGAVAD GEETA – 17**  
**“The Yoga of the Threefold Faith”**

## **CONTENTS**

---

<b>Introduction to Chapter 17</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>17.1 THE THREEFOLD FAITH</b>	<b>(Verses 1 – 7)</b>	<b>04</b>
Verse 1:	<i><u>Arjuna: What is Faith Without Scriptures?</u></i>	4
Verse 2:	<i>One's Faith is the Deciding Factor</i>	5
Verse 3:	<i>Man is As His Faith is</i>	6
Verse 4:	<i>Faith Determines Our Ideal</i>	7
Verse 5:	<i><u>Example of Rajas: Austerity Driven by Lust</u></i>	8
Verse 6:	<i><u>Example of Tamas: Senseless Self-Torture</u></i>	9
Verse 7:	<i>The Subjects Covered Ahead</i>	10
<b>17.2 CHOICE OF FOODS</b>	<b>(Verses 8 – 10)</b>	<b>11</b>
Verse 8:	<i>Sattwic Foods</i>	11
Verse 9:	<i>Rajasic Foods</i>	11
Verse 10:	<i>Tamasic Foods</i>	11
	<i>Table of Qualities of Food</i>	12
<b>17.3 TYPES OF SACRIFICE</b>	<b>(Verses 11 – 13)</b>	<b>13</b>
Verse 11:	<i>Sattwic Sacrifice</i>	13
Verse 12:	<i>Rajasic Sacrifice</i>	13
Verse 13:	<i>Tamasic Sacrifice</i>	13
	<i>Table of Qualities of Sacrifices</i>	14
<b>17.4 TYPES OF AUSTERITY</b>	<b>(Verses 14 – 16)</b>	<b>15</b>
Verse 14:	<i>Austerity of BODY</i>	15
Verse 15:	<i>Austerity of SPEECH</i>	15
Verse 16:	<i>Austerity of MIND</i>	15
	<i>Table of Types of Austerities</i>	16
<b>17.5 QUALITIES OF AUSTERITY</b>	<b>(Verses 17 – 19)</b>	<b>17</b>
Verse 17:	<i>Sattwic Austerity</i>	17
Verse 18:	<i>Rajasic Austerity</i>	17

Verse 19:	<i>Tamasic Austerity</i>	17
	<i>Table of Qualities of Austerities</i>	18
<b>17.6</b>	<b>TYPES OF CHARITY</b>	(Verses 20 – 22) <b>19</b>
Verse 20:	<i>Sattwic Charity</i>	19
Verse 21:	<i>Rajasic Charity</i>	19
Verse 22:	<i>Tamasic Charity</i>	19
	<i>Table of Qualities of Charities</i>	20
<b>17.7</b>	<b>A PURIFICATORY MANTRA</b>	(Verses 23 – 28) <b>21</b>
	<i>An Introduction to this Topic</i>	21
Verse 23:	<i>“OM TAT SAT” – The Supreme Purifier</i>	22
Verse 24:	<i>The First Component, “OM”</i>	23
Verse 25:	<i>The Second Component, “TAT”</i>	23
26 & 27:	<i>The Third Component, “SAT”</i>	24
Verse 28:	<i>The Place of “ASAT”</i>	25
	<i>Conclusion</i>	26

---

\*\*\*\*\*



**SRI HANUMAN**  
*His Faith in Sri Rama*  
*came spontaneously from early childhood*

## 17.1 THE THREEFOLD FAITH

(Verses 1-7, 6 No.)

THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE whose approach to life begins and largely remains within the traditions and culture of the environment in which they are born. Certain daily rituals are always present in every environment, in every place on earth. They are imbibed by us as we grow. We hear stories of great heroes of our tradition; these become our role models. Certain basic principles of life are imbibed through folklore and song, through sayings uttered by community leaders, or adhered to by elders in the family. Through all such means, one naturally formulates some working philosophy by which he lives his life.

All this can be achieved despite the lack of any formal education of the scriptures. To many that may be all they are looking for, and they do not see any problem with it. Arjuna's question is to be seen against this background.

**Verse 1:** *Arjuna: What is Faith Without Scriptures?*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः

॥ १७-१॥

arjuna uvāca |

yē śāstravidhimutsrjya yajantē śraddhayānvitāḥ |

tēṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa sattvamāhō rajastamah

॥ 17-1॥

	<i>Arjuna uvaacha:</i>	<i>Arjuna said:</i>
1	<i>Ye shaastra-vidhim utsrija,</i>	<i>Those who, setting aside scriptural ordinances,</i>
2	<i>yajante shraddhayaan-vitaah;</i>	<i>perform their actions with faith –</i>
3	<i>teshaam nishthaa tu kaa Krishna,</i>	<i>what is their condition, O Krishna?</i>
4.	<i>sattwam aahoh rajah-tamah.</i>	<i>Is it Sattwa or is it Rajas-Tamas?</i>

Acharyaji said that this was the most well thought out question by Arjuna so far. In relation to his situation as a beginner, it is also more relevant and more important than his questions to see the Lord's Vibhootis and His Cosmic Form; it is of greater practical significance to him as it relates to his own need of the moment.

Arjuna shows an amazing atunement to his Teacher. Sri Krishna's preference is to base actions on sound principles, regardless of where they come from. Universality is in every breath of His teaching. This question encourages one to think laterally and universally.

### The Value of Scriptural Study

When the occasion and opportunity to study the scriptures in their original form does present itself in due course, the seeker is always advised to take it up seriously to broaden his understanding of the psychology behind his actions.

Acharyaji spoke very helpfully on the subject of studying the Shastras: “Shastras are always available. Why can’t we know them? There are several reasons:

i) There is sheer indifference or laziness on the part of a person to avail himself of this knowledge. This is a Tamasic reason.

ii) There may be fear that it is too difficult or too mammoth a task to study them. This is a Rajasic reason.

iii) The person has the interest and even the faith, but just lacks the opportunity to study it. This is a Sattwic reason.”

Thus did Acharyaji brilliantly answer the question in the same spirit as the present Chapter. On this positive note of encouragement to all seekers, we begin this absorbing Chapter on the “**Threefold Faith in Man**”.

### In the Absence of Scriptural Knowledge

**1-4** Arjuna is asking: “Not knowing what the scriptures say, if I act from the level of my own faith and do what my tradition and culture has taught me to do, what is my condition? Do I still become an Adhikari for Knowledge of the Self, or am I to be considered a failure? Am I considered to be Sattwic, Rajasic or Tamasic?”

### Verse 2:      **One’s Faith is the Deciding Factor**

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।

सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु

॥ १७-२॥

śrībhagavānuvāca |

trividhā bhavati śraddhā dēhināṃ sā svabhāvajā |

sāttvikī rājasī caiva tāmasī cēti tāṃ śṛṇu

|| 17-2||

	<i>Shree Bhagavaan uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Blessed Lord said:</i>
1	<i>Trividhaa bhavati shraddhaa,</i>	<i><u>Threefold</u> is the <b>Faith</b></i>
2	<i>dehinaam saa swabhaava-jaa;</i>	<i>of the embodied, <u>inherent</u> in their nature –</i>
3	<i>saattwikkee raajasee cha eva,</i>	<i><b>Sattwic</b> (pure), <b>Rajasic</b> (passionate) and</i>
4	<i>taamasee cha iti taam shrinu.</i>	<i><b>Tamasic</b> (dull, dark); do thou thus hear of it.</i>

The Lord’s reply is extremely interesting. At once the Divine Teacher picks up the essence of the question and answers it from first principles.

**1-2** Faith itself is of three kinds. The answer to Arjuna’s question rests on the type of faith one has. This is a very important statement and has to be grasped well:

**Swabhaava-Jaa:** Faith is here said to be inherent in one’s nature.

The purpose of the Shastras is to change our **Swabhaava**. The person who has studied the scriptures, who knows its philosophy well, and who knows what Sadhana is advised, is at a distinct advantage. The advantage is transformation of his nature.

This transformation has been well covered in Chapter 16 already, and is not the topic here.



*The person may be of Tamasic, Rajasic or Sattwic nature – it does not matter where he is when he begins. If such a person follows the compass of scriptural guidance devoutly with attention, **he transforms himself** over a period of time. He will grow from Tamas to Rajas, and then from Rajas to Sattwa. This is his advantage.*

That nature, according to the next verse is '**Sattwa-Roopena**', which means dependent on the mind (Sattwa in this context means the natural mind-stuff). Thus the Lord is actually telling us that faith is according to the inherent nature of one's mind.

However, the person who does *not* have the scriptural knowledge has the following disadvantage. The disadvantage is stagnation of his nature.

*The person will still fall into any one of the three Gunas to start with. If he is fortunate enough to be Sattwic, what he does will certainly be very close to what the Shastras expect of him. If he is not Sattwic, he is hugely disadvantaged because he has no higher benchmark to aim at. He will perhaps not even know that he is at a disadvantage. His Gunas dictate what he does – he cannot help it. Therefore, **he stagnates** on the spiritual path.*

**3-4** The rest of this Chapter deals with this second case. We have an exhaustive account of how the three Gunas differentiate every department of our life.

As one may expect, the Lord begins with a threefold account of one's **Faith** in this section. Subsequent sections deal with differentiation of one's acts of sacrifice, of austerity and of charity. Included are some interesting facts about the types of foods liked by each type of Guna. The food itself is also given a threefold classification.

This intriguing way of looking at our whole life is the subject of this Chapter. It is a novel way when compared to the approach of modern science. Instead of describing behaviour in terms of atoms and molecules, ancient Indian philosophers described it in terms of the three Gunas.

### **Verse 3:      *Man is As His Faith is***

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः

॥ १७-३॥

sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata |

śraddhāmayō:'yaṁ puruṣō yō yacchraddhaḥ sa ēva saḥ    || 17-3||

1	<i>Sattwa anuroopaa sarvasya,</i>	<i>In accordance with each one's <u>nature</u></i>
2	<i>shraddhaa bhavati bhaarata;</i>	<i>is his <b>faith</b>, O Bharata.</i>
3	<i>shraddhaa-mayah ayam purushah,</i>	<i>Man consists of his faith:</i>
4	<i>yah yat shraddhah sah eva sah.</i>	<i><b>"As is a man's faith, so is he."</b></i>

### **Faith is a Variable**

**1-2** The word **Sattwa** here means ‘Sat Tattwa’ or “*the true, essential nature*”. That refers to the mind and intellect, not the body. The faith which was said to be one’s inherent nature in verse 2, is actually the nature of one’s mind. That means our faith is not a fixed fixture like our nose or hand or tongue – things which we have to live with for the rest of our life. Being the mind, it is a *variable* that varies as the mind varies. As we make efforts to change our mind through knowledge and experience, so does our faith change also.

Our mind is determined largely by our bundle of Vasanas or latent tendencies acquired in past lives. That collective experience is the source of our present faith. This tells us two things about our mind and about our faith:

- i) We are responsible for the present state of our mind and faith.
- ii) We can change our present state by obtaining new information, new knowledge; acquiring new habits, and reviewing our present desires.

The dynamics of change of our inherent faith is being opened up in this Chapter. Acharyaji called inherent faith by the term “our leanings” or “natural inclinations”. It is in our hands to alter our present faith, our present leanings and inclinations, simply by re-educating ourselves. This opens up vast possibilities within us. We are not as static as we think ourselves to be. A dynamism unknown to us lies within, and can be activated to transform our entire nature! We have the potential to be what we to be!

If the desires are overhauled and directed towards the Lord, our nature can be transformed into a Sattwic one, and then our faith also gets transformed accordingly. This is a potential that is untapped by most people. The Lord is making us aware of the positive potential locked within all of us of making radical changes in our nature.

### **The Growth and Resilience of Faith**

**3-4** Everything in our life follows from the faith we have. A child has faith in its mother as a baby. It completely surrenders to her. As it grows, the child becomes more self-reliant and less dependent on the mother. This is as Nature has intended for the child. If that change did not happen, it would be dependent for life on a single person. That is not what Nature wants for us. Of course, this change does not imply that our love for mother starts reducing. No, it starts growing in other directions, yet to be explored.

If we have faith in the society we live in, we will co-operate with it as best we can. If we do not have that faith, we will constantly rebel against society and become social misfits.

If we have faith in our Guru, we will willingly obey him. If not, we will abandon him.

Faith is that which gives us an anchorage in life, that in which we are rooted at a very deep spiritual level. Whether our faith is shattered easily or is resilient enough to withstand great pressures from outside, is itself dependent on the *type* of our Faith! Is our faith like a football that retains its roundness even though kicked all over the field; or is it like putty that changes each time it is merely touched? This is the difference between firm faith and blind, superficial faith respectively.

---

### **Verse 4:      *Faith Determines Our Ideal***

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।

प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः

॥ १७-४॥

yajantē sāttvikā dēvānyakṣarakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ |  
prētānbhūtagaṇāṁścānyē yajantē tāmasā janāḥ

|| 17-4||

1	<i>Yajante saattwikaah devaan,</i>	<i>The <u>Sattwic</u> or pure, worship the <b>Gods</b>;</i>
2	<i>yaksha-rakshaansi raajasaah;</i>	<i>the <u>Rajasic</u> or passionate, Yakshas &amp; <b>Rakshasas</b>;</i>
3	<i>pretaan bhoota-ganaan cha anya,</i>	<i>and <b>ghosts</b> and the hosts of spirits &amp; others</i>
4	<i>yajante taamasaah janaah.</i>	<i>are worshipped by the <u>Tamasic</u> people.</i>

In this verse we see our faith being applied to something which forms the backbone of every individual's life – our selected ideal; that for which we will give our whole life. Our ideal is what we worship, adore and follow. If faith is a variable, so too is our ideal, our worship and that which we adore in life. We can raise or lower our ideal in life.

How do we choose our Ideal? We don't; our Faith chooses it for us. It is our faith that decides whom we worship and adore. In terms of the predominant Guna in us, that ideal can be the Gods, the Rakshasas or even ghosts and lower spirits. It all depends on what Guna predominates in us.

We see here how scientifically-based is the Lord's approach to such important aspects of life as our faith and our ideals. They are not governed by chance, but by our own "essential nature" – our own Faith.

### **The Three Faces of Faith**

**1** The Sattwic person worships the Lord. The Lord promises us only our spiritual growth, nothing else. He does not bestow any material favours, etc. Hence, Sattwic persons only are drawn towards Him.

**2** The Rajasic person is naturally pulled by his desires to go to Yakshas or Rakshasas, who give their worshippers various material comforts, enjoyments and pleasures. Persons of the active temperament go to such "Deities" to fulfill their wants.

**3-4** The Tamasic person goes to the numerous ghosts, spirits and others who give help to those of evil designs. He cannot go to God, because God will not grant these desires. He cannot go to the Yakshas because they require some effort on our part before granting our desires.

Tamasic people want something for nothing, so they perform atrocious rituals to capture wandering spirits and, subduing them by force, they get them to do evil acts for them. For this they only need to get some knowledge of occultism or 'spiritism'. It is said that Hitler had an occultist as his adviser during World War II.

In general, what or whom we glorify tells us what our faith is like. If we admire saints and sages, our faith is Sattwic. If we admire wealthy businessmen, successful sports or film stars, or powerful politicians, our faith is Rajasic. If we admire violent, vicious people, murderers, criminals, lustful or extremely lascivious people, then our faith is Tamasic.

---

### **Verse 5**      **Example of Rajas: Austerity Driven by Lust**

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।

दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः

|| १७-५||

aśāstravihitam ghōram tapyantē yē tapō janāḥ |  
dambhāhaṅkārasamyuktāḥ kāmāgabalānvitāḥ

|| 17-5||

1	<i>Ashastra-vihitam ghoram,</i>	<i>Not enjoined by the scriptures, terrible</i>
2	<i>tapyante ye tapah janaah;</i>	<i>are the <b>austerities</b> practised by men who are</i>
3	<i>dambha-ahamkaara-samyuktaah,</i>	<i>given to <u>hypocrisy</u> and egoism;</i>
4	<i>kaama-raaga-balaan-vitaah.</i>	<i>impelled by the force of <u>lust</u> and attachment.</i>

We now have two illustrations of what we have just learnt about inherent faith. This verse illustrates Rajasic faith; the next verse illustrates Tamasic faith. These two illustrations warn us to avoid such type of behaviour. They indicate to us the dangers we face when we attempt to live the spiritual life without guidance from the scriptures.

**1-2** Rajasic and Tamasic people face great difficulties if they do not follow someone who knows how to guide them properly in accordance with the scriptures.

### **Rajasic Propensities**

**3-4** The inherent Rajasic nature panders to one's ego. That means it is driven purely by the dictates of base desires, sensuality, name and fame, and desire for wealth. Because these are so repulsive in nature, those who are inclined towards them try to hide them by being hypocritical. They pretend to be what they know they are not. Hypocrisy is the handmaid of egoism.

The driving force in the lives of such people is *lust* and *attachment*. Without scriptural guidance, it is next to impossible to control such forces on one's own. Only the Sattvic person can succeed in doing this, and that, too, with a great deal of caution.

Arjuna is already aware of the great difficulty in avoiding sin. He had asked Sri Krishna about this in Chapter 3. In Chapter 6 he has laid bare to the Lord that he cannot see how one can control the mind, which by nature seems to be like the uncontrollable wind.

### **Verse 6: Example of Tamas: Senseless Self-Torture**

कर्षयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।

मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यासुरनिश्चयान्

|| १७-६||

karṣayantaḥ śarīrasthaṁ bhūtagrāmamacētasah |

māṁ caivāntaḥśarīrasthaṁ tānviddhyāsuraniścayān

|| 17-6||

1	<i>Karshayantah shareera-stham,</i>	<i>In the <b>body</b>, resorting to <u>torturing</u></i>
2	<i>Bhoota-graamam achetasah;</i>	<i>senselessly all its <u>various parts</u> (elements);</i>
3	<i>maam cha eva antah-shareera-stham,</i>	<i>and even <u>Me</u> who dwells in the body –</i>
4	<i>taan viddhih aasura-nishchayaan.</i>	<i>know them to be of <b>demoniacal</b> resolves.</i>

### **Tamasic Propensities**

Tamasic people will stop at nothing in their efforts to obtain the power they desire. The 'laziness' of Tamas applies strictly in the sense that they make no effort to improve spiritually; it does not literally mean physical laziness. These people can put forth tremendous effort, albeit in the wrong direction, to get what they want.



**1-2** Tamasic darkness desires power over other beings. In order to get that power, they will resort to bodily torture, their own as well as the bodies of others.

**3** They even torture the Lord who peacefully dwells in the hearts of all. The Lord's indwelling Presence is completely ignored. Acharyaji said that the pain the Lord feels is rhetorical; it means that they do not listen to the fine voice of conscience within. They are impervious to the voice of conscience; conscience cannot penetrate them.

**4** This Pada sums both verses, the Rajasic and the Tamasic examples. As in Chapter 16, the two go together under the title Demoniactal. They apply to Asuras and Rakshasas.

We are now ready to study in detail the expression of our faith in different activities. The Lord starts with Food, something to which everyone can relate.

**Verse 7:      *The Subjects Covered Ahead***

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।

यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु

॥ १७-७॥

āhārastvapi sarvasya trividhō bhavati priyaḥ |

yajñastapastathā dānaṁ tēṣāṁ bhēdamimaṁ śṛṇu

॥ 17-7॥

1	<i>Aahaarah tu api sarvasya,</i>	<i>Indeed, even the <b>Food</b>, of every person</i>
2	<i>trividhaa bhavati priyah;</i>	<i>is threefold in its <u>nature</u> and <u>dearness</u> to each;</i>
3	<i>yajnah tapah tathaa daanam,</i>	<i>as also is <b>Sacrifice, Austerity and Charity</b>;</i>
4	<i>teshaam bhedam imam shrinu.</i>	<i>Hear now the distinction of each of these . . .</i>

**1** It is wisely said, “Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you how you think.”

The wisdom of this comes through in Lord Krishna's first topic chosen for discussion on the subject of one's natural faith. A man's faith is determined largely by what he eats.

Starting with Food, the detailed discussion proceeds on to Sacrifice, Austerity and Charity – each one is discussed under the sub-headings Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. These are the deeds we perform. From the content of our good deeds, we have a ready reckoner to tell us what our inborn faith is.

Austerity is dealt with in much greater detail than the other topics. There are three kinds of austerity, namely austerity of Body, Speech and Mind. Each of these three are discussed under each of the three Gunas, making up nine categories in all just under the topic of Austerity.

The Chapter closes with a detailed breakdown section on the purificatory Mantra, “Om Tat Sat”, by which all one's thoughts, words and actions may be purified of all unintentional flaws and deficiencies.

This then is the scope of this entire Chapter.

\*\*\*\*\*



## 17.2 CHOICE OF FOODS

(Verses 8-10, 3 No.)

### Verse 8: *Sattwic Foods*

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यंसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।  
 रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ १७-८॥  
 āyuhṣattvabalārōgyaṃsukhaprītivivardhanāḥ |  
 rasyāḥ snigdhaḥ sthirā hṛdyā āhārāḥ sāttvikapriyāḥ ॥ 17-8॥

1	<i>Aayuh sattwa bala aarogyam,</i>	<i>Life, purity, strength, health,</i>
2	<i>sukha preeti vivardhanaah;</i>	<i>joy and cheer – foods that increase these;</i>
3	<i>rasyaah snigdhaah sthiraa hridyaa,</i>	<i>which are <u>savoury</u>, oleaginous (oily), substantial and <u>agreeable (likeable)</u>;</i>
4	<i>aahaaraah saattwika-priyaah.</i>	<i>such <b>foods</b> are dear to the <b>Sattwic</b> people.</i>

### Verse 9: *Rajasic Foods*

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।  
 आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥ १७-९॥  
 kaṭvamlalavaṇātyuṣṇatīkṣṇarūkṣavidāhinaḥ |  
 āhārā rājasasyēṣṭā duḥkhaśōkāmayapradāḥ ॥ 17-9॥

5	<i>Katooh amla lavanah ati-ushna,</i>	<i>Bitter, sour, saline, excessively hot,</i>
6	<i>teekshnah rookshah vidaahinah;</i>	<i>pungent, dry and burning –</i>
7	<i>aahaaraah raajasasya ishtaah,</i>	<i>such <b>foods</b> are liked by the <b>Rajasic</b> people,</i>
8	<i>duhkha-shoka-amayapradaah.</i>	<i>productive of <u>pain</u>, grief and <u>disease</u>.</i>

### Verse 10: *Tamasic Foods*

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।  
 उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ १७-१०॥  
 yātayāmaṃ gatarasaṃ pūti paryuṣitaṃ ca yat |  
 ucchiṣṭamapi cāmēdhyam bhōjanam tāmasapriyam ॥ 17-10॥

9	<i>Yaatayaamam gatarasam,</i>	<i>The <u>stale</u>, tasteless,</i>
10	<i>pooti paryushitam cha yat;</i>	<i>putrid and rotten foods;</i>
11	<i>ucchhishtam api cha amedhyam,</i>	<i>which are like refuse and <u>impure</u> –</i>
12	<i>bhojanam taamasa priyam.</i>	<i>these <b>foods</b> are dear to the <b>Tamasic</b> people.</i>

The Lord clearly states that these are foods that are naturally liked by each of the three Gunas. If a person eats foods of a particular category, he will develop along the lines of that category. The following table summarises these verses:

**TABLE OF QUALITIES OF FOODS**

SATTWIC FOODS	RAJASIC FOODS	TAMASIC FOODS
<i>Verse 8</i>	<i>Verse 9</i>	<i>Verse 10</i>
<i>Aayuh – life-giving</i>	<i>Katooh – bitter</i>	-
<i>Sattwa – pure</i>	<i>Amla – sour</i>	<i>Gatarasam – tasteless</i>
<i>Balam – strength</i>	<i>Lavanah – saline</i>	<i>Pooti – putrid</i>
<i>Aarogyam – sound health</i>	<i>Ati-Ushna – excessively hot</i>	<i>Paryushitam – rotten</i>
<i>Sukham – joy</i>	<i>Teekshnah – pungent</i>	-
<i>Preeti – cheerfulness</i>	<i>Rookshah – dry</i>	-
<i>Rasyaah – savoury, juicy</i>	<i>Vidaahinah – burning (spicy)</i>	-
<i>Snigdhaah – succulent, tender, oleaginous</i>	<i>Duhkha – producing pain</i>	<i>Yaatayaamam – stale, cold, more than 3 hrs old</i>
<i>Sthiraa – nourishing and substantial</i>	<i>Shoka – producing grief</i>	<i>Ucchhishtam – like refuse, discarded by others</i>
<i>Hridyaa – agreeable and appealing</i>	<i>Amaya –producing disease</i>	<i>Amedhyam – impure, cannot be used for worship</i>

\*\*\*\*\*



## 17.3 TYPES OF SACRIFICE

(Verses 11-13, 3 No.)

### Verse 11: *Sattwic Sacrifice*

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।

यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः

॥ १७-११॥

aphalākaan̄kṣibhiryajñō vidhidṛṣṭō ya ijjatē |

yaṣṭavyamēvēti manah̄ samādhāya sa sāttvikah̄

॥ 17-11॥

1	<i>aphalaa-kaankshibhih yajnah,</i>	The <b>Sacrifice</b> of men <u>without desire</u> for its fruit;
2	<i>vidhi-drishtah yah ijjate;</i>	which is offered as <u>enjoined</u> by the scriptures;
3	<i>yashtavyam eva iti manah,</i>	“This is my <u>obligatory</u> duty”, with this thought
4	<i>samaadhaaya sah saattwikah.</i>	firmly in his mind – such sacrifice is <b>Sattwic</b> .

### Verse 12: *Rajasic Sacrifice*

अभिसन्धाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।

इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम्

॥ १७-१२॥

abhisandhāya tu phalaṁ dambhārthamapi caiva yat |

ijjatē bharataśrēṣṭha taṁ yajñam viddhi rājasam

॥ 17-12॥

1	<i>Abhisandhaaya tu phalam,</i>	But if one seeks the <u>fruit</u> of one’s sacrifice;
2	<i>dambhaartham api cha eva yat;</i>	and even does it just for <u>ostentation</u> ;
3	<i>ijjate bharata-shreshtha,</i>	then, O Best of the Bharatas, offering such
4	<i>tam yajnam viddhi raajasam.</i>	a <b>Sacrifice</b> – know it to be <b>Rajasic</b> .

### Verse 13: *Tamasic Sacrifice*

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।

श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते

॥ १७-१३॥

vidhihīnamasṛṣṭānnam mantrahīnamadakṣiṇam |

śraddhāvirahitam̄ yajñam̄ tāmasam̄ paricakṣatē

॥ 17-13॥

1	<i>Vidhi-heenam asrishta-annam,</i>	Without keeping to <u>ordinances</u> for food offering;
2	<i>mantra-heenam adakshinam;</i>	without <u>chanting</u> any Mantras; devoid of <u>gifts</u> ;
3	<i>shraddhaa-virahitam yajnam,</i>	devoid of any <u>faith</u> – such a <b>Sacrifice</b>
4	<i>taamasam parichakshate.</i>	is declared to be <b>Tamasic</b> .



## TABLE OF QUALITIES OF SACRIFICES

SATTWIC YAJNA	RAJASIC YAJNA	TAMASIC YAJNA
<i>Verse 11</i>	<i>Verse 12</i>	<i>Verse 13</i>
<b><i>Yashtavyam</i></b> – done solely as a duty	<b><i>Dambha</i></b> – for ostentation only	<b><i>Asrishta-Annam</i></b> – no food offered
<b><i>Aphala</i></b> – expecting no result	<b><i>Abhisandhah</i></b> – seeking fruit or result	<b><i>Mantra Heenam</i></b> – Proper Mantras are not chanted.
<b><i>Vidhi-Drishtah</i></b> – as enjoined by scriptures	<b><i>Kaamartham</i></b> – prompted by desire	<b><i>Vidhi Heenam</i></b> – disobeying all scriptural injunctions.
<b><i>Samaadhah</i></b> – firm in faith		<b><i>Adakshinam</i></b> – without giving charity
		<b><i>Shraddhaa Virahitam</i></b> – devoid of any faith

\*\*\*\*\*



## 17.4 TYPES OF AUSTERITY

(Verses 14-16, 3 No.)

### Verse 14: *Austerity of BODY*

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।  
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते

॥ १७-१४॥

dēvadvijaguruprājñapūjanam śaucamārjavam |  
brahmacharyamahimsā ca śārīram tapa ucyatē

॥ 17-14॥

1	<i>Deva-dvija-guru-praajna,</i>	<i>The Gods, the Brahmanas, the Guru and the wise –</i>
2	<i>poojanam shaucham aarjavam;</i>	<i>their worship; observing cleanliness and tranquillity of mind (straight-forwardness);</i>
3	<i>brahmacharyam ahimsaa cha,</i>	<i>observing celibacy and non-violence;</i>
4	<i>shaareeram tapah uchyate.</i>	<i>this is called <b>austerity</b> of the <u>BODY</u>.</i>

### Verse 15: *Austerity of SPEECH*

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।  
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते

॥ १७-१५॥

anudvēgakaram vākyaṁ satyaṁ priyahitaṁ ca yat |  
svādhyāyābhyasanam caiva vāṅmayam tapa ucyatē

॥ 17-15॥

1	<i>Anudvegakaram vaakyam,</i>	<i>Speech which causes no excitement;</i>
2	<i>satyam priyahitam cha yat;</i>	<i>which is truthful, pleasant and beneficial;</i>
3	<i>swaadhyaya-abhyasanam cha eva,</i>	<i>study and practice of the Vedas;</i>
4	<i>vaangmayam tapah uchyate.</i>	<i>this is called <b>austerity</b> of <u>SPEECH</u>.</i>

### Verse 16: *Austerity of MIND*

मनः प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।  
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते

॥ १७-१६॥

manah prasādah saumyatvaṁ maunamātmavinigrahaḥ |  
bhāvasaṁśuddhirityētattapō mānasamucyate

॥ 17-16॥

1	<i>Manah-prasaadah saumyatvam,</i>	<i>Serenity of mind; good-heartedness;</i>
2	<i>maunam aatma-vinigraha;</i>	<i>observing silence; self-control;</i>
3	<i>bhaava-sam-shuddhih iti etat,</i>	<i>purity of nature – this is</i>
4	<i>tapah maanasam uchyate.</i>	<i>called <b>austerity</b> of the <u>MIND</u>.</i>

## TABLE OF TYPES OF AUSTERITIES

TAPAS OF <u>BODY</u>	TAPAS OF <u>SPEECH</u>	TAPAS OF <u>MIND</u>
<i>Verse 14</i>	<i>Verse 15</i>	<i>Verse 16</i>
<b>Poojanam</b> – Worship of Gods Brahmanas, teachers, wise.	<b>An-Udvegakaram</b> – causing no excitement	<b>Manah Prasaadah</b> – serenity of mind
<b>Shaucham</b> – cleanliness	<b>Satyam</b> – truthful, accurate	<b>Saumyatvam</b> – good-heartedness
<b>Aarjavam</b> – tranquility of mind, straight-forwardness	<b>Priyahitam</b> – pleasant & beneficial	<b>Maunam</b> – observing silence
<b>Brahmacharyam</b> – celibacy	<b>Swaadhyaya</b> – study of Vedas	<b>Aatma Vinigraha</b> – self-control of mind
<b>Ahimsaa</b> – non-violence	<b>Abhyaasanam</b> – practice of the Vedas	<b>Bhaava Samshuddhi</b> – purity of one's nature

The above 3 stanzas give us a clear picture of what is true Tapas at all three levels of activity – body, speech and mind. These austerities can be done with Sattwic, Rajac or Tamasic attitudes; with or without expecting results, and so on. According to the governing temperaments, they act differently, and with different emphasis.

In the following verses the three types of Tapasvins and the nature of their Tapas are described.

\*\*\*\*\*



## 17.5 QUALITIES OF AUSTERITY

(Verses 17-19, 3 No.)

### Verse 17: *Sattwic Austerity*

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः ।  
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥ १७-१७॥  
śraddhayā parayā taptam tapastattrividham naraiḥ |  
aphalākāṅkṣibhiryuktaiḥ sāttvikam paricakṣatē ॥ 17-17॥

1	<i>Shraddhayaa parayaa taptam,</i>	<i>With utmost <u>faith</u>, practising</i>
2	<i>tapah tat trividham naraiḥ;</i>	<i>this threefold austerity (described above); by men</i>
3	<i>aphalaa-kaankshibhih yuktaiḥ,</i>	<i>free from desiring the <u>fruits</u> of it –</i>
4	<i>saattwikam pari-chakshate.</i>	<i>is called <b>Sattwic austerity</b>.</i>

### Verse 18: *Rajasic Austerity*

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।  
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥ १७-१८॥  
satkāramānapūjārtham tapō dambhēna caiva yat |  
kriyatē tadiha prōktam rājasam calamadhruvam ॥ 17-18॥

1	<i>Satkaara-maana-poojaartham,</i>	<i>For gaining good <u>reception</u>, honour and worship;</i>
2	<i>tapah dambhena cha eva yat;</i>	<i>and which with <u>hypocrisy</u> alone the <b>austerity</b></i>
3	<i>kriyate tat iha proktam,</i>	<i>is practised – that is here said to be</i>
4	<i>raajasam chalam adhruvam.</i>	<i><b>Rajasic</b> – unstable and <u>transitory</u> in nature.</i>

### Verse 19: *Tamasic Austerity*

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।  
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ १७-१९॥  
mūdhagrāhēṇātmanō yatpīḍayā kriyatē tapaḥ |  
parasyōtsādanārtham vā tattāmasamudāhṛtam ॥ 17-19॥

1	<i>Moodha-graahena aatmanah,</i>	<i>Done out of some <u>foolish</u> notion of the Self;</i>
2	<i>yat peedayaa kriyate tapah;</i>	<i>austerity which is practised with <u>self-torture</u>;</i>
3	<i>parasya utsaadanaartham vaa,</i>	<i>and for the purpose of <u>destroying</u> another –</i>
4	<i>tat taamasam udaahritam.</i>	<i>such <b>austerity</b> is declared to be <b>Tamasic</b>.</i>



## TABLE OF QUALITIES OF AUSTERITIES

SATTWIC TAPAS	RAJASIC TAPAS	TAMASIC TAPAS
<i>Verse 17</i>	<i>Verse 18</i>	<i>Verse 19</i>
<b><i>Shradhayaa</i></b> – with utmost faith	<b><i>Satkaara</i></b> – for gaining good reception	<b><i>Moodha Graahena</i></b> – with foolish notions
<b><i>Trividham Tapah</i></b> – the above threefold austerity	<b><i>Maana, Poojartham</i></b> – for honour & worship	<b><i>Peedayaa</i></b> – with self-torture
<b><i>Aphala-Kaankshibhih</i></b> – free from desiring any fruits	<b><i>Dambhena</i></b> – with hypocrisy	<b><i>Parasya Utsaadana Artham</i></b> – to destroy another
	<b><i>Chalam, Adhruvam</i></b> – unstable and transitory	

\*\*\*\*\*



## 17.6 TYPES OF CHARITY

(Verses 20-22, 3 No.)

### Verse 20: *Sattwic Charity*

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।

देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम्

॥ १७-२०॥

dātavyamiti yaddānam dīyatē:'nupakāriṇē |

dēśē kālē ca pātrē ca taddānam sāttvikam smṛtam

॥ 17-20॥

1	<i>Daatavyam iti yat daanam,</i>	<i>"This is my <u>duty</u>" – a gift given with this feeling;</i>
2	<i>deeyate anupakaarine;</i>	<i>given to one who cannot do anything <u>in return</u>;</i>
3	<i>deshe kaale cha paatre cha,</i>	<i>given in a <u>fit place</u> and <u>fit time</u> to a worthy one –</i>
4	<i>tat daanam saatwikam smritam.</i>	<i>such a <b>gift</b> is held to be <b>Sattwic</b>.</i>

### Verse 21: *Rajasic Charity*

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।

दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम्

॥ १७-२१॥

yattu pratyupakārārtham phalamuddiśya vā punaḥ |

dīyatē ca parikliṣṭam taddānam rājasam smṛtam

॥ 17-21॥

1	<i>Yat tu prati-upakaara-artham,</i>	<i>Given with a view to <u>receiving in return</u>;</i>
2	<i>phalam udrishya vaa punah;</i>	<i>or looking in anticipation for a <u>reward</u> again;</i>
3	<i>deeyate cha pari-klishtam,</i>	<i>and given very <u>reluctantly</u> –</i>
4	<i>tat daanam raajasam smritam.</i>	<i>such a <b>gift</b> is held to be <b>Rajasic</b>.</i>

### Verse 22: *Tamasic Charity*

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।

असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्

॥ १७-२२॥

adēśakālē yaddānamapātrēbhyaśca dīyatē |

asatkṛtamavajñātam tattāmasamudāhṛtam

॥ 17-22॥

1	<i>Adesha-kaale yat daanam,</i>	<i>The gift given at a wrong <u>place</u> and <u>time</u>;</i>
2	<i>apaatrebhyah cha deeyate;</i>	<i>given to persons <u>not worthy</u> of receiving it;</i>
3	<i>asatkritam avajnaatam,</i>	<i>given without proper <u>treatment</u>; with <u>disdain</u> –</i>
4	<i>tat taamasam udaahritam.</i>	<i>such a <b>gift</b> is declared to be <b>Tamasic</b>.</i>

## TABLE OF QUALITIES OF CHARITIES

SATTWIC DAANAM	RAJASIC DAANAM	TAMASIC DAANAM
<i>Verse 20</i>	<i>Verse 21</i>	<i>Verse 22</i>
<b><i>Daatavyam</i></b> – done as one’s duty	<b><i>Upakaara-Artham</i></b> – expecting in return	<b><i>Asatkritam</i></b> – without proper treatment
<b><i>An-Upakaarine</i></b> – to one who cannot reciprocate it	<b><i>Phalam Udrishya</i></b> – looking for a reward again	<b><i>Avajnaatam</i></b> – given with disdain
<b><i>Deshe</i></b> – in a fit place	<b><i>Pari Klishtam</i></b> – very reluctantly given	<b><i>Adesha</i></b> – in a wrong place
<b><i>Kaale</i></b> – at a fit time		<b><i>Akaale</i></b> – at a wrong time
<b><i>Paatre</i></b> – to a fit person		<b><i>Apaatre</i></b> – to an unfit person

Charity is one of the foremost practices upheld in the Indian tradition. Charity is ingrained in the hearts of the Hindus. In particular, the giving of food and hospitality to guests is considered to be very purifying. However, the attitude is very important.

\*\*\*\*\*



## 17.7 A PURIFICATORY MANTRA

(Verses 23-28, 6 No.)

IN THIS CONCLUDING section of the Chapter we deal with an important way in which all our Sattwic actions can be purified of any unintentional imperfections that may have crept into them. The Mantra prescribed for this purpose is ***“Om Tat Sat”***.

### AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS TOPIC

In the case of food, its perfection can be determined by checking out all the external conditions involved in its preparation. Our five senses can be the instruments to do the checking. The appearance of the food can be known easily; Every ingredient can be checked to ensure that it is fresh and in the correct measure; the cooked food can be tasted and smelt; it can be touched to check its temperature and texture. Any errors can be corrected by making a few physical adjustments.

It is not the same with the other three items – namely Yajna, Tapas and Dana. In their case, it is very difficult to trace the errors since the “errors” are in the mind of the performer. These actions depend heavily on the mental attitude and focus of attention of the performer during the action. Error in such cases will always remain an unknowable and unknown quantity.

Even if some of these shortcomings are known, they are hard to correct. We may not have the capacity to correct them, even when knowing what they are. How much more difficult will it be to correct those errors that we are unaware of!

Rectification of errors is the theme of this section. This is necessary so that the fruit of these actions may be reaped as desired. We are dealing only with Sattwic actions for which the fruit desired is Chitta Shuddhi or purity of mind. When other tangible results are renounced, they get converted into purification of the person performing the acts.

For this reason, the Rishis have in their wisdom included a powerful means by which even these “unknowable errors” may be rectified. They have proposed the method of chanting the Mantra ***“Om Tat Sat”*** to do this all-important function.

The actions we are concerned with are Sattwic. Much effort would have already gone into them for that very reason. However, the “Om Tat Sat” Mantra is a means to remove all traces of error, and render the actions as perfect as possible.

A comparison may be made to the “Om” Mantra of the Mandukya Upanishad. There, ***“Om”*** is the full Mantra; it is split into its three components, *A*, *U* and *M*. Each component representing the Gross, Subtle and Causal states of consciousness respectively. With ***“Om Tat Sat”*** a similar breakdown into three components is made. The three components are *Om*, *Tat* and *Sat*.

The **Pure Consciousness** in the Mandukya Mantra is replaced by the **Yajna** or Sacrifice in the “Om Tat Sat” Mantra. The meanings are different, but the similarity lies in the breakdown of the structure. Pure Consciousness is common to all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. In a similar way, Yajna stands for all the three types of Sattwic acts, namely, Yajna, Tapas and Dana, i.e. all acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity.

The following table compares the two Mantras:

THE MANDUKYA’S “OM”		THE GEETA’S “OM TAT SAT”	
PORTION	REPRESENTATION	PORTION	REPRESENTATION
“OM”	Brahman, the Reality or Pure Consciousness	“OM TAT SAT”	Brahman; Composition of Yajna: Actor, Knowledge & Action
A	Waking State – Gross	OM	Beginning of Yajna
U	Dream State – Subtle	TAT	Renouncing the Unreality in Yajna
M	Deep Sleep State – Causal	SAT	Asserting the Reality in Yajna

**Verse 23:** “OM TAT SAT” – the Supreme Purifier

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।

ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा

॥ १७-२३॥

ōmtatsaditi nirdēśō brahmaṇastrividhaḥ smṛtaḥ |

brāhmaṇāstēna vēdāśca yajñāśca vihitāḥ purā

|| 17-23||

1	“Om tat sat” iti nirdeshah,	“Om Tat Sat” – by this designation,
2	brahmanah trividhah smritah;	threefold in nature, is <b>Brahman</b> declared.
3	brahmanaah tena vedaah cha,	By it, were the <u>Brahmanas</u> , the <u>Vedas</u> and
4	yajnaah cha vihitaah puraa.	the <u>sacrifices</u> created in the days of yore.

This verse deals with the recitation of the whole Mantra, “Om Tat Sat”.

**1-2** “Om Tat Sat” represents Brahman, the Origin of all the three components of the composite Yajna. It conveys the full idea of Yajna, just as “Om” conveys the idea of the all-pervading Brahman or Pure Consciousness common to all three states: the causal, the subtle and the gross.

**3-4** This Mantra is chanted in all ceremonials in order to purify all the following three components of the Yajna:

i) **Brahmanaah**: the performers of the Yajna ceremony or ritual; this is the **Kartaa** or Actor or “Doer” of the Yajna. The Brahmana represents the Sattwic man. He is qualified to perform the Yajna, the purpose of which is purely Sattwic in nature.

ii) **Vedaah**: the knowledge of the Vedas is needed in order to perform the Yajna properly. this is the **Karana** or efficient cause or Source of the Yajna. Without this knowledge it is not possible to succeed in doing the Yajna to produce the desired fruit.





1	<i>tat iti anabhi-sandhaaya,</i>	Uttering “TAT” – without aiming at
2	<i>phalam yajna tapah kriyaah;</i>	the fruits, are acts of sacrifice and austerity,
3	<i>daana-kriyaah cha vividhaah,</i>	as well as various acts of charity,
4	<i>kriyante moksha-kaankshibhih.</i>	performed by the seekers of liberation.

**1-3** The second component is “**Tat**”. This part is used specifically to renounce the fruit of the action being done. Since mental purity is being sought, no thought should be directed towards the fruits. The moment our attention gets even momentarily diverted to the fruits such as heavenly pleasures, etc, then purity is lost.

The renunciation of fruits is highly praised by Sri Krishna in Chapter 12.12 where He places it on top of the list of Sadhanas. If “Om” begins the Sadhana, “Tat” ensures that it continues until “Sat” is reached.

**4** Renunciation of the fruit is a Sadhana that is a must for those who strive for liberation from the bondage of Samsara. Without it, all effort are still in the realm of Samsara, however well they may be performed. Without it, all actions will classify as Rajasic or Tamasic, and will therefore not be eligible for purification with “Om Tat Sat”.

At a deeper level, renunciation actually means renouncing the element of Unreality in the Yajna. The fruits of the Yajna cannot really be renounced. According to the Law of Karma, it is bound to come to us whether we like it or not. What is renounced is the attachment to the fruit, and not accepting what the Divine decrees as the fruit.

What is renounced is all that is ‘unreal’ in nature that tries to get connected to the Yajna. Rajas and Tamas will try their best to enter the Yajna. But they have to be renounced. They must not be given a ‘seat’ at the Yajna, for they are always carriers of Unreality into something which is supposed to be wholly Sattwic.

#### **Verse 26 & 27:**

#### ***The Third Component, “SAT”***

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।

प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते

॥ १७-२६॥

sadbhāvē sādhubhāvē ca sadyētatprayujyātē |

praśastē karmaṇi tathā sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyātē

॥ 17-26॥

1	<i>Sadbhaave saadhu-bhaave cha,</i>	In the sense of <u>Reality</u> , and sense of <u>goodness</u> ,
2	<i>sat iti etat prayujyate;</i>	is this word “ <b>SAT</b> ” used;
3	<i>prashaste karmani tathaa,</i>	so also, to render <u>auspicious</u> all kinds of acts,
4	<i>sat shabdah paartha yujyate.</i>	O Paartha, is the word “ <b>SAT</b> ” used.

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।

कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते

॥ १७-२७॥

yajñē tapasi dānē ca sthitiḥ saditi cōcyātē |

karma caiva tadarthīyaṁ sadyēvābhidhīyātē

॥ 17-27॥

5	<i>Yajne tapasi daane cha,</i>	<i>In sacrifice, in austerity and in charity –</i>
6	<i>sthitih sat iti cha uchyate;</i>	<i>steadfastness in these is called as “SAT”;</i>
7	<i>karma cha eva tad-artheeyam,</i>	<i>and all action in connection with these,</i>
8	<i>sat iti eva abhi-dheeyate.</i>	<i>is also called as “SAT”.</i>

The third component is “SAT”. This part is used to assert the Reality, the Truth or Brahman, in all the following aspects of the Yajna:

**1-2 i) *Sadbhaave*:** In its meaning as “Reality”, the purpose is to remind us at all times that the act is possible only because of the “Reality”, and that Reality is the goal to be reached by the act.

ii) ***Sadhubhaave*:** In its meaning as “goodness”, we are to do the who act with the feeling that it is going to promote goodness in some way. We can also think of the goal as being the good of all concerned with the act.

**3-4 iii) *Prashaste*:** In its meaning as “auspiciousness”, the whole act is to be done in a spirit of it adding to the auspiciousness in the world. There should be benevolence, happiness and goodwill generated by the Yajna.

**5-6 iv) *Sthitih*:** Other meanings of Sat such as “steadfastness”, remind us that Reality can only be reached if we are steadfast in the performance of the Yajna.

**7-8 v) *Tad-Artheeyam*:** “in connection with these”; this ensures that everything else connected with the action is also pleasing to the Lord, and worthy of being offered to Him.

In short, the chanting of “Sat” ensures that the Yajna glorifies the Lord; that Brahman is made the central goal and objective of the Yajna; that the performer makes spiritual progress as a result of the Yajna; and that all who participate in the Yajna will strengthen their faith in the Reality by participating in it.

#### **Verse 28:     *The Place of “ASAT”***

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।

असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह

॥ १७-२८॥

*aśraddhayā hutam dattam tapastaptam kṛtam ca yat |*

*asadityucyatē pārtha na ca tatprētya nō iha*

|| 17-28||

1	<i>Ashraddhayaa hutam dattam,</i>	<i>Without faith, if sacrifice, charity</i>
2	<i>tapah taptam kritam cha yat;</i>	<i>and austerity, of whatever kind, is done,</i>
3	<i>asat iti uchyate, Paartha,</i>	<i>it is called “ASAT”, O Partha;</i>
4	<i>na cha tat pretya na iha.</i>	<i>it helps one neither hereafter nor here!</i>

The Chapter began with Arjuna asking what is the state of one who does these three actions not knowing the scriptures.

**1-2** From that question, the whole chapter began a discussion connecting the actions of people with faith. Whatever be their faith – Sattwic, Rajasic or Tamasic – so would be the results they reap from the actions done. Faith was needed to reap any fruit.





**COLLECTION OF VARIOUS**  
**-> HINDUISM SCRIPTURES**  
**-> HINDU COMICS**  
**-> AYURVEDA**  
**-> MAGZINES**

**FIND ALL AT [HTTPS://DSC.GG/DHARMA](https://dsc.gg/dharma)**

**Made with**



**By**

**Avinash/Shashi**

**Icreator of  
hinduism  
server!**

 **KAPWING**

Hence, if there is no faith at all to begin, where is the question of bearing any fruit.

This fact gets even more pronounced in the context of this final section when we are dealing only with Sattwic acts. If even the Rajasic and Tamasic actions done with faith are not being considered here, how much less will be considered those actions done without faith!

**3** This verse states the fate of actions done without the basic faith in God. Without faith, the actions are as good as not being done at all. It is just a wasted effort. It is like something which is Asat – it does not exist at all! They are ASAT, non-existent – not worth considering.

**4** Faithless acts do not get one anywhere in this world, least of all to heaven! They help us neither here in this world, nor hereafter in the heavenly world. They are a total waste of effort.

---

## **CONCLUSION**

The right attitude, which is reflected in Sattwic Shraddha (pure faith), is the root of successful Yajna-Tapas-Dana. It is what makes one a Mukhya Adhikari – a qualified aspirant to tread the path to Self-realisation.

Spiritual life is out of sight for Tamasic minds. Neither is it a fanfare for the restless Rajasic minds. Sattwic minds alone are the ripe material that can be smelted into gold to be used to make the Lord's ornaments.

Thus, at the end of the penultimate Chapter of the Geeta, the Lord closes by virtually telling Arjuna, "Come on, Arjuna, you are meant for this path. You are a Mukhya Adhikari. Your heart is pure and sincere."

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु  
ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे  
**श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगो** नाम सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥ १७॥

ॐ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu  
brahmavidyāyāṁ yōgaśāstrē śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvādē  
śraddhātrayavibhāgayōgō nāma saptadaśo'dhyāyaḥ || 17||

---

\*\*\*\*\*

**Om Tat Sat!**

**END OF DISCOURSE 17**

**"THE YOGA OF THE THREEFOLD FAITH"**

