



## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 2: Sāṅkhya-Yoga

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## Prajñā And Mātrā: Key Essentials of a Fulfilled Life

॥ श्री ॥

The **2nd chapter** of the Bhagavad-Gītā, is **Samkhya Yoga** - The **Yoga of Knowledge**.

We begin this enlightening discourse by offering our prayers to Yogeśvara, followed by the lighting of the auspicious lamp to dispel the darkness of ignorance in our minds and illuminate it with the bright glow of knowledge and prayers to the Gurus.

May HE shower us with HIS blessings as we continue on this Divine path of learning the Gītā. Indeed, we are those fortunate beings who have been blessed by HIM and our Gurus, the recipients of the Divine Will.

Today marks 5159 years since Bhagavān first disclosed this nectar of Knowledge, the Bhagavadgītā to dispel Arjuna's dilemma and through him, the ignorance of many ordinary individuals.

There is a beautiful bhajan that illustrated Gītā jīs significance,

जाने क्या जादू भरा हुआ, भगवान तुम्हारी गीता में,  
मन चमन हमारा हरा हुआ, घनश्याम तुम्हारी गीता में,  
जाने क्या जादू भरा हुआ।।

गीता ग्रंथो से न्यारी है, श्रुति जुगति अनुभवकारी है,  
युग युग का अनुभव जुड़ा हुआ, घनश्याम तुम्हारी गीता में,  
जाने क्या जादू भरा हुआ।।

जब शोक मोह से घिर जाते, तब गीता वचन हृदय लाते,  
कल्याण खजाना भरा हुआ, श्री कृष्ण तुम्हारी गीता में,

जाने क्या जादू भरा हुआ।।

गीता संतो का जीवन है, गंगा के सम अति पावन है,  
शरणागति अमृत भरा हुआ, भगवान तुम्हारी गीता में,  
विज्ञान ज्ञान रस भरा हुआ, श्री कृष्ण तुम्हारी गीता में,  
हरी प्रेम लबालब भरा हुआ, घनश्याम तुम्हारी गीता में,  
जाने क्या जादू भरा हुआ।।

जाने क्या जादू भरा हुआ, भगवान तुम्हारी गीता में,  
मन चमन हमारा हरा हुआ, घनश्याम तुम्हारी गीता में।।

Oh! What kind of magic exists in Your Gītā, Bhagavān! where our hearts become filled with joy. It is unique in scriptures considered '*shrutis*' (that which is heard) for it contains the wisdom accumulated of several ages. It is beneficial in sorrow, sacred like the Ganga, the lifetime of Saints and has the *amrit* (nectar) of renunciation. It contains the wisdom of experience filled with the Devotion of Hari. Such is the magic of the Gītā of Bhagavān.

This auspicious occasion of Gītā Jayanti is marked by celebrations across the world. We too should make an effort to join in these celebrations, praying that our journey in this path continues forever.

Many must have noted the subtle transformation within us after our association with the Gītā. We do not get affected by adverse situations so easily, and feel happy most of the times.

The 7th verse of the 2nd chapter is very significant. It is said by several saints that the seventh Shloka has a profound impact when one recites and writes it 11 times with a sincere sense of surrender. Just as Arjuna was seeking 'Sharan' of the Divine in his moment of mental chaos and confusion; Similarly, in acquiescence before the Divine will, we can face conflicting situations in our lives by using the above remedy and thereafter, place the written shloka along with the Bhagavad-Gītā, close to our hearts, as we go to sleep. Parameśvara will definitely, in some way or the other, give us a path out of our crisis.

As seen in the previous session in the 7th shloka, we saw Arjuna seeking tutelage and guidance from Bhagavān, as he surrendered himself as a disciple, "**śhiṣhyaste 'haṁ śhādhi mām tvām prapannam**" so that he may be shown the right path and his dilemma regarding participation in this '**Dharma Yudha**' may be resolved. He wanted '**Shreyas**' and not '**Preyas**', that is, he asked Parameśvara to instruct him on what would be beneficial for him, instead of giving him what he likes.

However, the subsequent shloka reveals that his behavior is nothing short of that petulant child, who wants something or the other from his mother, promising not to demand anything more.

Young children have a unique nature. This of course gets carried over to adulthood! Small children are often known to tell their mothers, "Get me this thing just this once please, after this I will not ask for anything else ever again!". Even adults say such things, as they sincerely feel that they will not require anything else beyond what they desire at that point of time. But the moment there is even the slightest indication of obtaining the said desire; another desire pops up in their mind. The cycle continues. Later people even say, "You are Parameśvara, the Supreme. Who else should we approach for help if not you? If we don't turn to you, you will feel hurt that we didn't look up on you as our own!" People colour their pleading with such brilliant ideas.

Arjuna did the same. Just as the parents smile indulgently when faced with their child's demands,

Yogeśvara too smiled indulgently at Arjuna.

We can see this from the behaviour of Arjuna, as we continue on to the next verse; where, Arjuna has changed his gears; from asking for a path that was Shreyas, he again expressed his desired action, contradicting his own statement.

## 2.8

**na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād,  
yacchokamucchoṣaṇamindriyāṇām,  
avāpya bhūmāvasapatnamṛddhaṃ(m),  
rājyaṃ(m) surāṇāmapī cādhipatyam. 2.8**

For, even on obtaining undisputed sovereignty and an affluent kingdom on this earth and lordship over the gods, I do not see any means that can drive away the grief which is drying up my senses.

This shloka and the subsequent one, saw Arjuna shifting gears. On the one hand, he had surrendered before the Divine; on the other hand, he continued with his woes, stating that he could find no means of driving away the anguish bottled within him; as he had to face his friends, relatives and preceptors in his capacity as their opponent in the war. To know that they would not be present by the end of this war.

**He wouldn't be able to get rid of the grief that had welled up in his heart, even if he were to get the sovereignty of the celestial realms, or domination over prosperous kingdoms on earth.**

Arjuna wasn't an ordinary mortal, but an extraordinary warrior who had gone to the Svarga-loka with an intact body, and had also experienced what it was like to rule such a realm.

There is a mention in the Mahābhārata, that Arjuna had once been to Svarga-loka, after pleasing Mahadev and his father Indra. Indra's court was in progress as he reached the realm of Svarga, where he was welcomed by Indra himself. All the Devatās, Devās, Maharishis and other illustrious personalities were also present at the court at this time. Arjuna was stunned by the splendour and grandeur of the Sabha (gathering), as even the largest and most magnificent Sabha on earth was minuscule when compared to this bejewelled brilliance and glowing splendour of the celestial court of Indra.

Arjuna advanced demurely to offer his obeisances to Indra Deva. He also wondered where he could sit, as the Sabha was populated by illustrious Devatās, Maharshis and other great personalities. He even wondered, if he had the merit to be seated amongst them. While Arjuna was walking hesitantly, Indra Deva called Arjuna towards him. This stumped Arjuna! but he obeyed and offered his obeisance to Indra, the king of the Devatās; who was also his own father. He grabbed hold of Arjuna's hand and led him to his throne. Then, instructed Arjuna to sit on the throne; Arjuna was astounded! He trembled and lowered his gaze, astonished that Indra Deva had asked him to sit beside him on the throne. Here, he was all along wondering, if he even possessed the merit to be among the stalwarts present in the Sabha? Such an incident had never occurred earlier and did not occur again too....

Seeing him bewildered, Indra Deva assuaged his fears and said that Arjuna had the merit; hence, deserved to be seated beside him on the throne being His son! Being thus encouraged by Indra Deva, Arjuna obeyed him and sat beside him on his throne. On account of this incident, Arjuna knew what it

was like to be the king of the Devās. He had had the experience of sitting on the throne of Indra Deva and be honoured by all those present in the Sabha.

Thus, when he declared, that he would want none of that glory, be it of the earthly realm or the celestial kind, as it would not assuage his mental agony; his was not an empty boast, but carried weight.

We should note that Arjuna was not the only person who had revealed his grief. The Kuru King Dhṛtarāṣṭra was equally distressed. However, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's worry and grief were selfishly confined to his sons as he declared, "**māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāśchaiva**" distinguishing between his sons and pāṇḍavāś; therefore, his sorrow would be termed as '**Tāmasika**'; whereas Arjuna's torment extended to Bhīṣma, Droṇācārya and other members of the Kuru family. His grief is therefore '**Rājasika**' in nature.

## 2.9

**sañjaya uvāca**  
**evamuktva hṛṣīkeśaṃ(ñ), guḍākeśaḥ(ph) parantapa,**  
**na yotsya iti govindam, uktvā tūṣṇīm(m) babhūva ha. 2.9**

Sañjaya said:

O King, having thus spoken to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna again said to Him, " I will not fight " and became silent.

Here, Sañjaya during his narration of this scene to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, referred Arjuna as "**guḍākeśaḥ**" meaning the curly haired one or the one who has conquered his sleep; who addressed Bhagavān as **Hṛṣīkeśh** (one who has conquered all his senses), continuing from his earlier thought as described in the previous verse, declaring that **he would not fight!** After this he became silent.

This stand was in complete contradiction to his earlier resolve to seek shelter of Śrī Bhagavān and surrender completely unto HIM. Arjuna had after all, not even waited for Parameśvara to offer HIS guidance in this matter, and had gone ahead with his stubborn resolution to stay away from the battlefield! Just like a child, he had declared his intended result before he was given any guidance!

## 2.10

**tamuvāca hṛṣīkeśaḥ(ph), prahasanniva bhārata,**  
**senayorubhayormadhye, viṣīdantamidam(m) vacaḥ. 2.10**

Then, O Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as if smiling, addressed the following words to Arjuna, sorrowing in the midst of two armies.

Continuing further, Sañjaya stated that in spite of Arjuna's 'conditional' surrender, Yogeśvara maintained HIS smiling countenance as HE began speaking to the grief-stricken Arjuna, in the midst of the two opposing armies.

HE was not offended that Arjuna, despite offering himself as a student, had declared that he would not fight this war before even listening to what Bhagavān had to say! Instead, he smiled indulgently and spoke to Arjuna. The word used to denote the expression of Bhagavān is **prahasan**, meaning with slight amusement or a smiling countenance and different from happiness or joy or laughter.

HE called Arjuna by addressing him as Bhārata (belonging to the lineage of Bhārata) reminding him of his illustrious lineage.

Thus, having stationed the chariot in the middle of the battlefield between the two armies, Yogeśvara began the narration of an ancient wisdom, the eternal song of knowledge, the Bhagavadgītā that leads one to mokṣa. This is the epoch marking that momentous occasion.

## 2.11

### śrībhagavānuvāca aśocyānanvaśocastvaṃ(m), prajñāvādāṃśca bhāṣase, gatāsūnagatāsūṃśca, nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ. 2.11

Śrī Bhagavān said:

Arjuna, you grieve over those who should not be grieved for and yet speak like the learned; wise men do not sorrow over the dead or the living

The eleventh Shloka has its own special significance. Sages have gone as far as to ascribe the real beginning of the Bhagavadgītā from this shloka. In many respects, the Gītā is marked by 3 important events:

- The **first Shloka** of the first chapter beginning with Dhṛtarāṣṭra's question to Sañjaya regarding what is happening at "**dharma-kṣhetre kuru-kṣhetre**"; the battle-field of Dharma, Kurukṣetra.
- The **seventh Shloka** of the second chapter which establishes Arjuna as the surrendered disciple of Bhagavān.
- The **eleventh Shloka** of the second chapter which is the starting point for the flow of Parameśvara's commentary as imparted to Arjuna.

For any narrative to be effective, there are three factors at play: '**prasang**' or background, '**sandarbh**' or the context and setting, and '**Bhaavaarth**' or meaning plus essence of the narrative.

- Shlokas **1.1 to 2.7** revolve around the background and events which lead to the explanation of the sacred eternal song of Bhagavad-Gītā.
- Shlokas **2.8 to 2.10** describe the 'sandarbh' or the context and setting against which the philosophy of the Gītā is conveyed to Arjuna.
- The 'Bhaavarth' or the core of the Gītā starts from Shloka **11 of Chapter 2**.

Having figured out Arjuna's root cause of despair and lamentation, HE admonished Arjuna that here he was debating with the words of wisdom, (**prajñā-vādān**) thinking he was Wise, yet like an ignorant was mourning (**anvaśochaḥ**) over the trivial things, for the paṇḍitāḥ never lament (**anuśhochanti**) over the dead (**gata āsūn**) or the living (**agata asūn**), or those who were not yet dead as he feared in the 1st chapter.

Here, the term used is **paṇḍitāḥ** denoting the one who has realised Self, coming from the root **paṇḍa** (one who has the knowledge of Self).

Arjuna's grief originates from three sources:

- '**Shoka**' or grief which revolves around regret over events that occurred in the past. "Why did such a thing happen?" or, "How could I have avoided a situation?" are questions that illustrate Shoka.

- **'Moha'** or illusory attachment over worldly possessions. Worries over how to deal with problems should a difficult situation arise, reflect the mindset of those who are under the sway of 'Moha'.
- **'Bhaya'** or fear, which has its roots in the future, deals with insecurity over events that are not in our control. "What if something happens?" or, "What if I die?" are questions that mirror the thought-process of those afflicted with fear.

The purpose of elaboration on the various kinds of sorrow is to emphasize that a person who has "**Prajñā**" or wisdom is not affected by any of these sorrows. He laments not over the events gone by, frets not over the present situation and fears not what will happen in times to come.

When one reads, listens and focuses on experiences, intellectual perception develops. But, it is not necessary that the intellect develops by just reading and listening. One who has merely collected information without gaining experiential wisdom would belong to the category of the 'erudite fools'.

### **There is a small incident that illustrated this,**

Once a large construction was underway. The company was importing a large plant from Germany. A huge factory was built to accommodate and run the plant. The design and construction of the factory was assigned to a very well-known architecture company. The building was near completion when the plant was brought into the country. The plant was voluminous in size: 25 feet high, 40 feet broad and 40 feet long. It also weighed 18 tonnes. This was shifted to the factory site. When it arrived at the site the architect was aghast!

He was aware of the dimensions of the plant and had incorporated large doors to accommodate it. But he had not given any thought, as to how this humongous plant could be lowered into the cavity that had been made to accommodate the plant!! A crane was required to lift the heavy plant, but it could not go into the building. The architect was now worried and consulted people across the world, but to no avail!! Desperate! as his reputation and career was at stake, he had spent crores in his quest for the solution without any success.

In the meantime, an old labourer who had been working at the site for the past one year, approached the architect and told him that he had been observing all the proceedings and offered his help. The architect glanced over at him and scoffed at the unkempt shabby old man, telling him to stop disturbing him, as he was already hassled. But the old man persisted and even said that he wouldn't take any remuneration for the same! He further asked, if the plant could withstand water? If, the architect was to ensure that water or dampness didn't spoil the plant, he could take care of the rest...Intrigued, the architect asked him to share his idea. The old man agreed to tell him at the price of Rs.5 lakhs. Cornered, the architect with little hope of solving it himself, agreed to the deal.

The old man then disclosed that the cavity or the pit should be filled with ice and the plant should be taken into the building, on gliders and slid onto the ice. The resultant water from the melting ice could be pumped out and the plant would eventually sink down into the cavity. This ingenuity astounded the architect! he wondered why he had not thought of this brilliant, yet simple and inexpensive solution himself?

The old man explained, that while his knowledge was restricted to what the books had told him, he couldn't think anything besides them; Whereas, this solution was a common practice in their villages, whenever any heavy weight had to be lowered onto the ground!

Thus, **wisdom comes from experience; Prajñā** cannot be obtained from the mere learning of scriptures, but to put them into practice.

'**Vidura Neeti**', a treatise by Vidura, that is included in the Mahābhārata, gives an insight into the qualities of a "**prajñāvān**" or a wise person. Offering advice to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Vidura summed up the qualities of **Paṇḍit**, in 15 shlokas, and those of an ignorant in 10 shlokas. What is surprising, is that none of them find any resonance with the physical traits we assume for the term Paṇḍit. There is no mention of a Tilak or a janevu, the sacred thread or Jaati or caste. All the characteristics are associated with knowledge, intellect, proficiency and experiential knowledge (prajñā). These are the qualities of a **Paṇḍit**. Though a Brahmin could become a Paṇḍit, but it is not imperative that a Brahmin alone could become a Paṇḍit. Since the *Purohitas* of various pilgrimage sites, possess information that even we don't have, like that of our ancestors, they are called **paṇḍa**.

The futility of lamenting of something inevitable could be described by **an incident of Bhagavān Buddha**.

Once a lady ran towards Buddha carrying the lifeless body of a 10-year-old son. Buddha's disciples tried to stop her, but undeterred, she ran up to Buddha, lamenting loudly; she told him that she was sure that Buddha alone could revive her son. She warned him not to try to teach her or explain anything to her, as she was only interested in reviving her only son.

Buddha, understanding her distress, instructed her to go to 5 houses or families which had never experienced death and get a handful of mustard seeds from each of those houses. He said that he could revive her son, only if she did so. Immediately, she ran around trying to locate such families, but returned empty-handed and disheartened. Angry, she accused Buddha of fooling her; For, "it is impossible that there could ever be a household which has not experienced death!". Buddha smiled at her as it was exactly the point he was trying to drive into her; that **death being inevitable, why deny this inescapable truth?**

## 2.12

**na tvevāhaṃ(ñ) jātu nāsaṃ(n), na tvaṃ(n) neme janādhipāḥ,  
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ(s), sarve vayamataḥ(ph) param. 2.12**

In fact, there was never a time when I was not , or when you or these kings were not. Nor is it a fact that hereafter we shall all cease to be.

Bhagavān explained the nature of Self in this Verse, where HE proclaimed that their never existed a time, where HE did not exist or Arjuna didn't exist. Nor was their a time where all the people he was seeing, Rulers and all didn't exist. They all have always been present here eternally.

## 2.13

**dehino'sminyathā dehe, kaumāraṃ(m) yauvanaṃ(ñ) jarā,  
tathā dehāntaraprāptiḥ(r), dhīrastatra na muhyati. 2.13**

Just as boyhood, youth and old age are attributed to the soul through this body, even so it attains another body, The wise man does not get deluded about this.

Yogeśvara explained that the journey of the Jīvātman from one body to another at the time of death, is analogous to its journey through the stages of childhood, youth and old age.

It is the body that withers away, not the ātmā. We humans take the various stages of life to be

normal, but the ultimate stage of death to be unusual. The problem arises when we start taking the body to be the real self.

If we are taking a train from Kanpur to Mumbai, we have to pass through many stations. However, we view the stations objectively instead of identifying with them. We do not say "**I am Itarsi**" or "**I am Bhopal**". Similarly, we have to realize that throughout this journey of life, it is the state of the body that changes and not the '**Self**' or the '**I**' that resides within the body.

The mind-set that leads us to think that we are young or we are old, is fraught with erroneous thinking; because this thought process makes us identify with the body. We should realize, that the '**Self within us**' has not changed at all. The state changes, but not the individual. An individual experiences joy and sorrow in a way similar to when he was a child. The entity does not change, it's only the external form that changes. Emotions change but we experience them in the same way throughout our lives.

This dichotomy of mourning the inevitable was also mentioned in the **Mahābhārata**, in the incident of the **Yaksha Prashna** (in vana parva). Yudhiṣṭhira alludes to it in response to a question by the Yaksha, where he asked,

**किमाश्चर्यम्**

(kim Ashcharyam): What is that which is most wonderful (/most surprising)?

**Yudhiṣṭhira replied:**

अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्ति यमालयम्।

शेषाः स्थावरमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम् ।।

Day after day countless creatures go the abode of Yama (die), yet those that remain behind desire immortality. What can be more wonderful/surprising than this?

A beautiful rendition by **Kabirdas ji**, brings out this fleeting nature of life, our temporary attachments, as well as the ignorance of the grief-stricken living, that forget that they too would eventually leave this mortal body.

मन फूला फूला फिरे, जगत में कैसा नाता रे ॥

माता कहे यह पुत्र हमारा, बहन कहे बीर (भाई) मेरा,  
भाई कहे यह भुजा हमारी, नारी कहे नर मेरा,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रे, मन फूला फूला फिरे,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रे।

पेट पकड़ के माता रोवे, बांह पकड़ के भाई,  
लपट झपट के तिरिया रोवे, हंस अकेला जाए,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रे, मन फूला फूला फिरे,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रे।

जब तक जीवे माता रोवे, बहन रोवे दस मासा,  
तेरह दिन तक तिरिया रोवे, फेर करे घर वासा,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रे, मन फूला फूला फिरे,

जगत में कैसा नाता रै।

चारगजी चरगजी बनाई, चढ्यो काठ की घोड़ी,  
चारो कानी आग लगाई, फूँक दियो ज्यों होरी,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रै, मन फूला फूला फिरे,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रै।

हाड जले जस लाकड़ी रे, केश जले जस घास,  
सोना जैसी काया जल गई, कोइ न आयो पास,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रे, मन फूला फूला फिरे,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रै।

घर की तिरिया दूढन लागी, दुंडी फिरि चहु देशा,  
कहत कबीर सुनो भई साधो, छोड़ो जगत की आशा,  
जगत में कैसा नाता रे ॥  
मन फूला फूला फिरे, जगत में कैसा नाता रै।

The dead son's mother laments for her son while the sister cries out for her brother etc. each one claims or refers to the individual by different names and relations, but the person is still the same; the mother clings on to his hand crying, the brother, his sleeves. The mother cries throughout her life, sister cries for 10 months, while the wife cries for 13 days, as she has to take care of the household and her children.

After demise, he or she will be laid on a pyre irrespective of their status and will be burnt. The bones crackle in the flames and will burn like grass. Once set aflame, even the lamenting dear ones will steer clear of the flames fearing its heat.

The body that was once nurtured and pampered is consigned to and engulfed by the flames. Thus, no matter how much one considers their body to be important, it is destined to be consigned to the flames. One finds, that this pride in a body that is so temporary is the root cause of all misery.

The Jñānis (Sages) understand this journey of the **Atman** (Self) from one body to the other. In a similar manner, as one goes from birth to death; they take one body after leaving another. Thus, birth, childhood, adulthood, old age, death and rebirth is a continuous cycle.

Hence, there was no need for grief or lamentation over mere life and death, as the Jīvātman that resides in it and makes its identity, is eternal.

## 2.14

**mātrāsparsāstu kaunteya, śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkhadāḥ,  
āgamāpāyino'nityāḥ(s), tāṃstitikṣasva bhārata. 2.14**

O son of Kuntī, the contacts between the senses and their objects, which give rise to the feeling of heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc., are transitory and fleeting; therefore, Arjuna, endure them.

One of the most important verses of the Bhagavadgītā, it is a conceptual Shloka. The concept presented here is unique and one does not find a similar concept elsewhere.

We experience the world through our senses, they are:

- 5 Jñānendriyas (senses of knowledge): Śrotra (ears) Cakṣuḥ (eyes), Rasana (tongue), Tvak (skin) and Ghrāna (nose)
- 5 Karmendriyas (Senses of action): hands, legs, stomach, genitals and rectum

The Jñānendriyas helps us to perceive this material world and our place in them. This it does with its interaction with the sense-objects. The term used here is **mātrā-sparśhāḥ**, where **sparśhāḥ** is commonly considered as touch. But here, it also denotes contact. We commonly assume that touch, or contact could only be done through skin; however, here Parameśvara established that one experiences this contact through all the 5 Jñānendriyas.

#### **Example:**

- When one is subjected to loud noise, the ears hurt. This is sparśhāḥ with the help of ears. *Vani*: that is voice and *Shabda* that is words, contact the ears.
- When you stare up at the sun first thing in the morning, the eyes will start burning and watering. If we expose our eyes to extreme temperatures, they hurt.

Therefore, our eye's, ears and the other sense organs too respond to 'contact'. Thus, one can never remain without the interaction with the sense-objects. Then, if one cannot remain free from the sense-objects; how does one free ourselves from being attached to them? Since, attachment is the primary cause of grief....

Here, the important thing to notice is the term **mātrā**, which here alludes to a sense of measure. Thus, though commonly explained as, "contact of the senses with the sense-objects"; **mātrā-sparśhāḥ** could also be explained as "**having a sense of measure when experiencing sense-objects**".

#### **Example:**

Salt is essential in our food. If the quantity is less we find the food unpalatable. However, if it is in excess the food cannot be eaten. Again this measure varies from person to person. Some like salt on the higher side, while some like it less, while a few others like it in moderate quantities.

The optimal temperature for our body is between 25 to 30°C. Once, this is exceeded, we feel uncomfortable. The body remains the same, what changes are the outside conditions. This change of measure, changes our state of happiness and comfort.

Thus, **one prefers a state or a sense object, so long it doesn't exceed a certain limit**. What determines this limit? It is the one that we have decided for ourselves and habituated ourselves to.

We always want to be healthy, wealthy and happy. However, there is no permanence in this world. What rises, falls. The limit determines our state. However, even this sense of measure or limit is arbitrary. It also changes from one person to another.

#### **An incident from Ashu ji's travels illustrated this,**

Once while in Nainital, it was extremely cold. There were a few Mountain dwellers sitting in extreme cold, huddling together. Their clothing gear was very poor and not suited for such conditions. On being asked on how they manage to live in such cold conditions? they replied that they had gotten used to it. On further questioning, they revealed that when it gets unbearably cold; they disrobe themselves completely and after spending some time shivering, they wear the same clothes again

and this time, it would feel warm.

This was because when the body was exposed to extreme cold, the same scanty clothes would provide the warmth that the body needed. Here, the temperature was constant, the body was the same and the clothes were the same. What changed was the acceptable limit of tolerance.

Similarly, amongst the **Tibetans**, there is a custom of cleaning up a new born baby with the glacial water. Babies who survive this ordeal, manage to enhance their immunity. This is the reason why Tibetan Llamas can be seen wearing a thin layer of clothing even at the time of extreme winters, as they are used to the cold.

Thus, "**mātrā**" or knowing the appropriate measure or limit when experiencing sense-objects is important. Sense-objects cannot be avoided, neither are they problematic in measured quantities. However, if they exceed a certain limit, one gets attached to them.

If one saw something that they like, they will spend the whole day watching just that. If one finds listening to something soothing to their ears, they will spend the entire day with earphones stuck in their ears. If one enjoys the taste of certain foods, they will end up eating them all the time.

We desire the experiences caused by the sense-objects, which eventually lead us to misery; as the desires are never ending and one cannot get permanent happiness by obtaining material pleasures.

All our experiences are in fact, temporary and not permanent (**anityāḥ**); hence, it is important to bear them with tolerance and not to allow an increase in the limit of these sense-objects for their experiences. One should forever remain un-agitated and balanced, or equipoised in happiness and sorrow. This is also noticed, where a person who remains un-agitated in anger, is called cool headed and a person with quick anger is called hot headed.

The senses are not permanent. They are "**āgamāpāyino**" ~'they keep coming and going' and hence, must not be given any pre-dominance. "**This too shall pass**" should be our thought process.

**A story about Mulla Nasiruddin** illustrates how a change in a situation leads to changing perceptions. Where, change in the perception of measure or limit, caused due to a situation, leads to change in one's emotions and well-being.

The Mullah came across a poor person who was despondent over his poverty and aggrieved over the fact that he could not arrange a bagful of groceries for his wife. He was sitting on the roadside crying bitterly while his friend was unsuccessfully trying to console him. Mulla Nasiruddin then decided to steal the poor man's bag, that was only half full of grocery. He snatched his bag and ran, with the poor man running desperately after him.

The man thought whatever little he had, would be lost. Finally, the Mulla flung the bag at the man and hid behind a tree. On receiving the bag, the poor man felt happy as he had managed to retrieve whatever little he had got. The same bag which had caused so much distress to the poor man, now turned into a source of joy!

**The external sources of joy are impermanent by nature.** Of the hundreds of viewers watching this session, at least 90% had never thought that they would reach so far in life, in terms of financial stability; yet, they still feel incomplete. To a person having no house of his own, a one-bedroom apartment is the object of desire. For person having a small apartment, getting a bigger apartment would be the need of the hour. The list of desires are endless, and if not fulfilled, make us miserable.

Even **Tulsidas ji** wondered, what to ask as a boon from the Divine, since everything is so temporary....

"का माँगू कुछ चिर न रहि" माँगू भी क्या?"

**Thus, Happiness is relative and depends on our individual perceptions.** The entire play is really of "the sense of measure, and the wisdom, to keep the experiences of sense-objects at a certain limit; not allowing them to exceed". Not getting attached to them. This is the key for a fulfilled life.

The importance of this was illustrated in the **following incident,**

Once, a couple wanted to get their daughter married and so approached an astrologer to go through her horoscope. The astrologer refused to predict her future and asked them to leave. A little scared, the parents were anxious to know the problem, especially the mother. Finally, he said that the girl would be unhappy for one year after marriage. This saddened the mother greatly. The father, consoled his wife, that one year wasn't that long and left with her. After the couple left, his assistant asked the Pandit what was so special about that one year; since, he too saw sorrow in her chart, but nowhere was the limit set to 1 year. Pandit ji replied that by the end of the year, the girl would have gotten used to her sorrow; hence, would no longer seem like sorrow to her.

Wealth, beauty, health are all transient hence it is important to tolerate a situation. "**Titikṣhasva**", tolerance is an important quality. Happiness and sorrow depend on our perception. The problem is that one is never satisfied with what we have. When we gain something, we never question why we get it; but the moment we lose something, we start lamenting that Parameśvara was not being good to us.

**Mātrā, āgamāpāyino, Titikṣhasva, Tap;** These four qualities define the experience of a person, that is "the limit of tolerance of an individual, to bear the temporary torment" in their life; They are all relative to an individual's own capacity. A person might be in distress over a stolen cylinder, which someone else might be least bothered with.

**Ashu ji narrated an amusing incident** of his friend who was in great worry having lost Rs 5 lacs. His wife however, appeared calm and relaxed. When asked what had happened, the wife replied that the man had made a profit of Rs 10 lacs the previous day on shares, and lost Rs 5 lacs that day. Therefore, the man had actually made a profit of Rs 5 lacs. Again, it is the perception that matters. While the man is fixated on the loss of Rs 5 lacs, his wife looked at the positive aspect.

There are some who seek benefits, after only contributing a miniscule amount of their wealth; while the poor who has nothing expects nothing in return from the largesse he donates from his livelihood. Who is more worthy of HIS blessings? Again, one sees the play of Mātrā here.

Happiness is relative and transient; one cannot gain contentment by seeking sense objects. All have their own perception of happiness.

Nanakji states,

"कोट्टे चढ़के देखिया, घर घर लागि आग,  
नानक दुखिया सब संसारा, सुखिया सोई जो नाम अधारा।"

One can never remain satisfied with success. No matter how happy we might have been before, sorrow always seems larger than life. The fear of an impending sorrow is bigger than accumulated happiness.

In the 17th chapter, Bhagavān has mentioned forbearance of any experiences with delight is considered to be "**Tap**". Hence, Kunti had asked for sorrow in her life.

We conclude this session with Harinaam Sankirtan..

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Let us take a look at some of the Q&As

### **Akshay ji**

**Question:** You had mentioned in the last session that there are four kinds of Dharma, the Varna dharma and Ruchi sudharma being two of them. We like entertainment, is it then Ruchi Dharma. If not, how does one know their Ruchi-sudharma?

**Answer:** To know the distinction between Varna Dharma and Ruchi Sudharma, let us take the example of a person who is Vaishya by varna and is in some business. Here, his occupation points towards both his Varna dharma and his Ruchi Dharma. However, if the person belonging to the Vaishya varna was interested in artistic pursuits, then his ruchi-dharma would be to become an artist. Anything that is productive and gives satisfaction, would be an indicator of Ruchi-dharma. Watching TV is certainly not any sign of Ruchi Dharma.

### **Shivangi ji**

**Question:** This is a generic question regarding the use of the word 'Bhagavān'. We often use terms like Parameśvara and Paramatma to denote the Supreme, we understand that Vyas ji was very specific when he referred Shri Krishna as Bhagavān. What are the nuances between these 3 terms and why did Vyas Muni refer to the Divine only as 'Bhagavān', and not Ishvara or Parameśvara?

**Answer:** The Sanatan Dharma holds different view-points to describe the Supreme. The word 'Bhagavān' originates from the 'Bhag' element. The term Bhagavān indicates the one who possesses Bhaga—the ṣaḍguṇas, or the group of the blessed qualities like: jñāna (knowledge), aiśvarya (sovereignty), śakti (ability, potency), bala (strength), vīrya, (virility, unaffectedness) and tejas (splendour), Smṛiti (memory); dominion, might, glory, splendour, wisdom and detachment.

The word Parameśvara denotes, the One who is the Ishwar (Ruler) of all. What matters here is the 'bhaav' or feeling with which you are calling upon the Divine. For example, you could be addressed by different names depending on their relationship with you. The identity remains the same, only the feeling changes. Similarly, the words Parameśvara, Bhagavān and Paramatma point towards the same Eternal One. Vyas ji refers to the Divine as Bhagavān to show HIS mastery over the qualities of Aishwarya, Jñāna etc.

### **Mamta Nawalgaria ji**

**Question:** Can you please repeat the significance of the seventh Shloka of this chapter and the procedure to use this shloka for our benefit?

**Answer:** You have to chant this shloka and also write it down eleven times each at any time of the day, then after jotting down the shloka, place the Bhagavadgītā close to your heart. The main point to note is that the shloka should be chanted with 'shraddha' devotion and faith.

### **Suhas Deshpande ji**

**Question:** 'Learn Geeta' has changed our lives in a positive way. How do I incorporate Geeta in my life?

**Answer:** Our vivechans are meant for us to practically apply the teachings to our lives. We have offline activities for youth. We have the Geeta Maitri and in Mumbai we have almost 800 volunteers who are involved in the offline activities as part of the Geeta Maitri Ayojan.

**V.K.Rai ji**

**Question:** It is said that the Divine does not take birth. Yet, Sri Krishna has HIMSELF said that HE has taken many births and has in HIS earlier life, imparted HIS wisdom to Vivasvaan. Though there is no doubt that Sri Krishna is indeed Divine, the point of query is, can Bhagavān take a 'saakaar' or concrete birth?

**Answer:** The birth and karmas of the Divine are not at all like that of the ordinary mortals. They are 'divya' in both their births and in their karmas.



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You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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