



अद्वैत वेदान्त

advaita vedānta

Acharya Tadany

॥ भगवद् गीता ॥

... Bhagavad Gītā ...

Chapter 4

AI Summary - Class 167

For Bhagavad Gita 2, by Acharya Tadany Cargnin dos Santos  
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## Summary

### Analysis of varṇa System (Continuation)

## Introduction to varṇadharmā

Acharya Tadany's teaching explores the varṇa system as presented in the Bhagavad Gītā, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding social divisions in the Veda. The system is not merely a social construct but a multifaceted approach to understanding human society through different lenses as well as leading to societal harmony, growth and prosperity.

## The Four Main Divisions

Society is organized into four primary functional groups:

- **brāhmaṇa** - The intellectual and spiritual class
- **kṣatriya** - The warrior and administrative class
- **vaiśya** - The merchant and agricultural class
- **śūdra** - The service and labor class

## Three Perspectives on Social Classification

### 1. jāti (Birth Perspective)

This perspective views social divisions based on one's birth and parentage. A person's jāti is determined at birth and remains constant throughout their life, regardless of their later choices or circumstances.



**Key Point:** jāti is immutable, it cannot be changed during one's lifetime as it is determined by birth. (Acharya Tadany)

## 2. Karma (Profession Perspective)

The Karma perspective focuses on a person's occupation and professional activities. Unlike jāti, this classification is fluid and can change based on one's chosen profession.

### Examples of Karma Transitions:

- A person born as a brāhmaṇa (jāti) can become a kṣatriya (Karma) by entering politics or administration
- The same brāhmaṇa could become a vaiśya (Karma) by engaging in business activities
- Despite these professional changes, their birth classification (jāti) remains brāhmaṇa

**Important Distinction:** While Karma can change, jāti remains constant. A person can hold different Karma classifications throughout their life while maintaining their original jāti. (Acharya Tadany)

## 3. guṇa (Character Perspective)

The guṇa perspective transcends both birth and profession, focusing instead on a person's character traits and moral qualities. This classification applies universally across all social divisions.

Character types corresponding to the four divisions:

- **guṇa brāhmaṇa** - Person of noble character, wisdom, and self-control
- **guṇa kṣatriya** - Person with courage, leadership, and protective qualities
- **guṇa vaiśya** - Person with entrepreneurial spirit and resourcefulness
- **guṇa śūdra** - Person oriented toward service and support

# The Principle of Equality

### No Gradation in Birth

Acharya Tadany emphasizes that there is **no hierarchical ranking** based on birth (jāti). All birth classifications are equal in value and dignity. No one is superior or inferior based on the family or class they are born into.

### No Gradation in Profession

Similarly, all professions (Karma) are equally important and valuable to society. There is no inherent superiority of one profession over another. Each role serves a necessary function in the social fabric.



**Fundamental Principle:** All professions are equally important. Society requires the contribution of all four functional groups to operate harmoniously. (Acharya Tadany)

## The Hierarchy of Character

While birth and profession have no gradation, character (guṇa) does establish a clear hierarchy:

1. People of noble character (guṇa brāhmaṇa) are most respected and worthy of worship
2. Character development represents spiritual progress and proximity to self-knowledge
3. Higher character types are closer to liberation (mokṣa)
4. Society naturally respects and honors those with noble character, regardless of their birth or profession

## Character and Liberation

The relationship between character types and spiritual liberation:

Character Type	Relationship to Liberation
guṇa brāhmaṇa	Closest to self-knowledge and liberation; characterized by wisdom, self-control, and spiritual understanding. The highest level.
guṇa kṣatriya	Progressing toward liberation through duty, courage, and righteous action. Second Highest because of selfless activities.
guṇa vaiśya	Developing through ethical commerce and resource management. Third Highest because of selfish activities.
guṇa śūdra	None of the above activities. Lowest level.

## The Question of Choice

Acharya Tadany presents a crucial distinction regarding human agency in this system:

### No Choice Available

- **jāti (Birth):** Completely determined at birth, no choice involved
- **Karma (Profession):** Limited by circumstances, opportunities, and social factors

### Choice Available

- **guṇa (Character):** Fully within individual control and choice
- Everyone can choose to develop noble character regardless of birth or profession



**Central Teaching:** While we cannot choose our birth or fully control our professional circumstances, we always have the choice to develop our character. This is the path available to everyone for spiritual growth and liberation. (Acharya Tadany)

## Practical Implications

### Universal Aspiration

Everyone, regardless of their jāti or Karma, should:

- Respect and honor people of noble character (guṇa brāhmaṇa)
- Strive to develop noble character themselves
- Recognize that character development is the true path to spiritual progress
- Understand that liberation is accessible through character refinement, not through birth or profession

### Social Harmony

The system promotes social harmony by:

1. Recognizing the equal value of all births and professions
2. Establishing character as the true measure of human worth
3. Providing a clear path for everyone to achieve spiritual growth
4. Encouraging respect based on character rather than birth or occupation

## Conclusion and Future Discussion

Acharya Tadany concluded this session by posing an important question about the availability of choice within this societal structure. This question sets the stage for deeper exploration in the next class, where the practical aspects of exercising choice in character development (guṇa) will be discussed in detail.

The teaching emphasizes that while our birth and professional circumstances may be beyond our control, the development of our character remains our most fundamental freedom and responsibility. This is the essence of the Bhagavad Gītā's practical wisdom for daily life.