

GITA CLASS- CHAPTER 2, PART 3

Now we can come to our subject; the *Śaṅkara Bhāṣyā*. Here in the commentary, *Śaṅkara* is discussing the combination of *Jñāna* and *Karma*. This is a matter that should be given full attention and understood. In whatever actions which we must perform with the feeling of doer-ship, for example, 'I am beginning this action. I desire this result from this action' - wherever this mental *sankalpa* must be performed, when one has to perform such an action, can a person meditate firmly on the non-attachment of the *Ātman*?' No.

This is because these are two mutually opposing *sankalpas*. Both of these are not possible at the same time. That is what is said. It is true that person can combine together meditation on the Self and the performance of *karma*. When? It is when the knowledge of the Self isn't according to *Advaita*. However, if the meditation on the Self is in the knowledge of *Advaita*, then those kinds of *karma sankalpas* are not possible. We discussed already why *Śaṅkara* refutes this combination.

Before *Śaṅkara* presented this knowledge of *Advaita*, the common *sankalpa* of the *Ātman* was different. This was, 'All of these action are taking place in the Self. The experience of the fruit of these actions also takes place in the Self.' *Śaṅkara* agrees that a person with this kind of mental *sankalpa* can combine the performance of *karma* alongwith meditation on the Self. However, *Śaṅkara* stops there. He says, 'That understanding of the *Ātman* is not correct. The *Ātman* is eternal and free. It is neither the doer nor the enjoyer.'

When *Śaṅkara* gives the people this clear determination about the *Ātman*, then the old *sankalpas* cease to exist. This is the meaning of *Śaṅkara* refuting the combination of *Jñāna* and *Karma*. This is again next in the *bhāṣyā*,

*'Na chārjunasya praśna upapanno bhavati 'jyāyasī
chetkarmaṇaste' ityādiḥ. Edkapuruṣānuṣṭheyatvāsambhavaṁ
buddhakarmanorbhagavatā pūrvamanuktaṁ
kathamarjuno/śrutam buddheścha karmaṇo jyāyastvam*

*bhagavatyadhyāropayenmṛṣaiva jyāsaī chetakarmaṇaste matā
buddhiriti.'*

Again, Śaṅkara is explaining his philosophy: 'na cha Arjunasya praśnaḥ upapanno bhavati.' If the Lord expressed the opinion that the combination of *karma* and *jñāna* is the best course for Arjuna, Arjuna's question would have been out of place. 'Praśnah na upapanno bhavati.' His question would not have been logical. So, Arjuna is asking a question. The commentator is saying that if the Lord had said to combine *jñāna* and *karma*, then Arjuna's question wouldn't make sense.

What is Arjuna's question? It says, 'Jyāyasī chet karmaṇas te mata buddhir?' After hearing all of the Lord's instructions in the 2nd chapter, Arjuna asks Sri Krishna in the 3rd chapter, 'You are saying that *jñāna* is better than *karma*. If You feel that knowledge is superior to *karma*, then why are you encouraging me to perform this *karma*? That is what Arjuna asks in the third chapter of the Gita.

If the Lord had instructed Arjuna to combine both *Jñāna* and *karma*, Arjuna may have asked, 'Lord, why are you asking me to combine *jñāna* and *karma*?' However, that isn't how Arjuna asked the Lord. Arjuna said, 'Tatkiṁ karmaṇi ghore māmi' 'Why are you encouraging me to fight in this awful war? That's what he asked. So, to make this clearer, the Lord replies to Arjuna by explaining that he instructed these two *Niṣṭhās*, *karma* and *jñāna*, as separate from each other.

The *bhāṣyā* then says, 'Buddhikarmaṇoḥ,' the Discipline of Knowledge and the Discipline of Karma, 'eka puruṣānuṣṭheyatvāsambhavam' - both of these cannot be performed by the same person at once.' 'Bhagavatā anuktaṁ' - 'if the Lord didn't say this, then what?' Śaṅkara is imagining that the Lord didn't say that both Disciplines are separate from each other. The Lord actually did say this, but if the Lord didn't say this, 'katham arjunaḥ.' How could Arjuna ask this question? *Aśrutaṁ buddhescha karmaṇo jyāyastva Bhagavati adhyaropayet mṛṣā eva.* If the Lord didn't clearly say this, then how could Arjuna superimpose this idea in the instruction of the Lord?

It says that perhaps Arjuna didn't hear this from the Lord, '*buddheścha karmaṇoh aśrutam.*' Without hearing from the Lord that knowledge is greater than karma, how could he falsely impose this on the Lord? How could Arjuna accuse Him of saying that?

In this part of the Gita, Arjuna is telling us what the Lord has said up till that point. Arjuna says, '*Jyāyasī chet karmaṇas te mata buddhir janārdana.*' The literal meaning is, '*jñāna* is greater than *karma.*' Because the Lord had previously said this, Arjuna has given the summary of the Lord's instructions here. If the Lord hadn't said this, then Arjuna wouldn't have been able to say this.

According to Arjuna, the Lord said that knowledge is superior to action, but He is still encouraging Arjuna to engage in *karma.* '*Kim cha*', that's not all.

'Kimcha yadi buddhikarmaṇoh sarveṣāṃ samucchaya uktaḥ syādarjunasyāpi sa ukta eveti – 'yacchreya etayorekaṃ tanme brūhi suniśchitam' iti kathamanyataraviṣaya eva praśnaḥ syāt.'

That's not all. If the Lord had said that the combination of *karma* and *jñāna* is for everyone, for all kinds of *adhikāris*, then Arjuna wouldn't have asked this to Sri Krishna. What did the Lord say to Arjuna? The Lord explained the Discipline of Knowledge, and the Discipline of Karma. If the Lord had said to combine these, then why would Arjuna ask again in the 8th chapter, 'Tell me for sure which is best for me, Jñāna or karma. Tell me clearly, what should I do?' This is what Arjuna is requesting from the Lord.

If the Lord had instructed the combination of *jñāna* and *karma*, then Arjuna wouldn't have again asked in this manner, by saying, 'tell me clearly, which is better?' Therefore, these two Disciplines are separated by Arjuna's question. This shows that the Lord did not instruct the combination of *jñāna* and *karma.*

If the Lord instructed the combination of these two, how could Arjuna only ask for one of them? He says, 'choose for me either *jñāna*, or *karma.*' He is asking for only one of these. Arjuna is asking the Lord to select one of the

two Disciplines for him to follow. Because of this, we can understand that the Lord didn't instruct both together. This is made clear through an example.

***'Na hi pittapraśamārthino vaidyena madhuraṁ śitaṁ cha
bhoktavyamityadiṣṭe tayoranyatarātpittapraśamanakāraṇaṁ
brūhīti praśno bhavati.'***

A person becomes sick due to too much *pitta* element in the body. So what does he do? After understanding that his illness is caused by accumulation of *pitta*, he approaches a doctor.

The doctor advises this, '*madhuraṁ śitaṁ cha bhoktavyaṁ.*' You should eat something sweet and something cooling to solve your *pitta* imbalance.' According to *Ayurveda*, if you eat something that is sweet and something that is cool, the *pitta* element will be reduced. Here it says to combine two things. This is called *samucchayaṁ*, combination. It says that the patient should eat both a sweet food and a cold food, '*madhuraṁ śitaṁ cha.*'

After an intelligent person hears such an instruction, what will he think? 'I shouldn't just take a sweet food, and I shouldn't just take a cold food. Instead, I should eat a sweet food and and a cooling food together. He understands that he should eat both of these, because it says, '*madhuraṁ śitaṁ cha.*' The word '*cha,*' means that both things are joined together. If a person understands like this, then there is no way for what is said next. '*Tayor anyatara pitta praśamana kāraṇaṁ brūhi.*'

The doctor said to take both of these together, the sweet food and the cold food. So, how could he ask, 'Should I take the sweet food to reduce the *pitta*, or should I take the cold food?' This cannot happen. He has no right to ask such a question. This is because the doctor said, '*madhuraṁ śitaṁ cha,*' both the sweet and the cooling food. That is a combination. The doctor said to take both things together. Then, the patient says, '*tayor anyatara pitta praśamāna kāraṇaṁ brūhi.*' The sick person asks, 'which of these should I use to reduce the *pitta*? Please tell me.' In this situation, it is not possible for him ask this. '*Iti praśnāsambhavati.*' This kind of question does not happen. Why is this?

This is because *samucchayam*, or combination, means using both of the two things together. So, it is not possible for a person who has discrimination, and who has understood what was said, to ask, ‘which one of these should I use?’ Like this, if the Lord had said that he should perform both *karma yoga* and *jñāna yoga* at the same time, then there is no way of discriminative Arjuna, who has understood the Lord’s instructions, to ask, ‘which of these is better for me? Which should I practice?’ This kind of question would be impossible, yet it is there. Then another doubt is raised.

***‘Athārjunasya bhagavaduktavachanārtha
vivekānavadhāraṇanimittaḥ praśnaḥ kalpyeta, tathāpi bhagavatā
praśnānurūpaṁ deyaṁ, ‘mayā buddhikarmaṇoḥ samucchay
uktaḥ kimarthamitthaṁ tvam bhrāntosīti.’ Na tu punaḥ
prativachanamananurūpaṁ pṛṣṭādanyadeva dve niṣṭhe mayā
purā prokte iti vaktum yuktam.’***

What else can we understand? Perhaps Arjuna didn’t understand the Lord’s instructions. Even though Arjuna really did understand that the Lord had divided the two Disciplines, it supposes, ‘maybe Arjuna didn’t properly understand the Lord.’ So, we can assume for now that Arjuna asked this because of lack of one-pointedness in the meaning of the Lord’s words. Because of Arjuna’s distress of the war, and lack of presence of mind, perhaps he imagined this idea on the part of the Lord. In other words, what did the Lord really say? The opposition is trying to show that Lord actually instructed this *Samucchayam*, the combination of *Karma* and *Jñāna*.

Let us think about this. Suppose Arjuna didn’t understand the Lord’s instructions. Even though the Lord instructed the combination of *jñana* and *karma*, what did Arjuna ask? Arjuna asked the Lord, ‘Tell me which of these is best for me?’ What does *Śaṅkara* say to this idea? It says next, ‘*tathāpi.*’ *Śaṅkara* says, ‘Fine, suppose that that is what happend. If it was like that, then the Lord should have given this instruction. ‘*Mayā buddhikarmaṇoḥ*

samucchayaḥ uktaḥ.’ I told you that you should combine both *jñāna* and *karma*.’

The section that we are discussing is when Arjuna asks Krishna, ‘you must tell me for sure which is greater, *jñāna* or *karma*.’ If Arjuna had asked this because of his lack of understanding of the Lord’s instructions, then the Lord should have replied like that. However, the Lord didn’t reply like that. If this argument is true, the Lord would have to had said like this.

‘*Mayā buddhikarmaṇoḥ samucchayaḥ uktaḥ. Kimarthaṁ ithaṁ brānthosi iti.*’ The Lord should have said, ‘I instructed to you the combination of *karma* and *jñāna*.’ So why are you acting like a crazy person? You have lost your discrimination. Didn’t I tell you to combine both *karma* and *jñāna*.’ The Lord would’ve said this, supposing that He instructed the combination of *jñāna* and *karma*. However, the Lord didn’t say these words. Instead, what did the Lord say?

The words of the Lord weren’t what we said they should have been. Śaṅkara says that the Lord’s question isn’t fitting with the logic explained before. How is that? ‘*Dve nisthe mayā purā prokte*’ - ‘I have instructed 2 Paths.’ This is in the 3rd chapter. After explaining these Paths in detail in the 2nd chapter, Sri Krishna is again saying, ‘I advisea two Paths.’

So, Arjuna asks Sri Krishna, ‘which is better for me, *karma niṣṭhā* or *jñāna niṣṭhā*.’ Then, Krishna gives a clear answer. ‘*Dve Nishte.*’ I advised two *niṣṭhās* to you, Arjuna.’ The Lord didn’t say, ‘I advised to you the combination of both *niṣṭhās*. You haven’t understood me. You have misinterpreted my instructions.’ So what does this mean? This means that thinking that Arjuna didn’t understand the Lord’s instructions is not correct. Then, Śaṅkara gives more proof of his view.

‘*Nāpi smārtenaiva karmaṇā buddheḥ samucchaye ‘bhiprete vibhāgavachanādi sarvamupapannam.*’

So then what? It then says that the Lord didn’t even intend to instruct the combination of *smārta karmas* with *Ātma Jñāna*. Why is this? This is because the two *ślokas* quoted from the Gita show the separation of these two *niṣṭhās*.

These *ślokas* are, ‘*dve nisthe mayā purā prokte*’, and ‘*yacchreyaḥ etayorekaṁ tanme brūhi suniśchitaṁ.*’ These two *ślokas* mean, ‘two kinds of *niṣṭhās* were instructed by me,’ and Arjuna’s question, ‘tell me for certain which one of these is better for me?’ If the Lord’s intention were to combine *Karma* and *Jñāna*, then these *ślokas* would be incorrect.

The *Siddhānti* is saying that a single person cannot combine both the *karmas* ordained by the *śrutis* and *smṛtis* with the *tattva jñāna* that *Śaṅkara* describes. That’s not all.

‘*Kiṁcha kṣatriyasya yuddhaṁ smārtaiṁ karma svadharma iti jānatastatkiṁ karmaṇi ghore niyojayasītyupālambho ‘nupapannas tasmādgītāśāstra iṣanmātreṇāpi śrautena smārtena vā karmaṇā ‘tmajñānasya samucchayo no kenachiddarśayitum śakyaḥ.’*

That’s not all. In the 3rd chapter, Arjuna accuses the Lord. How? Arjuna says, ‘*tatkiṁ karmaṇi ghore māṁ?*’ ‘Why are you encouraging me to fight in this awful war?’ How is this war? A *kṣatriya* knows that war is a *karma* that is ordained by the *Smṛtis*, and his *svadharma*. If Arjuna knew all of this, why is he asking the lord, ‘why are you encouraging me in this *karma*?’ If the Lord had said before to combine both *jñāna* and *karma*, Arjuna couldn’t have asked, ‘why are you encouraging me to *karma*?’

In this way, the commentator completely refutes the opposing argument. Therefore, in the *Gita śāstra*, there is not even an ounce of proof to show that the Lord advises the combination of either *śrouta* or *smārta karmas* with *Ātma Jnana*. ‘*Na kenachit darśayitum.*’ Therefore, no one can show this in the *Gita*. In this way, the commentator completely refutes the previous explanation by the *Pūrva Pakṣa*.

Now, why does *Śaṅkara* spend so much time discussing these matters? First, we must remember that many *āchāryas* before *Śaṅkara* explained the *Gita* in this way. Also, the principle of the *Ātman* that these commentators revealed is not the principle of the *Ātman* that *Śaṅkara* reveals here. The knowledge of *Advaita* that is revealed in *Śaṅkara’s* commentary is not the *Ātma Tattva* that was shown in the previous commentaries.

The commentators that came before *Śaṅkara* had the principle that *Ātma Jñāna* and the performance of *Vedic karmas* should be combined. However, the principle that *Śaṅkara* found in the Gita is that these two cannot be combined. Also, this explanation of the impossibility of combining *jñāna* and *karma* helps the listener to understand the *Ātma tattva* that *Śaṅkara* had, free of all doubts. To fully grasp this as well, *Śaṅkara* explains here, ‘the combination of *karma* and *jñāna* is impossible.’ Now some other matters in the Gita are naturally revealed here.

*‘Yasya tvajñānādrāgādidoṣato vā karmaṇi pravṛttasya yajñena
dānena tapasā vā viśuddhasattvasya jñānamutpannam
paramārthatattvaviśayamekamevedam sarvaṁ brahmākarṣṇa cheti,
tasya karmaṇi karmaprayojane cha nivṛttepi lokasaṁgrahārtham
yatnapūrvam yathā pravṛttastathaiva karmaṇi pravṛttasya
yatpravṛttirūpaṁ drśyate na tatkarma
yena buddheḥ samucchayaḥ syāt.’*

We asked a question before. Here is the answer. Either due to Ignorance or the defect of emotions such as attachment, the *Jīva* performs *karma*. Notice the cause of this that is said. We normally think that we perform *karma* due to our will alone. This is also what we think about *Karma Tyāga*, the renunciation of *karma*. We think that an individual renounces *karma* out of his own will alone, but that is not so.

The performance of *karma* doesn’t depend on an intentional will alone. Then what is it? ‘*Ajñānāt.*’ It is from the ignorance within the mind. ‘*Rāgādi Doṣato Vā.*’ Either this, or due to the defect of emotions such as attachment, the *jīva* performs *karma*. This can be the manifested external attachment that we show, or the emotion of attachment and other feelings deeply impressed within the mind. This is what inspires the *jīva* to perform action.

In this way, the *jīva* performs *karma*. Then, ‘*yajñena dānena tapasā vā viśuddhasattvasya.*’ In the 18th chapter, the Lord says that these three should not renounced; *yajña*, *dāna*, *tapas*. These are sacrifice, charity, and austerity. All

of these become a cause for purity of mind. This is said in the end of the Gita, ‘*na tyajyañ*’; these should not be renounced. Who is this said to? These three *karmas* are instructed to those living according to the system of life-stages and the varṇas, and by the ordinances of the *śrutis* and *smṛtis*.

So, the *jīva* performs these *karmas*, and even though he has desire, he transforms his *karma* into *karma yoga*. ‘*Viśuddhasattvasya*.’ He gains purity of mind. Then what does he do? ‘*jñānañ utpannañ paramārthatattvaviśayañ*.’ He gains knowledge of the *paramārtha tattva*, the principle of the Supreme Truth. This means that he gains knowledge of the true nature of the *Ātma Tattva*, or *Īśvara Tattva*, the principle of the Lord.

And what is that knowledge? ‘*Ekam evedañ sarvañ brahma akartṛ cha*.’ This is the knowledge that he gains. ‘*Ekam evedañ sarvañ brahma*.’ Everything that is seen is that *Paramātman* Itself. Also, ‘*akartṛ cha*.’ He understands, ‘That is a non-doer.’

‘*Tasya karmaṇi karmaprayojane cha nivṛttopi*.’ Then what does he do? *Karma* withdraws from him at this stage. There may be external performance of *karma*, but for such a person, *karma* has ceased to exist. *Karma* can exist only where there is ego, attachment, likes, dislikes, and ignorance. In *Karma Yoga* also, these exist.

So, here what happens? *Karma* withdraws from him, because the purpose of *karma* has withdrawn. Why does *karma* withdraw? It is because the purpose of *karma* no longer exists. That was the answer given to the previous question. So once there is no more purpose of *karma*, there is no need to renounce *karma*. Instead, *karma* will withdraw by itself. In this stage, the *sādhak* has gained the perfection of the purpose of *karma*. In that state, he gains *Jñānotpatti*, the dawn of Self-Knowledge.

When that happens, there are examples such as *King Janaka* who continued to perform *karma*. The commentary says, ‘*loka saṁgrahārtham*.’ How do they perform *karma*? It is for the good of the world. For the sustenance and protection of the world, ‘*yatna pūrvam*,’ one acts with effort, like an *Ajñāni*. He isn’t an *ajñāni*, but it says, ‘like an *Ajñāni*.’ What does he do? ‘*Yathā pravṛttaḥ*.’

In the same way that an *Ajñāni* acts with effort, the *Jñāni* will also act. He performs actions in that same way, with effort and intention. For him, it says, ‘*yat pravṛttirūpaṁ dṛśyate.*’ What is seen in him is not action. Instead, it is *pravṛttirūpaṁ*, of the form of action. Here, the word ‘*rūpaṁ*’ means, ‘shadow.’ This is what is seen when he performs actions. So this word, *rūpaṁ*, is used for a particular reason. What other people see in him is not action. Instead, it is *pravṛttirūpaṁ*, the shadow of action. It cannot be called action.

Then, it says, ‘*na tat karma.*’ That is not *karma*. So, we asked about the combination of *Jñāna* and *Karma*. Here is the answer. That is not *karma*. When we use the word ‘*karma*,’ what is needed? That is a word that is used very specifically. It becomes *karma* only where there is ego, attachment, likes, dislikes, and ignorance. Desire must also be there. Only then does it become *karma*. So, that is not *karma*.

Then, the *bhāṣyā* says, ‘*yena buddheḥ samucchayaḥ syāt.*’ This means that this kind of *karma* can never be combined with *Jñāna*. Because a person lacks knowledge of the true nature of the Self, he argues that one can combine *Jñāna* and *karma*. In that way, the Pūrva Pakṣa debated and tried to prove his theory. However, we should remove the thought that the actions of a *Jñāni* are *karma*. That isn’t *karma*. That is different from *karma*. Then what is it? That is the shadow of *karma*. In other words, in the view of an *Ajñāni*, one will think that this is *karma*. He will feel that it is like *karma*, but in truth, that is not *karma*.

Therefore, it isn’t possible to have the doubt, ‘since the *Jñāni* performs actions, this must indicate the combination of *Jñāna* and *karma*.’ This action that is seen in a *jñāni* cannot be said to be *karma*, which could have been combined with *Jñāna*. One thing we must understand in particular is that in truth, one has no kind of right to question about the *karma* of a *jñāni*, because for him, there is no *karma*. Because of this, any question about *karma* has no relevance to the *jñāni*. Next, it explains more,

**‘*Yathā bhagavato vāsudevasya kṣātrakarmacheṣṭitaṁ na jñānena
samucchīyate puruṣārthasiddhaye
tadvattatphalābhisam̐dhyaham̐kārābhāvasya tulyatvādviduṣaḥ.***

*Tattavittu nāhaṁ karomīti manyate na cha
tatphalamabhisam̐dhatte.’*

‘*Yathā Bhagavato Vāsudevasya.*’ Here the commentator distinguishes between ordinary *Jñānis* and *Sri Krishna*. Why is this? It is because Krishna was an *Avatar*. *Sri Krishna* was an *Avatar* of God, so, it says, ‘*kṣatradharma cheṣṭitam̐.*’ There are *karmas* performed by the Lord in the *Mahābhārata* war and elsewhere that were inspired by the *Kṣatriya dharma*, the *rajas guṇa*. This happens out of the Lord’s own free will. We said before, ‘*Vaiśnavīm̐ Svām̐ Māyām̐ Vaśīkṛtya,*’ by controlling His own *Māyā*, *Vaiśnavī*, the Lord accepts human birth.’ Thus, the Lord out of free will accepts this *rajas guṇa* and performs *dharmas* such as the ruling of the country, protection of the people, and other *lilas*. Even though the Lord performs all of these *Lilas*, it says, ‘*na jñānena samucchīyate.*’ You cannot say that this causes the combination of *jñāna* and *karma*.

You cannot say that these *lilas* show the combination of *karma* and *Jñāna*. Why not? ‘*Puruṣārtha siddhaye.*’ This means that that *karma* isn’t aimed at the fulfillment of the aims of life. All *karmas* are aimed at the attainment of the *puruṣārthas*. The highest aim of life is *mokṣa*, Liberation. No one should think, ‘the Lord acts for attaining *Mokṣa*, like me.’ Because the Lord has no need for any of these aims of life, His actions cannot be called *karma*. So, you cannot say that *jñāna* and *karma* are combined in this example.

Why is that? It says next, ‘*tadvat tat phalābhisam̐dhi aham̐kāra abhāvasya.*’ We said before that we cannot describe the Lord’s *lilas* as *prvṛtti* (action). This is because the Lord’s actions lack attachment to the fruits of actions, and are free from ego. Therefore, ‘*tulyatvād viduṣaḥ.*’ This is the same way that actions are performed by a *jñāni*, a *Vidvān*.

What does a *jñāni* do? What is a *Jñāni*? If we have any kind of thought as to what the *Ātman* is, we may say, ‘I am an *Ātma Jnani.*’ This is not what is indicated here. Here is indicated a person who knows the Truth. A Knower of the Truth is one who has the firm determination of the true nature of the *Ātman*. For such a *jñāni*, there is no reality to the external world. He sees everything as a dream.

When a person wakes up and remembers a dream that he had, he knows that it is untrue, so he feels it to be a mere illusion. Similarly, a *Jñāni*, while viewing the external world, constantly experiences the firm knowledge, ‘this is untrue. This is like a dream.’ For such a *jñāni*, who experiences this, it says, ‘*Tattvavinnāham karomīti manyate*. What is the *jñāni*’s experience? It is, ‘*na aham karomi*.’ I do not act.’ There is no action in me.’ If there is no action, then what happens? The combination of the body, senses, and mind performs action, like in a dream. How is this? It is unreal, an illusion. So, the *jñāni* feels, ‘*aham*.’ Who am I? I am the supreme Truth. I am the supremely pure Self.’ Because of this constant experience, all outer phenomena appears like a dream. Because the *jñāni* doesn’t see that he himself is acting, this cannot be said to be *karma*.

Because of this, what happens? The *jñāni*’s mind doesn’t become attached to the fruit of that action. He doesn’t bind himself to the fruit. He doesn’t have any desire or attachment towards the fruit of the action in his mind. The *Jñāni* never becomes bound to the fruit of any action.

Therefore, one cannot consider that *karma* which is not connected to any fruit as *karma*. That is the shadow of *karma*. The *Ajñāni* superimposes this onto the *Jñāni*. That’s the meaning.

What does the *jñāni* understand? He understands, ‘this *karma* and its fruit are merely superimposed on the *Paramātman*. In the Supreme Truth, these don’t exist. Therefore, it cannot be considered that the *Jñāni* has any kind of bond with *karma*.

And what about an *ajñāni*? He superimposes *karma* onto the *Jñāni*. He does this because he is identified with *karma*. He superimposes the *karma* of the senses, body, mind, on his own Self. He is full of Ignorance and likes and dislikes. He has a *vāsana* for *karma*. Because of this, he also superimposes this onto the *jñāni*.

In the same way that the *Ajñāni* superimposes this onto his own Self from *vāsanas*, he gives this same superimposition of *karma* to the *jñāni*. He thinks that the *Jñāni* acts, while being established in Knowledge. However, we see that the commentator is explaining the level of experience of the *jñāni*, with the words, ‘*na aham karomi*.’ I do not act.’ This means that the *jñāni*

experiences, 'there is no *karma* within me.' Because of this, all actions that the *jñāni* is seen to perform are like a dream. 'Mṛṣa,' it is without any reality.

In this way, Śaṅkara explains clearly so that all doubts are fully resolved in this subject. He says, 'there is no combination of *Jñāna* and *Karma*. This doesn't happen in any way. That cannot happen in either in a *jñāni* or an *ajñāni*.' So, to again dispel any doubts about this subject, it says next,

***'Yathā cha svargādikāmārthino 'gnihotrādi
kāmasādhanānuṣṭhānāyā 'hitāgneḥ kāmya evāgnihotrādau
pravṛttasya sāmikṛte vinaṣṭe 'pi kāme tad
evāgnihotrādyanutiṣṭhato 'pi na tatkāmyamāgnihotrādi bhavati.'***

Here is another example. This is an example of Vedic karma. A person desires sons, gold, heaven, and so on. By the performance of *karmas* such as the *agnihotra*, they aim to fulfill these desires. 'Ahitāgneḥ.' At the beginning ceremony of the *yagna*, the performer of the karma makes the *sankalpa*, 'I desire this fruit. For that purpose, I am ready to perform this *Agnihotrā*, which is ordained in the *Vedas*.' This is called a *yagna dikṣa*.

What does the person do here? It says, '*kāmya eva agnihotrādau pravṛttasya*.' So, the *yagna* has been started, and is aimed at a specific desire. This is called a *kāmya karma*. So, halfway through this *yagna* that is being performed for the attainment of a desire, what happens? It says, '*Vinaṣṭopi kāme*.' From the maturing of some past merit, his desire for heaven and other things is destroyed. Even if he began the *karma* with desire, that can happen. Due to the merit from previous lives, from *sādhana* performed in past lives, at this point, his desire is destroyed. After this is destroyed, what does he do?

It is a rule that one must finish the *karma* one has begun. Take Arjuna for example. Sri Krishna gave this instruction to Arjuna. Arjuna had already begun to act in the war. He had come that far, so the Lord encouraged him to complete that. So, according to that rule, he continues to perform the *karma* that he began. Once that *karma* is performed and finished, what happens? '*Na tat kāmyam agnihotrādi bhavati*.'

One can never call this a *kāmya agnihotra*, or an *agnihotra* performed out of desire. Why is this? The desire of the performer has been destroyed. That *karma* will never give the performer its fruit. That is the meaning.

We discussed this previously. If a *Vedic karma* must give its intended result, the desire for that result must be there. That is also needed. Only if it is performed with desire for the fruit, will that *karma* give its fruit. In this case, the desire of the performer has been destroyed. Then even if this person completes the *karma*, it won't yield a fruit for him. In other words, it won't become a cause of bondage for him. He will not have to take another birth in order to experience that fruit.

From desireless *karma*, one attains *chitta śuddhi*, purification of mind. From that comes *Jñāna Niṣṭhā*. Then comes *Jñānotpatti*, the dawn of Knowledge within, and then *Mokṣa*. That is how this can happen. Then the *bhāṣyā* says,

‘Tathā cha darśayati bhagavān ‘kurvannapi’ ‘na karoti na lipyate’ iti tatra tatra. ‘Pūrvaiḥ pūrvataram kṛtam’ ‘karmāṇaiva hi saṁsiddhimāsthitā janakādayaḥ’ iti tattv pravibhajya vijñeyam.’

The Lord Himself says this in the Gita. ‘*Kurvan api.*’ This means, even though one performs actions, ‘*na lipyate,*’ *karma* doesn't bind him. He is not affected by *karma*. Why is this? Two things are indicated here. First, this indicates the condition of an *ajñani*. ‘*Kurvan api.*’ A person steps into *karma*. While performing the action, he gains understanding. He then renounces the ego and performs the *karma* as an offering to God. These things happen in a progression.

The *Ajñani* starts to perform *karma*, acts, and makes the action into *Karma Yoga*. He gains awareness, purity of mind, and then *Jñāna*. For such a person, ‘*na lipyate.*’ When he gains mental purity and *Atma Bodha*, ‘*na lipyate.*’ That *karma* doesn't bind him. Why not? This is because his desires have been destroyed. This is what happens in the case of a *Karma Yogi*. He

originally enters *karma* out of desire, ignorance, and likes and dislikes. However, the way he withdraws from *karma* is through *Ātma Bodha*, awareness of the Self. That is what is said here.

Then it says, ‘*Na karoti na lipyate.*’ What is his experience in that state? This is all said in the Gita. ‘*Na Karoti na lipyate.*’ His experience is, ‘I don’t perform *karma*. No *karma* exists in me. I am not bound by *karma*.’ *Karma*, along with the ego, *ahaṅkāra*, doesn’t exist within him. He doesn’t have to take another birth to experience the fruit of *karmas*. Then it says, ‘*iti tatra tatra.*’ The Lord repeats this principle again and again in each section of the Gita.

On the other hand, a follower of *Pūrva Mīmamsa* may bring forth this point from the Gita. ‘*Yat cha ‘pūrvaiḥ pūrvataram kṛtam’ ‘karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhiṁ āsthitāḥ janakādayaḥ’ iti.*’ It is said in the 4th chapter of the Gita. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, ‘you should perform *karma* just as those from ancient times did.’ Then, to further prove this, the *Pūrva Mīmamsaka* says, ‘*karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhiṁ āsthitāḥ janakādayaḥ.*’ *Janaka* and others attained perfection, *siddhi*, through *karma* alone. This is what is said. However, this word *siddhi*, perfection, can be interpreted in two different ways. The commentator says this next. Does this statement, ‘through *karma* alone,’ mean that one can attain *mokṣa* through *karma* performed with ignorance, ego, and likes and dislikes? No, it’s not like that.

Śaṅkara replies to this doubt. ‘*Tat tu pravibhajya vijñeyam.*’ So, this *śloka* can be interpreted in two different ways. How is that?

‘Tatkatham? Yadi tāvatpūrve janakādayastattvavido ‘pi pravṛttakarmaṇaḥ syuste lokasaṁgrahārtham guṇā guṇeṣu vartante iti jñānenaiva saṁsiddhimāsthitāḥ, karmasaṁnyāse prāpte ‘pi karmaṇā sahaiva saṁsiddhimāsthitā na karmasaṁnyāsam kṛtavanta ityetṣorthaḥ.’

What did *Janaka* and others do? In the situation that we see, where sages like *King Janaka* can be seen carrying the *karmas* and responsibilities of even a whole kingdom, it says, ‘*tattvavitopi.*’ They are *Tattvajñānis*, Knowers of the

Truth. Can that be true? Yes, you can think that. However, '*pravṛtta karmaṇaḥ.*' They are seen as performing karma, like *Ajñānis.*

What do these sages do? '*Te loka saṁgrahārtham,*' for the good of the world, through actions such as the protection and sustenance of a kingdom and so on, '*guṇā guṇeṣu vartante*' *iti jñānenaiva.*' He knows that the gunas of *Prakṛti* are acting, not the Self. This means that the senses are acting among the sense objects, while the Self is detached. All of these actions are performed by the combination of mind, body, and senses, not the Self.' '*Iti jñānenaiva.*' The *Jñāni* knows all this. Through this knowledge, '*saṁsiddhim,*' mokṣa, '*āsthitāḥ.*' Through that spiritual knowledge, they attained *mokṣa*, Liberation.

Then it says, '*karmasaṁnyāse prāpta api.*' So even though they reached the stage where they should have renounced external *karmas* such as protecting the kingdom, it says, '*karmaṇā sahaiva saṁsiddhiṁ āsthitāḥ.*' What is their *prārabdha*? It is to renounce all external *karmas* only when they leave the body. They attain *mokṣa* through this progression, and continue to perform *karmas* externally till the end of the body. '*Na karma saṁnyāsam kṛtavanta ityarthāḥ.*'

They didn't renounce *karma* externally. Because of this, however, there is not even a slight defect in their abidance in Self-knowledge. In this way, performing *karma* externally while being established in knowledge of the Supreme Truth, cannot be called *Karma Yoga*. The *Jñāni* is fully established in the Self. In the Supreme Truth, this *karma tyāga* has already happened for him. How is that? This is because ego and attachment, along with their cause, Ignorance, disappear from the *Jñāni*.

Even though *Karma Sanyassa* has already happened, he doesn't renounce *karma* externally. He acts. Why is that? It is *prārabdham* that causes this, in the case of a *Jñāni*.

Then it says something else. What is that? There can be two meanings for the word '*saṁsiddhi.*' It can either mean *mokṣa*, or *chitta śuddhi* (mental purity). What if you apply the meaning of mental purity? It says, '*atha na te tattvavidāḥ.*' If this is said to mean the *Janaka* and others were not *Tattva Jñānis*, then what?

‘*Atha na te tattvavida īśvarasamārpitena karmaṇā
sādhanabhūtena saṁsiddhiṁ sattvaśuddhiṁ jñānotpattilakṣaṇaṁ
vā
saṁsiddhimāsthitā janakādaya iti vyākhyeyam.*’

In other words, it can also be interpreted in this way. ‘*īśvara samarpitena karmaṇā.*’ This means that they performed *karma* as an offering to God, as *Karma Yoga*. Even though they enter the field of *karma* due to ignorance, they transform their *karmas* into an offering to the Lord. Then what? ‘*sādhanabhūtena.*’ Their *karma* becomes a *sādhana*. As they perform *karma* like this, ‘*saṁsiddhiṁ sattvaśuddhiṁ.*’ They gain purification of mind, *sattva śuddhi*. What is the sign of this purification of mind? Two things happen. One is when the mental impurities of ego, attachment, likes and dislikes, and ignorance are destroyed. And what is the other sign? This is called, ‘*Jñānotpatti lakṣaṇah.*’ One experiences the arising of Self-knowledge within.

Normally, the progression is *karma yoga*, *chitta śuddhi*, *Jñāna Niṣṭhā*, *Jñānotpatti*, and *Jñāna Prāpti*. Even though we divide all of these like this, we should understand that after the attainment of *chitta śuddhi*, purity of mind, then there is no need to wait for the attainment of *Jñānotpatti*, the arising of knowledge. Whenever *Chitta śuddhi* reaches its fullness, at that time this arising of inner Self-Knowledge happens. This happens at the same time.

So, the second interpretation of the word, ‘*saṁsiddhi*,’ is that it means the complete purification of mind, which is indicated by *Jñānotpatti*, the arising of Self-Knowledge. It says, in that *saṁsiddhi*, ‘*āsthitāḥ Janakādayaḥ.*’ *Janaka* and others had attained this mental purity, marked by Self-knowledge. We can also understand in this way. One way is that through *karma yoga*, they attained purity of mind which gives rise to the dawn of Self-Knowledge. Or, instead, we can understand that after the attainment of *Jñāna*, they performed *karma* as a *karma chāya*, a shadow of karma. There is nothing wrong in either interpretation.

The main principle established by the commentator is that once a person attains *Tattva Jñāna*, the knowledge of the true nature of the Self, then there can be no combination of this *Jñāna* with *Karma*. The *karmas* that a *Jiva*

performs, prompted by Ignorance and desire, do not exist in such a *Jñāni*. That is the meaning. In summary, the *karmas* seen after the attainment of *Jñāna* cannot be called as *karma*. This was explained very clearly by the commentator.

VI. Forbearance in Pain and Pleasure

In the last section, we discussed the *karma* of a *Tattvajñāni*, a knower of the Truth. We said that we cannot consider the *karma* of a *Jñāni* as *karma*. Because of that, the combination of *Jñāna* and *karma* doesn't happen.

When a person who still has ego and attachment performs actions as an offering to God, that becomes *karma yoga*. That becomes a cause for *chitta śuddhi*, purification of mind. However, a *Tattva Jñāni*, one who has realized the Supreme Truth, does not perform that kind of *karma yoga*. Next, the *bhāṣyā* says,

*‘Atha na te tattvavida īśvarasamārpitena karmaṇā sādhanabhūtena
saṁsiddhiṁ sattvaśuddhiṁ jñānotpattilakṣaṇaṁ vā
saṁsiddhimāsthita janakādaya iti vyākhyeyam.’*

There are two sides to the meaning of this *śloka*. There is a side that accepts that *Janaka* was a *Jñāni*. They say, it's enough to think that although *Janaka* and other attained *Jñāna* and reached the stage of *Karma Tyāga*, they did not renounce externally.

‘Atha na te tattvavidaḥ.’ And what if we consider that they weren't *Tattva Jñānis*? Then, it can be thought that through *karma* surrendered to the Lord, they attained *chitta śuddhi*, purity of mind.

*‘Etamevārthaṁ vakṣyati bhagavānsattvaśuddhaye karma
kurvantīti. ‘Svakarmaṇā tamabhyarchya siddhiṁ vindati
mānavaḥ’ ityuktvā siddhiṁ prāptasya cha punarjñānaniṣṭhāṁ
vakṣyati
‘siddhiṁ prāpto yathā brahma’ ityādinā.’*

‘Etam eva arthaṁ vakṣyati bhagavān ‘sattvaśuddhaye karma kurvanti’ iti.’ This is said in the 5th chapter. The Lord says that *yogis* perform *karma* for *chitta śuddhi*, purity of mind. Then, in the last chapter, the Lord says,

‘*Svakarmaṇā taṁ abhyarchya siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ.*’ ‘*Svakarmaṇā,*’ through one’s own duty, ‘*taṁ,*’ the Lord, ‘*abhyarchya,*’ having worshipped, ‘*Siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ,*’ man attains *siddhi*, purity of mind. ‘*Ityuktvā,*’ after having said this, ‘*Siddhiṁ prāptasya cha punaḥ jñānaniṣṭhāṁ vakṣyati.*’

Here, the Lord says clearly; ‘One who has gained *chitta śuddhi*, purity of mind, immediately attains *Jñāna Niṣṭhā*, the Discipline of Knowledge.’ Therefore, it says, ‘*siddhiṁ prāpto yathā brahma.*’ This is in the 18th chapter, verse 50. This means, ‘a person who attains purity of mind attains *Brahmajñāna*.’

So, these words, ‘*siddhi*’ and ‘*saṁsiddhi*,’ can be used in two different ways. In one way, this means ‘*chitta śuddhi*,’ purity of mind, and in another way, it can mean, ‘*mukti*,’ Liberation. This can be used in two ways. In this way, the commentator concludes this section.

***‘Tasmādgītāsu kevalādeva tattvajñānānmokṣaprāptirna
karmasamucchitādinī niṣhitorthaḥ. Yathā chāyamarthastathā
prakaraṇaśo vibhajya tatra tatra darśayiṣyāmaḥ.’***

Śaṅkara is concluding his philosophy here. How is *mokṣa* attained? According to *Śaṅkara*, it is from ‘*kevalāt tattvajñāna.*’ From Knowledge of the Reality alone.’ It is not from the combination of *Tattvajñāna* with *Karma*. ‘*Iti niṣchitaḥ arthaḥ.*’ This is the decisive meaning of the Gita.

‘*Yathā cha ayaṁ arthaḥ tathā prakaraṇaśaḥ vibhajya tatra tatra darśayiṣyāmaḥ.*’ I will explain this idea in each circumstance of the Gita.

***‘Tatraivaṁ dharmasamūdhachetaso mahatī śokasāgare
nimagnasyārjunasyānyatrā ‘tmajñānād
uddharaṇamapaśyanbhagavānvāsudevastato
‘rjunamuddhidhārayiṣurātmaññānāyāvātārayannāha – aśochyānityādi.’***

It says that here Arjuna is, ‘*dharmasamūdhachetaso,*’ one who is deluded as to what is *dharma*. He could not recognize or distinguish what

dharma is. Arjuna could not decide whether to fight, or to renounce everything. Why is this? It says, ‘*mithyājñānavataḥ.*’ This is because of ignorance, *mithyājñāna.*

In this way, Arjuna, who was in ignorance, ‘*mahati śoka sāgare,*’ was sinking in the great ocean of grief. Then the Lord saw that there was no other way to uplift Arjuna out of this ocean of grief, except Self-knowledge. Without seeing any other shortcut, ‘*Bhagavān Vāsudevaḥ,*’ the Lord thought, ‘I must instruct *Ātma Jñāna* to him.’

‘*Tataḥ kṛpayā.*’ So because of the Lord’s compassion for the *Jiva*, ‘*uddidhārayiṣuḥ,*’ - the Lord desired to rescue Arjuna from this sea of grief. In this way, the Lord, *Sri Krishna*, revealed this *Ātma Jñāna* to Arjuna.

What is Arjuna’s basic flaw? It is his lack of true *Ātma Bodha*, Self-knowledge. It is Ignorance. So, for revealing the true nature of the Self, ‘*avatārayan āha.*’ The Lord reveals this *Ātma Vidyā* in the Gita, starting from the next *śloka.*

We can now move on to the next part of the *bhashya*, where *Śaṅkara* commentates on the 11th verse of the 2nd chapter. From here on, *Śaṅkara* explains each *śloka* in a normal manner. Now we can look at the *bhāṣyā*, to understand the meaning.

**‘*Na śochyā aśochyā bhīṣmadroṇādayaḥ*
sadvṛttatvātparamārtharūpeṇa cha nityatvāt,
nānaśochyānanvaśocho ‘nuśochitavānasi te mriyante
mannimittamaham tairvinābhūtaḥ kiṁ kariṣyāmi
rājasukhādineti. Tvam prajñāvatām buddhimatām vādāṁścha
vachanāni cha bhāṣase.’**

Here, *Śaṅkara* shows the construction (vipatti) of the word ‘*aśochyāḥ.*’ *Na śochyāḥ aśochyāḥ.* This means, ‘those who one should not grieve for.’ Who are they?’ It says, ‘*Bhīṣma Droṇādayaḥ.*’ *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa*, and the Kauravas. They are ‘*aśochyān,*’ not to be grieved for.

Here, *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa* are pointed out specifically. What makes them ‘*asōchyān?*’ It says, ‘*sadvṛttavāt.*’ This means that they follow the ways of good people. They are suitable people, so there is no purpose in feeling sad for them. Krishna says, ‘you can feel sad for *adharmic* people, but there is no purpose for you to feel sorrowful for *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa*, who follow good conduct.’

According to worldly reasoning, there is no purpose in a person like Arjuna grieving for *Dharmic Mahātmās*. Then the commentator continues, ‘*parama svarūpeṇa cha nityatvāt.*’ And what about grieving for them when they die? The commentator says that in their true nature, in their nature as the *Ātman*, they are eternal. They are not destroyed, so there is no need for you to grieve over their death. According to worldly logic, and according the true principle of the Self, Arjuna has no reason to grieve over *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa*. This means that there is no reason to feel sad, thinking, ‘they will be destroyed.’

‘*Tān asōchyān?*’ they are not to be grieved. However, it says, ‘*anvaśochaḥ anuśochitavān asi.*’ In spite of this, you have grieved for them. You continuously grieve for them. How is that? ‘*Te mriyante man nimittam. Aham tair vinābhūtah kiṁ kariṣyāmi rājasukhādīnā?*’ *iti.*’ This is what Arjuna asks the Lord. Arjuna says, ‘*man nimittam te mriyante.*’ All of them will die because of me. I will have to kill all of them, so they will die.

‘*Taiḥ Vinābhūtah,*’ without them, ‘*aham kiṁ kariṣyāmi,*’ what will I do?, ‘*rājasukhādīnā,*’ with the pleasures of the kingdom? What will I do with enjoyments, or with life itself?’ This is what Arjuna asked the Lord.

Remembering this, the Lord says, ‘*iti tvam,*’ ‘you spoke this, didn’t you?’ ‘*Prajñāvādān prajñāvatām buddhimatām vādāmścha vachanāni cha bhāṣase.*’ This phrase, ‘*prajñāvādān,*’ is explained. In the *śloka* it says, ‘*asōchyān anvaśochas tvam prajñāvādāmścha bhāṣase.*’ When it says ‘*prajñāvādān,*’ *prajñā* means intelligence. So it says, ‘*prajñāvatām buddhimatām.*’ of wise people, ‘*vādāmścha vachanāni,*’ these words and sentences, ‘*bhāṣase,*’ you are saying.

Sri Krishna says, ‘you are speaking like an intelligent person, but at the same time, you are grieving. So, ‘*prajñāvādāmścha,*’ words of intelligent people,

'bhāṣase,' you are saying, and you are grieving. That is the meaning. This is a contradiction. This is explained next.

*Tadetanmaudhyam paṇḍityam cha viruddhamātmani
darśayasyunmatta ivetyabhiprāyah.*

*Yasmādgatāsūngataprāṇānmṛtān agatāsūnagataprāṇājjīvataścha
nānuśochanti paṇḍitā ātmajñāḥ paṇḍā 'tmaviṣayā buddhiryeṣāṃ
te hi paṇḍitāḥ 'paṇḍityam nirvidya' iti śruteḥ. Paramārthastu
nityānaśochyānanuśochasyato mūddho 'sītyabhiprāyah.'*

So, 'tat etat maudhyam paṇḍityam cha.' Maudhyam means ignorance, foolishness. Arjuna is showing ignorance, and knowledge at the same time. These are mutually opposing. Can a person have at the same time ignorance and knowledge? 'Ātmani darśayasi.' Within Arjuna, he is showing these two opposing things. Through Arjuna's words, he is showing knowledge and ignorance at the same time.

What is this like? It says, 'unmatta iva iti abhiprāyah.' Arjuna is acting like a crazy person. Only a crazy person can show these two opposing things at the same time; knowledge and ignorance. This is only possible for someone who is crazy, an unmattan. So it says, 'Unmatta iva,' like a madman, what is Arjuna doing? You are showing knowledge and lack of knowledge at the same time. 'Iti abhiprāyah.' This is the meaning.

Why is that? Why have you reached this state, where you show both knowledge and absence of knowledge at the same time, like a crazy person? 'Yasmāt gatāsūn.' Asūn' means Prāṇa, life. Gatāsūn,' means one whose prāṇa has left, a dead person. Thus, it says gataprāṇān mṛtān,' This means those who are dead, whose prāṇa has left the body. Similarly, 'agatāsūn.' 'Agata asūn.' One whose prāṇa, is not departed is agatāsūn.' This means 'agataprāṇān,' Those who still have prāṇa. Thus, it says, 'jīvitaścha.' Those who are living.

So, 'gatāsūn,' those who are dead, and 'agatāsūn,' those who are alive, for both of these, it says, na anuśochanti paṇḍitāḥ.' They do not grieve over these

two kinds of people. Who are they? ‘*Paṇḍitāḥ.*’ What is meant by the word, ‘*paṇḍitāḥ?*’ It says, ‘*ātmajñāḥ,*’ those who know the Self. That is the meaning.

How did this word, ‘*paṇḍit,*’ come to have this meaning? That is what is said next. ‘*Paṇḍā ātma viṣayā buddhiḥ yeṣāṃ te hi paṇḍitāḥ.*’ The word ‘*Paṇḍā*’ means knowledge of the Self. This is ‘*Ātma Viṣayā buddhiḥ.*’ This means *Ātma Jñāna*. This is what is called *Paṇḍā*.

The root, or *dhātu* of this word, is *paṭhi*, which means knowledge. That is how the word ‘*paṇḍā*’ is formed. This can also mean knowledge. So, a person with knowledge is a *paṇḍit*. That is the meaning of the word.

So here is given the explanation of this word (*vipatti*), ‘*Ātma Viṣayā buddhiḥ yeṣāṃ te hi paṇḍitāḥ.*’ This word is formed from the word ‘*paṇḍā,*’ knowledge. A person who possesses this knowledge is thus a *paṇḍit*. That is how this word was made.

Then what does the word ‘*paṇḍit,*’ mean? It means an *Ātma Jñāni*, a knower of the Self. This word is used in several places in the Gita. It says elsewhere, ‘*paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ.*’ The knowers of the Self see everything equally.’ Thus, in several places, this word ‘*paṇḍit*’ is used to indicate a knower of the Self.

The way the word *paṇḍit* is used today just means a person who studies the scriptures. However, in the Gita, this word is used to indicate an *Ātma Jñāni*. Why is this? The *bhāṣyā* next gives a proof of this. ‘*pāṇḍityāṃ nirvidya bālyeṇa tṛṣṭāset.*’ This is in the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. When it explains every condition of the *Jñāni*, it says, ‘*pāṇḍityāṃ,*’ that *Jñāna*, ‘*nirvidya,*’ having attained, ‘*bālyeṇa,*’ in the condition of childhood, he is situated. Like this, where the *Jñāni* is described in different ways, the *śruti* also uses this word ‘*pāṇḍityāṃ,*’ to mean *ātmā jñāna*.

So, the Lord says, ‘*na anuśochanti Paṇḍitāḥ.*’ *Paṇḍits, Ātma Jñānis*, do not grieve. For whom? They do not grieve for those who are living and those who have died. While seeing the pain of those who are living, they feel compassion and pity. Still, what is that sorrow? It is part of *saṃsāra*. This sorrow of *saṃsāra* doesn’t affect the *Tattvajñāni*.

Remembering that sorrow, the *Tattvajñāni* doesn’t himself become sorrowful. If he were to become sorrowful, how would that be? It would be the

sorrow of an *ajñāni*, an ignorant person. This kind of sorrow is caused by ego, attachment, and likes and dislikes. If the *Ātma Jñāni* were to accept that kind of sorrow, we would have to say that the *Jñāni* is subject to *Samśāra*.

That is why even though there is love and compassion within the *jñāni*, in the supreme truth, they do not grieve. Even though they externally appear to be showing sorrow, inside they aren't affected by happiness and sorrow.

'Paramārthavastu Tān Nityān Aśochyān Anuśochasi. Ato Muḍhosi ityabhiprāyaḥ.'

So, it says first, *'prajñāvādān.'* Arjuna, you are speaking as if you are wise. However, you remain ignorant. This is the same with ordinary people. One speaks like a knowledgeable person, but is ignorant. This happens when a person tries to speak with authority on subjects that he has no knowledge about. That is what Arjuna was doing.

'Paramārthavastu Tān Nityān.' What are all of these people, *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa*? They are eternal, and embodiments of the Self. Therefore, they are not to be grieved for. Krishna says, 'Arjuna, there is nothing for you to grieve about.' If you think about their true nature, there is no purpose in grieving for them. But what are you doing? *'Anuśochasi.'* You are grieving for them. *'Ataḥ Muḍhosi.'* 'Therefore, you are a fool, a *muḍhan*. You are ignorant.

'Ityabhiprāyaḥ.' That is the idea of the Lord's words.

In this way, *Śaṅkara* has commentated on the *śloka* by taking the verse word-by-word in order. Now we can take a look at the *śloka*. What is its meaning? When we read the *ślokas* in the Gita, we should understand the meaning. This is because they are written very simply. So, we can take a look at the *śloka*.

'Tvam' Aśochyān Anvaśochaḥ tvam.' Krishna says, *'tvam,'* you, *'Anvaśochaḥ,'* have grieved over, *'Aśochyān,'* those who shouldn't be grieved for. This meaning was expressed before through the *bhāṣyā*.

That's not all. *'Prajñāvādān.'* The words of *paṇḍits*, of knowledgeable people, *'bhāṣase cha,'* you are saying. *'Paṇḍitāḥ,'* knowers of the Self, *'gatāsūn,'* about those who have died, *'agatāsūn,'* and about those who are living, *'na anuśochanti,'* do not grieve.

Seeing the sorrow of others, the *Jñāni* doesn't become sorrowful. After seeing the sorrow of the *jivas* in the cycle of *Samsāra*, the *Jñāni* doesn't become sorrowful. That is what is called, '*stitha prajñā*,' Steady Wisdom. At the end of this chapter, the condition of such a '*stitha prajñān*' is further explained. This means that a person who is established in *prajñā*, wisdom is not affected at all by these sorrows. We have finished the *bhāṣyā* of the 11th śloka.