

# Understanding Karma and the Charama Shlokam

## 35

### Bhagavad Gita Collection

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 **Description:** An exploration of the types of sins (karma) and the profound teaching of Krishna's ultimate verse in the Bhagavad Gita

 **Tags:** charama-shlokam, karma, bhagavad-gita, sri-vaishnava, moksha, surrender, spirituality

Your query requests information regarding the various types of sins and the Charama Shlokam, both of which are detailed within the sources, particularly in the context of the Bhagavad Gita and Sri Vaishnava philosophy.

### Types of Sins (Papas/Karma)

In Sanskrit, Papam is understood as bad karma. The sources describe two primary types of karma that dictate an individual's experiences:

#### 1. Sanchita Karma



This refers to the accrued karma (encompassing both merit/Punya and sin/Papa) gathered over plenty of previous births. This vast collection of past actions stays in an account.

#### 2. Prarabdha Karma



This is the portion of Sanchita Karma that is selected for an individual to experience in the current birth. At the start of this birth, Brahman, acting through Brahma, takes a "handful" from the large "sack" of Sanchita Karma to be experienced.

## The Cycle of Karma

The cycle of karma operates such that an individual experiences pleasure and pain in life due to their Prarabdha. However, as the Prarabdha Karma gets exhausted, another bunch is taken from Sanchitam to fill its place, ensuring that Sanchitam is never truly depleted. Furthermore, while a person is living and experiencing Prarabdha, they are also performing new karma, which refills the Sanchitam basket, ensuring the continuation of the karma cycle (punarapi jananam punarapi maranam). Only someone who is outside of karma (uchchadinam) can release the soul from this cycle.

## Charama Shlokam

The Charama Shlokam is considered one of the three Rahasyas (secret teachings) taught in the Sri Vaishnava Sampradayam, alongside Ashtaksharam and Dvayam. These three together constitute the Rahasya Trayam. A detailed study of this subject is found in Vedanta Desika's monumental 32-chapter work, the Rahasya Traya Saram.

The Charama Shlokam is the 66th verse of the 18th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. This verse is presented by Krishna to Arjuna as a necessary step for Bhakti Yoga to succeed in the current lifetime.

## The Verse and Its Meaning

The verse is: **Sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam sharanam vraja. aham tva sarva papebhyo mokshaishyami ma shuchah.**

This verse should not be misinterpreted as instructing one to abandon all Dharma. Instead, it advises surrender (Sharanam Vraja) to succeed in one's path.

### 1. Sarva dharman parityajya

This means abandoning the worry or concern regarding the successful completion of Dharma.

## 2. Mam Ekam Sharanam Vraja ✨

This instructs the seeker to surrender unconditionally to "Me" (Mam) and "Me only" (Ekam). The speaker, Krishna, identifies this "I" (Aham) as the one who is beyond karma, born as a result of Ichha (will), and the repository of Ananta Kalyana Guna.

## 3. Aham Tva Sarva Papebhyo Mokshaishyami Ma Shuchaha ✨

This is Krishna's promise upon receiving unconditional surrender:

- **Destruction of Sins:** Krishna promises to destroy all sins (Sarva Papebhyo). Specifically, your Sanchita Karma will vanish the moment you unconditionally surrender to Krishna.
- **Experience of Prarabdha:** While Sanchita is destroyed, the Prarabdha (the karma portion allocated for this current life) must still be experienced.
- **Granting Moksha:** Since the Sanchita (the seed for future births) is gone, Krishna says, "I will give you moksha" (Mokshaishyami).
- **Ma Shuchaha:** Krishna concludes by saying, "Don't worry" (Ma Shuchaha). This implies that Arjuna was worried, and the teaching is that once unconditional surrender has been made to Paramatma, one should remain confident and should not worry (nirbharo nirbhayosmi).



### Reference

This blog post is based on notes taken from the following video: **Video Source: Watch on YouTube** For a more detailed explanation, I highly recommend watching the original video.



### Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

These articles are based on discourses by **Sri Dushyanth Sridhar**, who renders discourses in English & Tamil on Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, Vishnu Purāna, Bhagavad Gitā, Vishnu Sahasranāma, and Divya Prabanda in the upanyāsam, pravachanam, or kālakshepam style. Visit <https://desikadaya.org> for more information. These notes are presented solely for educational

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