

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 3: Karma-Yoga

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Attain the Supreme by Performing one's Inherent Duties without Attachment

The third chapter of the Śrīmadbhagavadgītā is Karma-Yoga - The Yoga of Action.

The discourse started with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, invoking the blessing of Śrī Bhagavān followed by prayers at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān and all the spiritual masters with salutations to GuruDev. The session started by setting a context to the day's session, through a glance at the previous sessions.

Arjuna was distressed in the War field. An attempt was made by Śrī Bhagavān to guide and elevate Arjuna's spirits by expounding the Bhagavadgītā.

Bhagavadgītā has been communicated by Bhagavān for the welfare of mankind, through Arjuna using him as an instrument. It is for all those who wish to read, understand, and apply the principles of Gītā in life.

It can be considered that Arjuna, representing us, asked Śrī Bhagavān different questions. And HE gave the holistic "Jnana" (wisdom) in the form of answers, in a tiny book of Bhagavadgītā. It is like filling an ocean in a small pot (*Gaagar mei Saagar*).

As per our practice, the core of wisdom was told to Arjuna by Śrī Bhagavān, and he counselled comprehensively on what needs to be done to achieve the same in the remaining chapters. Hence, the primary principles or wisdom have been detailed by Śrī Paramātmā in the 2nd chapter wherein, the significance of Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga were mentioned by HIM.

Upon hearing about Jnana Yoga, Arjuna was perplexed and found himself wondering if Jnana Yoga was considered superior to Karma Yoga as per Śrī Paramātmā, why he was being convinced by HIM to fight the horrific war, while Arjuna himself, desired to pursue the path of Jnana. So he asked HIM,

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ 1॥

Arjun said: O Keshava, if You consider knowledge superior to action, then why do You ask me to wage this terrible war? My intellect is bewildered by Your ambiguous advice. Please tell me decisively the one path by which I may attain the highest good.

In response to Arjuna's question, Śrī Paramātmā said that both these paths have been suggested by HIM only. Based on the person's ability and nature, a suitable path must be chosen by the person. Both paths lead to the same destination of achieving the ultimate realization, which is naiṣhkarmyaṁ *Siddhi* (freedom from karmic reactions).

ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ 3॥

the path of knowledge, for those inclined toward contemplation, and the path of work for those inclined toward action.

It was also stated by Śrī Bhagavān that without performing Karma, ultimate realization cannot be attained. While discussing the significance of Karma Yoga, it was mentioned that a person cannot remain still even for a moment without engaging in Karma.

न कर्मणामनारम्भात्त्रैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्रुते ।
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ 4॥

One cannot achieve freedom from karmic reactions by merely abstaining from work, nor can one attain perfection of knowledge by mere physical renunciation.

Can one be alive without breathing and eating? Even for sustaining oneself, action has to be performed. When this is the situation, why should one not do our Vihitta Karma, the karma that is one's duty?

Śrī Paramātmā with the intention to enlarge one's perspective towards HIS creation said,

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ 10॥

In the beginning of creation, Brahmā created humankind along with duties, and told mankind to prosper in the performance of these *yajñas* (sacrifices), which will help achieve whatever one wishes to achieve.

The word Yajña is favoured by Śrī Paramātmā. The explanation of the word Yajña was beautifully provided by Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji. He said our duty, known as *Kartavya Karma*, is called Yajña. This is referred to as our *Nitya Yajña* our everyday duty that must be performed. It was stated that by performing our duties, we can attain great heights. Both material and spiritual progress can be achieved through the performance of our duties.

All the elements of nature are integral parts of the system of HIS creation. All the parts of the system naturally draw from and give back to the whole. Hence collaboration and the fulfilment of functions by all beings are necessary for the functioning of creation. Within this framework, there exist not just material things, but also gods and goddesses. For example, Varun Dev (god of water), Agni Dev, Vayu Dev etc.. We revere the Himalayas, Maa Ganga, sacred plants and trees as they all are HIS creation. They are not merely material entities for us. HE advised

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ 11॥

By your sacrifices, the celestial gods will be pleased, and by cooperation between humans and the celestial gods, great prosperity will reign for all.

When we diligently carry out our duties, the gods and goddesses also experience happiness. Our duties include tasks such as protecting plants, water bodies etc . The world relies on each one performing duties for its smooth functioning. As a result of everyone fulfilling their responsibilities, people are blessed with opportunities to live a life of their choice. So one must have the feeling of gratitude for all, as whatever one is blessed with, is because of all. So from where one has gained one should also contribute.

इष्टान्भोगान्हे वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ 12॥

The heavenly gods, being satisfied by the performance of sacrifice or duties, will grant one all the desired necessities of life.

However, HE said that those who enjoy what is given to them, without making offerings in return, are like thieves. For eg. Parents take care of children and when children grow up it is their duty to take care of their old parents. If they do not perform their duties and live only for themselves they are considered thieves.

3.13

**yajñasīṣṭāśinaḥ(s) santo, mucyante sarvākilbiṣaiḥ,
bhuñjate te tvaghaṃ(m) pāpā, ye pacantyātmakāraṇāt. 3.13**

The virtuous who partake of what is left over after sacrifice, are absolved of all sins. Those sinful ones who cook for the sake of nourishing their bodies alone, partake of sin only.

Bhagavān said those who live for themselves and are of the attitude that they will enjoy what they have earned, are self-centred. Such sinful people will consume nothing other than sin. However, the ones who prioritise doing their duty before they indulge in anything else will be redeemed of all sins.

- **yajña-sīṣṭa**—of the remnants of food of sacrifice; Here one needs to take into account food does not refer only to eat something but also includes the smell, sound, touch etc. are consumptions by the sense organs.
- **bhuñjate**—eat, consume
- **sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ**—from all sins;
- **mucyante**—they are freed;

By such an exchange, one who, according to one's nature, disposes of the wealth in the form of sacrifices in the form of prescribed karma and social work with disinterested wisdom, enjoys what remains with the family, is freed from the scourge of sins. Therefore, whatever you get by practicing self-righteousness, give it to others and enjoy it with satisfaction. Yajna is not a one-way act of giving, but a two-way act of exchange in which ida means receiving and pravan means giving.

In our culture having food is also considered as a yajña through this composition by Swami Samarth

Ramdas ji a great saint from Maharashtra.

वदनी कवळ घेता नाम घ्या श्रीहरीचे।
सहज हवन होते नाम घेता फुकाचे॥
जीवन करी जीवित्वा अन्न हे पूर्णब्रम्ह।
उदरभरण नोहे जाणजे यज्ञकर्म॥

Through this shloka we worship/ pay obeisance to the fire in the stomach. Eating food is a sacred yajna, so it must be done humbly and contentedly. In this shloka we thank HIM and nature for providing us with food that is full of Brahman for our survival. Finally, "Udarbharan Nohe Janije Yajnakarma" means - As much as it is unsanctified to swallow food to fill the stomach, it is sanskaram to take the right food, in the right amount, with the right respect as a Yajnakarma.

3.14

**annādbhavanti bhūtāni, parjanyaḍannasam̐bhavaḥ,
yajñādbhavati parjanyo, yajñah̐(kh) karmasamudbhavaḥ. 3.14**

All beings are evolved from food; production of food is dependent on rain; rain ensues from sacrifice, and sacrifice is rooted in prescribed action.

Food is consumed by everyone every day to nourish oneself. Our body is made up of food and thus is called **Annamaya kosha**. It is the physical sheath that composes the outer layer. It's sometimes referred to as the food sheath.

The body comprises of 5 koshas or sheaths. The other koshas are the **Prāṇamaya kosha** which is the vital energy, breath, or life force sheath; **Manomaya kosha** is contained within the annamaya and Prāṇamaya koshas, and acts as a messenger, bringing experiences and sensations from the outer world into the intuitive body; the **Vijñanamaya kosha** is the astral or psychic body that is the seat of intuition. Also known as the awareness or wisdom sheath, it allows one to develop a deeper awareness and to see reality for what it is; and the **Anandamaya kosha**, referred to as the bliss body. It's the deepest and subtlest of all layers, is perceived as something that can not be described but must be felt and experienced. Transcending all five sheaths can lead to a state of Samādhi, or unity between individual and universal consciousness. This is said to be pure bliss or joy.

Bhagavān said all beings are created from food. The food gets produced in this soil because of the rains, and rains happen because of yajña of the Sun deity and the wind deity fulfilling their duty i.e. generating heat causing evaporation. It is known to all that water in the ocean evaporates because of the heat generated by the Sun. The water vapour rises in the atmosphere and when it cools down, it forms tiny water droplets through the process of condensation. These turn into clouds, and when they grow bigger and become too heavy it begins to rain. This cools down the earth and everything that we consume in the form of food is grown on earth as a result of this process. This is how the cycle of creation goes on. The next verse dwells on who is the one who defines the duties to be performed by all beings.

3.15

**karma brahmodbhavaḥ(ṽ) viddhi, brahmākṣarasamudbhavam,
tasmātsarvagataḥ(m) brahma, nityaḥ(ṽ) yajñe pratiṣṭhitam. 3.15**

Know that prescribed action has its origin in the Vedas, and the Vedas proceed from the Indestructible (God); hence the all-pervading Infinite is always present in sacrifice.

Śrī Paramātmā said, the duties of each one, have been mentioned by Brahmā in the Vedas.

Just as how an organisation has rules or a country has its own constitution for smooth functioning, likewise the constitution of the universe are the Vedas. Vedas prescribe how the universe functions or how it should function. All that must be performed by beings as duties have been already prescribed in the Vedas. Hence, everything that happens, in the universe, happens as instructed in this universal constitution.

One is not aware of all the things that are happening around in the universe at all times. One is even unaware of the things that happen inside one's own body. Who digests the food that is consumed? In the 15th Chapter, there is a mention of;

पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम्

four kinds of food are digested by the fire of digestion in the stomachs of living beings. Everything that happens in the universe happens the way it should happen, as instructed by the Vedas.

The Vedas are said to be **apauruṣeya**, which means they have not been written by man. They are impersonal, authorless, (**revelations of sacred sounds, from the exhalations of Akṣara ParaBrahmā (indestructible Bhagavan), heard by ancient sages after intense meditation.**

One's ultimate aim in life is to attain HIM. Paramātmā says HE is Omnipresent, HE is everywhere and in everything. **If one desires to experience HIM, HE is present in every yajña or duty that must be performed (yajñe pratiṣṭhitam).**

One may have noticed that good and timely performance of duties instantly gives a lot of contentment, one experiences eternal bliss (sat chit ananda), and a sense of realisation of HIM as the doer. If everyone performs their prescribed duties one can visualise how well this universe would be functioning. But do all fulfil their duties as prescribed?

3.16

**evaṃ pravartitaṃ(ñ) cakraṃ(n), nānuvartayatīha yaḥ,
aghāyurindriyārāmo, moghaṃ(m) pārtha sa jīvati. 3.16**

Arjuna, he who does not follow the wheel of creation thus set going in this world i.e., does not perform his duties, leads a sinful and sensual life, he lives in vain.

HE told Arjuna that in this manner the wheel of the universe is moving, and simultaneously everything that must happen is also happening. But if one does not perform one's prescribed duties such a person is leading a sinful life (**aghāyu**), indulging only in sensual pleasures (**indriyārāmo**).

Such people are egocentric and not concerned about anybody else but the self. They opine that one is born only to enjoy life. There was a Western philosopher, Schopenhauer, who believed that the life of a human being is only to enjoy, similar to what is proposed in the *Charvak niti* -

यावज्जीवेत्सुखं जीवेत् ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत्.

Which means one must live happily as long as one is alive. Even if you have to take debt, eat what pleases your tongue, as once this body ceases to exist it does not come back. Schopenhauer also believed that one must enjoy as much as one can, and if there is nothing left to enjoy one may even consider ending one's life. However, when he studied Upanishads and Bhagavadgītā, he was completely transformed and said what he believed in was all wrong. He also said that the Upanishads and Gītā are the solaces of his life and always had these books next to him even when he was asleep.

We need to realise and believe that life is not only for enjoyment. Nowadays a lot of WhatsApp groups, even those of the elderly, propagate the message that life is for enjoyment. However, that is not true. The purpose of life is to discharge one's prescribed duties. One must reflect on why one is born as a human being, and not as an elephant, dog, ant, or a cat. Having been blessed with a human life, one must follow our scriptures and perform one's duties as prescribed in them. Śrī Paramātmā reiterated to Pārtha, that those who do not think like this and do not perform their duties are living a meaningless (**mogham**) life.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji said, when we attained this life we also obtained our duties.

म्हणौनि ऐके पांडवा । हा स्वधर्मु कवणें न संडावा ।
सर्वभावे भजावा । हाचि एकु ॥

Therefore no one should abandon his duty; on the contrary one should resort to it with his heart and Soul.

हां गा शरीर जरी जाहलें । तरी कर्तव्य वोघें आलें ।
मग उचित कां आपुलें । ओसंडावें ॥

Look, when one acquires a body (according to his past actions) work follows as a matter of course; then why should one avoid one's legitimate work?

परिस पां सव्यसाची । मूर्ति लाहोनि देहाची ।
खंती करिती कर्माची । ते गांवढे गा ॥

O Arjuna, he who loathes work even after acquiring a body is boorish.

In this world, there are 4 types of people.

- 1. Those who have everything and need not do anything for a living, and do not do anything.
- 2. Those who have nothing and have to work for a living and perform their duties.
- 3. Those who have nothing and even then do nothing and
- 4. Those who do not have to work for a living but work and perform all their duties.

Who is considered to be superior among these must be analysed and understood.

3.17

**yastvātmaratireva syād, ātmatṛptaśca mānavaḥ,
ātmanyeva ca santuṣṭaḥ(s), tasya kāryaṃ(n) na vidyate. 3.17**

He, however, who takes delight in the Self alone and is gratified with the Self, and is contented in the Self, has no duty.

All are bound by the need to perform their own duties, but Shri Paramātmā says, there are some who need not perform any duties. They are relieved of all the bindings.

These are the ones who have become one with the HIM (the *atma tattva*) and are completely content in the Self (**santuṣṭaḥ**) and do not seek anything. In life, they have achieved what they had to achieve (**ātmatṛptaśca**), learned what they had to learn, and performed all they had to perform. There is nothing left to be done. These are the people who are absorbed in HIM and are in eternal happiness and peace.

A pregnant woman's pregnancy period is spent feeding, walking, reading, thinking and meditating for

the growing fetus in her womb. After nine months of growing the fetus in her womb, she gives birth to him through labor pains. Once the child is born, does her contented mind desire anything more?

A self-realized contented doer has no desire in his contented state of mind, so his striving for action easily ceases.

What does a Yogi do on reaching such a state has been spoken about in the next verse.

3.18

naiva tasya kṛtenārtho, nākṛteneha kaścana, na cāsya sarvabhūteṣu, kaścīdarthavyapāśrayaḥ. 3.18

In this world that great soul has nothing to gain by action nor by abstaining from action; nor has he selfish dependence of any kind on any creature.

Such a person has nothing to gain from this world or from anyone else and is beyond any kind of self-interest. They are beyond the ego and are completely contented and have nothing to gain by performing actions or from not performing actions.

There was a person who had taken care of all his responsibilities, the children were all educated and married and that person was not required to do much. Despite this, he continued to do his work as he wanted his relative's children also to settle down well. He was not required to do the action at the same time abstaining from the action was also not required of him.

Śrī Paramātmā said, one who continues to perform actions even when one is not required to, is superior to all. Such a person does not think about mine vs others as a result of the self-realisation he or she has achieved. The concept of me and mine is the characteristic of the ignorant.

अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्।

उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥

This is mine and that is not mine, is the thinking of the narrow-minded. The largehearted consider the entire world as his family.

Such people are engaged in the welfare of all beings

सर्वभूतहिते रताः

as explained in the 12th chapter.

3.19

tasmādasaktaḥ(s) satataṃ(ñ), kāryaṃ(ñ) karma samācara, asakto hyācarankarma, paramāpnoti pūruṣaḥ. 3.19

Therefore, go on efficiently doing your duty at all times without attachment. Doing work without attachment man attains the Supreme.

Śrī Paramātmā said, therefore, one should always be engaged in doing work.

There are different types of work. Paramātmā advised to perform only the "**kāryaṃ Karma**" ie. action that is good to be performed, and that too efficiently (**samācara**). Stealing is also a karma, so

it is not about just doing the action but doing the right action. One may have heard people asking, is this drinking water, which means all water is not good enough for drinking? Similarly, all actions are not good for carrying forward.

Here, Śrī Paramātmā said, that one must perform the kāryaṃ Karma ensuring a high standard of quality in them, without considering ensuing consequences.

For e.g., if one happens to come across a woman being chased by anti-social elements, it is one's duty to protect the victim, without thinking about personal gains. Whatever duty comes one's way, one must do it without thinking twice, whether one has the ability to do it or not. Performance of one's duty without attachment to the gains, alone is sufficient to attain the supreme goal in life.

For eg. the duties of a student are, taking care of one's health, studying, helping parents with their work etc. There is a student who is aware of her duties and does all her work without being told. Another student does the homework only if bribed with sweets. One more student is interested in having the sweets first and would later consider whether to do the homework or not.

All three accomplished their work with good grades. However, the one who performed duty with a sense of responsibility and without being told, is superior. Doing duty because one gets something in return is doing duty with attachment to benefits. This immediately lowers the standard of the karma that is performed.

Therefore, Śrī Paramātmā said, by doing one's duty without attachment, one attains the supreme. One may recall that many have attained the Supreme just by doing this in the past.

3.20

karmaṇaiva hi saṃsiddhim, āsthitā janakādayaḥ, lokasaṅgrahamevāpi, saṃpaśyankartumarhasi. 3.20

It is through action without attachment alone that Janaka and other wise men reached perfection. Having in view the maintenance of the world order too, you should take to action.

Herein, Sri Paramātmā reiterated that by mere performance of duties without attachment, one can attain the Supreme. It is not essential to desert one's family and everything else. In this verse, HE gave an example of King Janaka. HE told Arjuna that like Janaka attained the Supreme while discharging his prescribed duties, likewise, he should also wage war without attachment to the consequences as that was his Kṣatriya duty.

Sri Paramātmā explained that Arjuna need not fight the war to regain his kingdom, instead he should fight for the welfare of his subjects and protection of Dharma (his Kṣatriya duty).

Arjuna is an accomplished warrior. Bhagavān reminded him of his warrior duty again and again because in despair Arjuna said, he would rather beg for a living than to slay his elders, relatives and friends.

गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान् श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके

Paramātmā said, one is required to perform prescribed karma for the welfare of others, even when sometimes one is not ready to do that action. Dnyaneshwar Ji said

मार्गी अंधासरिसा । पुढें देखाणी चाले जैसा ।

अज्ञाना प्रकटावा धर्मू तैसा । आचरोनी ॥

Just as a man having sight guides the blind by walking in front of them, so a wise person should

display to the ignorant his duty by his own conduct

हां गा ऐसे जरी न कीजे । तरी अज्ञाना काय उमजे ।
तिहीं कवणे परी जाणिजे । मार्गतिं या ॥

If he does not do so, how will an ignorant person come to know his duty and how will he understand the right path?

Similarly, Arjuna being a superior warrior, has to set the right example in the world, of doing the right action.

3.21

**yadyadācarati śreṣṭhaḥ(s), tattadevetaro janaḥ,
sa yatpramāṇam(ñ) kurute, lokastadanuvartate. 3.21**

For, whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do; whatever standard he sets up, the generality of men follow the same.

The behavior of the elders in the house is usually copied by the youngsters. People who read about Lokamanya Tilak ji or about other great leaders, get inspired to live like them. **The manner in which great people conduct themselves sets a standard in the world for others to emulate.**

For example, when the telephone rings, if a father tells his son, to say that he is not present at home, this would influence the boy to assume that lying is the right thing to do. Likewise, if a mother reprimands her child for using the phone, but she herself is on the phone all the time, it is setting a wrong example. The child will invariably learn the same example displayed by the mother.

Therefore, setting an example is the job of the learned or the great people. Thus Paramātmā kept coaxing Arjuna to perform his inherent duty as he had the responsibility to set the right example, despite the fact that it was not his preferred path.

A Saṁnyāsi or an ascetic need not do any action or karma **naiva tasya kṛtenārtho, nākṛteneha kaścana**. At the same time they also need not abstain from doing any karma.

Param Poojya swami Śrī Govind Dev Giri ji Maharaj is an ascetic, but he never takes his meals without performing Sandhya Vandana. He has bound himself to adhere to this system, as a result, his disciples follow his footsteps and this becomes the standard. This is why great saints always perform the right karmas or actions in the right manner, as they are being followed by others in the world. They do it not because they have to do it, but for the welfare of people.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj reiterated the same in the following ovi:

एथ वडील जें जें करिती । तया नाम धर्मु ठेविती ।
तेचि येर अनुष्ठिती । सामान्य सकळ ॥

Whatever the elders do, the others call it right conduct. All ordinary people follow their lead

हें ऐसें असे स्वभावे । म्हणौनि कर्म न संडावे ।
विशेषे आचरावे । लागे संतीं ॥

Since this is a natural thing, no one should renounce action. Especially sages should continue to perform action.

Śrī Paramātmā is HIMSELF an example of this. The 5,000 years old Bhagavadgītā, is as relevant, applicable, and followed today as it was when it was written. This is because, what was advised in this text, was followed by HE Himself. Sri Paramātmā did not have to do anything, HE had everything. HE was the king of all the three worlds. However, HE too performs HIS tasks, and speaks about it in the next verse.

3.22

**na me pārthāsti kartavyaṃ(n), triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana,
nānavāptamavāptavyaṃ(ṁ), varta eva ca karmaṇi. 3.22**

Arjuna, there is no duty in all the three worlds for Me to perform, nor is there anything worth attaining, unattained by Me; yet I continue to work.

Paramātmā said Arjuna, there is nothing in this world that HE has to perform, and there is nothing to be attained by HIM. HE had attained everything. Even then HE said, HE continues to work.

As one has observed, there is nothing that Śrī Paramātmā has not done, from grazing the cows to becoming the charioteer to Arjuna. During the war, HE would nurse the wounded horses during the ceasefire. HE did it all because HE considered it to be HIS duty and wanted to set the right example in the world.

In the 4th chapter, Śrī Paramātmā said,

**परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे**

HE said it is HIS duty to protect the virtuous and to destroy the wicked to establish dharma. HE said HE would come back to this earth again and again to ensure Dharma is established.

This is why Gītā is relevant even today, everything that was told was certainly practiced by HIM also.

3.23

**yadi hyahaṃ(n) na varteyaṃ(ñ), jātu karmaṇyatandritaḥ,
mama vartmānuvartante, manuṣyāḥ(ph) pārtha sarvaśaḥ. 3.23**

Should I not engage in action scrupulously at any time, great harm will come to the world; for, Arjuna, men follow My way in all matters.

Paramātmā said that, in the event of HIM not performing the duties cautiously and in the right manner, others would follow the same. HE was able to say what HE said, because HE maintains a very high standard in HIS work.

There was a saint in Maharashtra, Eknath Maharaj ji. One day a mother came to him with her child, and said her child has a bad habit of stealing and eating jaggery all the time. The mother requested Eknath Maharaj ji to advise the child that eating jaggery was bad for his health. Maharaj ji asked the woman to come after 8 days. When the mother came back after 8 days, Maharaj ji called the child to sit by his side, and gently told him not to eat a lot of jaggery as it is not good for him. After a few days Maharaj ji came across the mother and enquired about the child. The mother was happy that her child had stopped eating jaggery. However, she wanted to know why Maharaj ji asked her to come after 8 days when he could have advised the child on the first day itself. Maharaj ji told the mother

that he himself was consuming jaggery when she came the first time. And if he had advised the child, when he himself was eating jaggery, the child would never have stopped eating jaggery.

This is why Bhagavadgītā is so valuable today, as it contains what was practiced by Śrī Paramātmā. HE did menial jobs like picking up used *pattals* (plates made of leaves), such that one imbibed virtue from HIM.

In Marathi, they say

आधी केले मग सांगितले

meaning, If what is advised is first practiced by self, it is most significant, as this also supports others in their practice.

3.24

**utsīdeyurime lokā, na kuryāṃ(ñ) karma cedaham,
sañkarasya ca kartā syām, upahanyāmimāḥ(ph) prajāḥ. 3.24**

If I ever cease to act, these worlds would perish; nay, I should prove to be the cause of confusion, and of the destruction of these people.

Here, it must be remembered that Paramātmā is not an individual. In the Mahabharata wherever there is a description of Paramātmā, HE is referred to as, Śrī Krishna Uvacha or Śrī Vasudeva Uvacha. But in the Bhīṣma Parva, where Bhagavadgītā is described, HE is always referred to as Śrī Bhagavān, which is an indication that at the time when Gita was imparted to Arjuna, Śrī Krishna Paramātmā had assumed the state of Śrī Bhagavān.

Can one visualise, what would happen if Śrī Bhagavān did not perform his duties? Human beings are living on this earth, and the earth is sustaining everyone, but who is the one sustaining the earth? It is the gravity of the Sun, that holds planets in orbit. This gravitational force of the Sun is the reason why Earth moves in its own orbit. But what is the force that is holding the Sun, hundreds of other stars, the milky way and other galaxies in the sky?

It is none other than Śrī Paramātmā. HE said If HE ever failed to do HIS Karma the entire universe would collapse. HE would be considered a betrayer. So Śrī Paramātmā performs HIS duties all the time, without fail, and also in all HIS incarnations.

Similarly, one should always perform one's duties, irrespective of the need. If not for oneself, for the sake of others one should keep performing action. Keeping such noble thoughts in mind, as Swamiji says one should learn, teach and live Bhagavadgītā. **Effective performance of one's duty in itself is the application of Gītā in one's life. And this alone is sufficient for attaining the Supreme.**

With this thought in mind, the session was offered at the feet of Śrī Paramātmā and opened for questions and answers.

Shyam Prasad Ji

Question: What is the meaning of Yajna? When we say Yajna we usually remember Fire, havan kund etc. But in the session, I could perceive a different meaning. Please explain.

Answer: In the 4th chapter of The Bhagavad Gītā, Bhagavān recommended five yajnas for human beings. They are:

- **Dravya yajna**, that is offering of Wealth, Charity etc.
- **Tapo yajna**, exerting our body for doing for performing our duty.
- **Yog yajna**(Yoga),
- **Swadhyaa yajna**, reading or Learning gita or Upanishads or other relevant subjects,
- **Japa Yajna**, reciting the name of Sri Paramātmā
- **Gyana yajna**, Acquisition of Knowledge

In Gītā, Yajna does not have a limited meaning. It does not mean just the havan kunda. Havan kund is for devatas. As we have learned, There is Śrī Paramātmā and different devatas. These Yajnas are performed for making the devatas happy so that they favour us by fulfilling our desires. In the previous session we learned the same

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ

(verse 11 of chapter 3). Devatas are there in subtle form, like we do not see our mind which is also subtle. In the havankund when we offer various things we please the devatas. Similarly if we do our duty effectively we please everybody and the entire universe.

For e.g.. If we plant trees it will be good for the environment and would contribute to more rains.

Yajna has a broad meaning just like Dharma. Dharma means duty and not religion. We say pitru dharma, matru dharma etc, it means duty towards the father and the mother. Following Dharma will make you prosperous as well as elevate you spiritually. There are many words in Sanskrit which do not have parallel words in other languages. Yajna was created along with the creation. With every person born, that person's yajna also gets decided.

Devram ji:

Question: should one first learn to read Gītā or understand the meaning in the Vivechan first and then learn to read? How do I know If I am doing my kartavya karma or mere karma ?

Answer: Reading and understanding must go together, as understanding Gītā is a continuous process. When one is teaching Gītā, one is also learning. Every time we read Gītā we learn new things. There is no one who can claim that he or she has fully understood Gītā. The purpose of teaching also is to understand, as one can learn better and deeper as one is teaching. Application of Gītā in life, is equal to the performance of one's duty. We realise this if we ask our inner Self, what we are doing is our prescribed duty or not. We have to ask our own selves if what I am doing is the right the thing to do. In 16th chapter Śrī Paramātmā said to differentiate between Karya and akarya, what must be done and must not be done, one must refer to the scriptures.

When Arjuna, comes with the question that he is perplexed and does not know what is the right thing to do, he asked Śrī Paramātmā in the 17th chapter,

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः

those who do not follow the rules mentioned in the scriptures, but worship with faith, Is their faith situated in goodness, passion, or ignorance? Paramātmā said, in the verse

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा

while starting the task one must say 'Om' and remember HIM, as one is working on it, say 'tat' in the middle and end it with saying 'Sat', and offer the action or the karma at the feet of Paramātmā. doing this will ensure forgiveness in case of errors if any in the performance of the duty.

Urmila Ji:

Question: Can you please explain the meaning of verse 13

Answer: After doing the yajnya what remains is the prasad.

After performing the Yajnya what remains is the prasad, After givin the prasad, after paying back Pitru rhin, Mathru rhinn and all other rhins, consuming the remaining part with contentment absolves one of all sins. The sinful ones who cook and do everything for themselves alone are only participating in the sin. Thus, Gītā takes us from selfishness to realisation of the Self, that is understanding "who am I".

The person becomes ego-centered to geo-centric.



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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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