

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 2: Sāṅkhya-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/DSt1T1oDtx8>

Eternal, Indestructible attributes of Aatma Tatva (Soul)

The Second chapter of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā is **Sāṅkhya-Yoga The Yoga of Knowledge**

The session began with the customary lighting of the lamp and prayers were offered to The Guru, Śrī Bhagavān, Ved Vyasji, Bharat Mata, Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, and Saraswati Devi. Though Geeta was recited 5000 years ago, it is equally relevant today. Science has progressed and has brought the entire world in our palm by way of mobile phones, still the human weaknesses of *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Matsarya* are prevalent in equal measure even today and Geeta provides solution to problems arising out of them in our lives.

Śrī Bhagavān gives this *Gyanamrit* (nectar of knowledge) to mankind making Arjuna the facilitator. Arjuna, after seeing Bhīṣma Pitamah, his guru, his friends, and relatives on the battlefield, was utterly depressed and was ready to abandon the idea of fighting altogether. He wholeheartedly accepted Shri Krishna as his Guru and also agreed to follow HIS instructions.

Śrī Bhagavān explains that the universe works with cooperation of both the *Jad* (matter) and *Chaitanya* (Consciousness), just as a bulb and electricity are both needed to light it. We feel this body is me or I, but this body (matter) is only a connection with our family, friends or relatives but our original self is the

ĀtmaTatva (our soul) which resides in our body. It is neither born nor dies.

If Water and Milk are mixed together and kept in front of a Raj Hansa (Swan), he will remove water and drink only milk, so also our Sants and Mahatmas (holy saints), like Dhyaneswar Maharaj, have the ability to absorb the real and reject the delusional. That is the reason why they are called Paramhans. Bhagavān wanted Arjun also to develop

Ātma-Buddhi like saints instead of *Deh-Drishti* and *Deh-Buddhi* he was displaying.

2.17

**avināśi tu tadviddhi, yena sarvamideṣa(n) tatam,
vināśamavyayasyāśya, na kaścitkartumarhati. 2.17**

Know that alone to be imperishable, which pervades this universe; for no one has power to destroy this indestructible substance.

The world can work due to the presence of the Supreme. It is like an electrical field and the entire world is present in it.

The Supreme is present in every atom of the universe. Though it is invisible, but for *Chaitanya Shakti* (Consciousness energy) the world moves around. We all are part of the Supreme and HE resides in us in the form of our Soul. It is eternal, indestructible and omnipresent.

2.18

**antavanta ime dehā, nityasyoktāḥ(ś) śarīriṇaḥ,
anāśino'prameyasya, tasmādyudhyasva bhārata. 2.18**

All these bodies pertaining to the imperishable, indefinable and eternal soul are spoken of as perishable; therefore , Arjuna, fight.

Shri Krishna addressed Arjuna as Bharat - If we split the word Bharat, Bha means knowledge, and rata means engaged in. Śrī Bhagavān wants Arjuna to understand the ultimate knowledge, thus he addressed as Bharat also as a descendent of King Bharat, and explains to him the attributes of our Soul. It is immeasurable, eternal and indestructible, only the body in which It resides is destructible. Hence 'Arjuna need not worry about killing the bodies of his elders, as he would not harm their souls' was the subtle message here, as Lord Krishna advices him To Fight.

Comparing the scientific truth and our *Vedanta* philosophy, Science would take us from the *Jad* (matter) to *Chaitanya* (Consciousness energy) but *Vedanta* indicates that the soul is the main source of energy and It takes a body (matter) for performing actions.

2.19, 2.20

**ya eṣa(m) vetti hantāraṃ, yaścainaṃ(m) manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto, nāyaṃ(m) hanti na hanyate. 2.19
na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin,
nāyaṃ(m) bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ,
ajo nityaḥ(ś) śāśvato'yaṃ(m) purāṇo,
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre. 2.20**

Both of them are ignorant, he who considers the soul to be capable of killing and he who takes it as killed; for verily the soul neither kills, nor is killed.

The soul is never born, nor it ever dies; nor does it become after being born. For, it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and primeval; even though the body is slain, the soul is not.

Attachment to body makes one feel that physical death is death to the Ātman also. Those who think that the soul can kill and the one who thinks that the soul can be killed are both delusional. The soul neither kills nor can it be killed. It is immortal.

Bhagavān describes the eternal nature of the soul It is not born when the body is born; nor does it die when the body dies; nor having once existed, does it ever cease to be. The soul is without birth, eternal, immortal, and ageless. It is ever same and ancient.

Here a great analogy given by Sant Dnyāneshwar was quoted:

When a pot is full of water, one can see the reflection of the sun but if the pot is emptied no longer the reflection is seen. this doesn't mean the Sun ceases to exist.

Another example explained the Tatva further. A Space is occupied in the pitcher because of its shape. But on breaking what happens is the space merges with the external space. Similarly the Ātman Tatva merges in the Paramātmā Tatva on the death of the body.

2.21

**vedāvināśinaṃ(n) nityaṃ(m), ya enamajamavyayam,
kathaṃ(m) sa puruṣaḥ(ph) pārtha, kaṃ(ñ) ghātayati hanti kam. 2.21**

Arjuna, the man who knows this soul to be imperishable, eternal and free from birth and decay-how and whom will he cause to be killed, how and whom will he kill ?

Bhagavān describes to Parth now that having understood the Ātman is the real self and it is indestructible, free from birth and death, if he killed his elders physically, he would not be causing the death of their Soul or killing It.

Arjuna's thinking is clouded by moha (attachment). Bhagavān is trying to uplift the spirits of a despondent Arjuna and shift his focus from *Deh-Buddhi* to *Ātman-Buddhi*. He wants Arjuna to wage this righteous war without any sense of doer-ship.

2.22

**vāsāṃsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya,
navāni gṛhṇāti naro'parāṇi,
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇā-
nyanyāni saṃyāti navāni dehī. 2.22**

As a man shedding worn-out garments, takes other new ones, likewise, the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others that are new.

In this all important Shloka, Shri Krishna describes physical death as a natural occurrence. Just as a person casts off old and worn-out garments and wears new ones, likewise, at the time of death, the soul casts its worn-out body and enters a new one. Body is the instrument to do *Karma* (actions) for attaining liberation, but when an old body can no longer serve this purpose, *Jīvātma* would discard it and would take a new one to continue the journey.

2.23

**nainaṃ(ñ) chindanti śastrāṇi, nainaṃ(n) dahati pāVākaḥ,
na cainaṃ(ñ) kledayantyāpo, na śoṣayati mārutaḥ. 2.23**

Weapon can not cut it nor can fire burn it; water cannot wet it nor can wind dry it.

The soul cannot be contacted by any material object. Weapons cannot destroy it, nor can fire burn it. Neither the water can wet it, nor the wind can dry it. This verse has a deep impression on our thinking.

Many revolutionaries and freedom fighters went to gallows chanting this powerful verse, declaring to their oppressors, that you can kill our body but cannot destroy our soul.

2.24, 2.25

**acchedyo'ya madāhyo'yam, akledyo'śoṣya eva ca,
nityaḥ(s) sarvagataḥ(s) sthāṇur, acalo'yaṃ(m) sanātanaḥ. 2.24
avyakto'yama cintyo'yam, avikāryo'yamucyate,
tasmādevaṃ(m) viditvainaṃ(n) nānuśocitumarhasi. 2.25**

For this soul is incapable of being cut, or burnt by fire; nor can it be desolved by water and is undriable by air as well; This soul is eternal, all-pervading, immovable, constant and everlasting. This soul is unmanifest; it is incomprehensible and it is spoken of as immutable. Therefore, knowing it as such , you should not grieve.

Shri Krishna describes the soul as unbreakable and incombustible; it can neither be dampened nor dried. It is everlasting, all pervading, unalterable, immutable, and primordial. The soul cannot change its form regardless of any action performed on it. It is unlike material objects such as milk which can be processed into curd or curd becomes butter, from butter you can derive Ghee. But once it is changed to Ghee, the change is irreversible, the ghee can not go back to milk. It is formless so you can not see it or describe it. The body passes through six kinds of modifications:

- to be born
- to exist
- to grow
- to change
- to decay
- to parish

but the Ātman remains unaffected by these changes.

Here importance of Bhakti or devotional practices were emphasized to reduce the intensity of the degeneration of our body. Goswami Tulsidas in Ram Charit Manas sings the couplet, requesting Lord Rama to stay in his heart to remove disorders like,

**इति वदति तुलसीदास शंकर-शेष-मुनि-मन-रंजनम् ।
मम् हृदय कुंज निवास कुरु कामादी खल दल गंजनम् ॥5**

Even Jagadguru Ādi Śankarācārya propounded the theory of Advaita and gave this Nirvan Suktam wherein he says that he is none other than Shiva. He asks us to reach the ultimate wherein dwells The Divine.

**na mṛtyurna śaṅkā na me jātibhedah pitā naiva me naiva mātā na janmaḥ □
na bandhurna mitraṁ gururnaiva śiṣyaṁ cidānandarūpaḥ śivo'ham śivo'ham □**

(I have no fear of death, no caste or creed, I have no father, no mother, for I was never born, I am not a relative, nor a friend, nor a teacher nor a student, I am the form of consciousness and bliss, I am the eternal Shiva.)

2.26, 2.27

**atha cainaṁ(n) nityajātaṁ(n), nityaṁ(m) vā manyase mṛtam,
tathāpi tvaṁ(m) mahābāho, naivaṁ śocitumarhasi. 2.26
jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ(r), dhruvaṁ(ñ) janma mṛtasya ca,
tasmādaparihārye'rthe, na tvaṁ(m) śocitumarhasi. 2.27**

And, Arjuna, if you should suppose this soul to be subject to constant birth and death, even then you should not grieve like this.

For, in that case death is certain for the born, and rebirth is inevitable for the dead. You should not, therefor, grieve over the inevitable.

The Gītā is chanted when someone dies in a family to reiterate the fact that the soul of the departed, is not destroyed, it is the body that is destroyed but it has life lessons and should be read and put in practice by people, just like the motto of Geeta Parivar "Geeta Padhe, Padhaye, Jeevan Mein Laye."

Shri Krishna explains to Arjuna that even if you feel that the Ātman is born and dies with each body, you need not grieve like this. Death is a certainty for one who is born and so is rebirth for one who has died. This is the law of nature and inevitable. Waves of the ocean come to the shore and get merged with the ocean again in the same manner upon the death of the body the Jīvātma merges with Paramatma.

Śrī Bhagavān thus tries to divert Arjun from his grief and depression to Ātma Tatva Bodh.

Swami Chinmayananda has said that the world doesn't disappear for Saints but it just changes its meaning. Just as the sun neither rises nor sets but earth's rotation around itself creates illusion of day and night so also birth and death are unreal.

Once a Guru was explaining the characteristics of the Soul to his *Shishyas*, when a passer by heard him saying that the Soul is undefined and immortal, he immediately challenged the Guru to not make statements which could not be proved. The passer by had a book written in Urdu, the Guru asked the title of the book, and he gave the title but the Guru was not ready to accept that the book had a title, saying he felt that the feet of the crow were colored with ink and he had walked on that book. The passer by said as the Guru did not know to read the Urdu script he interpreted it as the crows footprints. Therein, the Guru pointed out to that passer by the same principle applied to Indestructible Ātman also. One needs to learn and understand to interpret the Language of Ātman.

2.28

avyaktādīni bhūtāni, vyaktamadhyāni bhārata, avyaktanidhanānyeva, tatra kā paridevanā. 2.28

Arjuna, before birth beings are not manifest to our human senses; on death they return to the unmanifest again. They are manifest only in the interim between birth and death. What occasion, then, for lamentation?

Shri Krishna addresses Arjuna as Bharat and explains that all human beings are unmanifest before birth, manifest during their life, and again unmanifest on death, so there is no need to grieve.

For example, the World Wide Web (www) can connect us to the world whenever we have an iPad, mobile, or laptop and wi-fi connection but when we switch off the instrument, the web too disappears. But it does cease to exist.

Another instance was given about Ganga water which starts from mountains, which is visible in the middle but on getting merged with an ocean cannot be seen as a separate identity.

2.29

āścaryavatpaśyati kaścidenam, āścaryavadvadati tathaiva cānyaḥ, āścaryavaccainamanyaḥ(ś) śrṇoti, śrutvā'pyenaṃ(m) veda na caiva kaścit. 2.29

Hardly any great soul perceives this soul as marvellous, scarce another great soul likewise speaks thereof as marvellous, and scarce another worthy one hears of it as marvellous, while there are some who know it not even on hearing of it.

People react in different ways after knowing this Atmatavva. 1. Some are simply amazed. Actually our physical body is amazing, all the systems, their universal nature; it is all amazing in itself. 2. Some other people want to talk about this. Once they get this knowledge they cannot keep it to themselves. 3. The 3rd type keep listening to this truth over and over again from their Guru and Saints and the 4th ones after listening once do not want to understand or listen to it again, and want to continue to live in the state limited by body consciousness.

Shri Krishna describes that some people see the soul as amazing, some describe it as amazing, and some hear of the soul as amazing. While others, even on hearing cannot understand it at all. Involving all senses is necessary for recognizing the soul and its importance, but in this world all can not do that.

2.30

dehī nityamavadhyo'yaṃ(n), dehe sarvasya bhārata, tasmātsarvāṇi bhūtāni, na tvaṃ(m) śocitumarhasi. 2.30

Arjuna, this soul dwelling in the bodies of all, can never be slain; therefore , you should not mourn for any one.

This soul dwelling in the body, is eternal and indestructible so Arjuna , you do not despair and mourn for any one, living or dead. This minute consciousness energy can not be destroyed.

2.31

svadharmamapi cāvekṣya, na vikampitumarhasi, dharmyāddhi yuddhācchreyo'nyat, kṣatriyasya na vidyate. 2.31

Besides, considering your own duty too, you should not waver, for there is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war.

Śrī Bhagavān uses HIS 3rd tactic and reminds Arjuna about his swadharma/ own duty. This is the first time that HE has used the word, swadharma in this text. A person may need to perform several duties at a time. For example, a woman has different roles and has to perform a mother's duty, a wife's duty, a daughters and an employee's duty. One must keep all of them in mind and not waver from the correct path. A soldier cannot suddenly change his mind not defend his country when he gets posted at the border. A jallad (executioner) does not incur any sin when he carries out the execution orders.

Śrī Bhagavān uses various ways to change Arjuna's mind about the war. Now he reminds Arjuna about his duty as a warrior. He explains to Arjuna that as he is a great warrior and it did not befit him to behave like a scared soldier. For a warrior, nothing more auspicious than a war fought to protect *Dharma*.

Śrī Bhagavān says when the conches are already blown and Arjun decides not to fight, it would be *Adharama* (not a right thing to do).

2.32

yadṛcchayā copapannaṃ(m), svargadvārāmapāvṛtam, sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ(ph) pārtha, labhante yuddhamiḍṛśam. 2.32

Arjuna, fortunate are the Kṣatriyās who get such an unsolicited opportunity for war, which is an open gateway to heaven.

Now Shri Krishna reminds Arjuna of his duty.

Ignorant people would comment at times that Geeta promotes wars / fights but this is an untruth because Shri Krishna tried to avoid the war and went to Duryodhan as an emissary and asked for 5 villages on behalf of Pandavas but Duryodhan refused to give even an inch of land to the Pandavas. The Kauravas and Duryodhan had already usurped the kingdom of Pandavas so to take it back was the duty of Arjuna. Shri Krishna explains to Arjuna that he should be happy to get such opportunities

to defend righteousness against Kauravas unsought. The discharge of his duty would be rewarded as a virtuous act in this life and the next.

2.33

**atha cettvamimaṃ(n) dharmyaṃ(m), saṅgrāmaṃ(n) na kariṣyasi,
tataḥ(s) svadharmāṃ(ñ) kīrtiṃ(ñ) ca, hitvā pāpamavāpsyasi. 2.33**

Now, if you refuse to fight this righteous war, then, shirking your duty and losing your reputation, you will incur sin.

Once again Śrī Bhagavān changes his gears and becomes practical and used this strategy to convince Arjuna.

Bhagavān says that if he refuses to fight this war, abandoning his duty and reputation he would incur sin. The effort was made to stop the war and Arjun was not the aggressor. But if challenged for a war and he refuses to fight then he would incur sin and would face loss of his reputation. Instead Arjun should consider as an opportunity as he was fighting for protecting *Dharam*.

2.34

**akīrtiṃ(ñ) cāpi bhūtāni, kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām,
saṃbhāvitasya cākīrtiḥ(r), maraṇādatiricyate. 2.34**

Nay, people will also pour undying infamy on you; and infamy brought on a man enjoying popular esteem is worse than death.

Bhagavān says that people would speak of him as a coward and a deserter. Dishonor is worse than death for a respectable person.

Bhagavān cautions that if Arjun retracts from war; citing love and humanity, instead of praising him people would say that he left the battlefield out of fear. The world will speak ill of him. His coming generations will call him a coward warrior who ran away from the battlefield and such infamy would be intolerable for him.

2.35

**bhayādraṇāduparataṃ(m), maṃsyante tvāṃ(m) mahārathāḥ,
yeṣāṃ(ñ) ca tvaṃ bahumato, bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam. 2.35**

And the warrior-chiefs who thought highly of you, will now despise you, thinking that it was fear which drove you away from battle.

Here, Bhagavān says Arjuna's army looks up to him as they consider him as the best warrior for this war and respect him for his prowess, but would now start doubting his strength. They would feel he

left the war out of fear. People would use unbecoming language to criticize his decision not to fight. He is a role model for many and they want to be like him, they will treat him with disdain or belittle him.

2.36

**avācyavādāṃśca bahūn, vadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ,
nindantastava sāmartyaṃ(n), tato duḥkhataraṃ(n) nu kim. 2.36**

And your enemies, disparaging your might, will speak many unbecoming words; what can be more distressing than this?

Bhagavān further says Arjuna's enemies will not allow him to flee. They will corner him from all sides and would kill him or would speak unspeakable words. They will consider him to be a coward and will think that he fled from the battlefield out of fear, and thus history will record him as a warrior who got scared in the battle field.

2.37

**hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṃ(ñ), jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm,
tasmāduttiṣṭha kaunteya, yuddhāya kṛtaniścayaḥ. 2.37**

Die, and you will win heaven; conquer, and you enjoy sovereignty of the earth; therefore, stand up, Arjuna, determined to fight.

Shri Krishna tells to Arjuna that if he decides to fight, he will be presented with Win - Win situations

- if becomes victorious, a kingdom on Earth would await him, and
- if he was forced to lay down his life while discharging his duty, he would go to the celestial abodes.

Thus Arjuna was inspired by Bhagavān to make a decision to fight. As a Guru and mentor when Arjuna was depressed, HE has shown him the way out of the difficult situation and filled him with self confidence.

2.38

**sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā, lābhālābhau jayājayau,
tato yuddhāya yujyasva, naivaṃ(m) pāpamavāpsyasi. 2.38**

Treating alike victory and defeat, gain and loss, pleasure and pain, get ready for the battle; fighting thus you will not incur sin.

It is the way of the world to treat gain and victory with pleasure and loss and defeat with pain. Shri Krishna talked of equanimity and motivated Arjuna to fight for the sake of duty, treating alike happiness and distress, loss and gain, victory and defeat. He was encouraged to fulfill his duty so as not to incur a sin.

Arjuna was predicting the consequences of war before the war and was getting agitated. So it is not advisable to think about the results while performing actions.

For example: A student who focuses more on the result, would forget what to write in exam.

The beautiful vivechan concluded with the prayer of The Guru.



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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.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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