

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 2: Sāṅkhya-Yoga

2/6 (Ślōka 11-21), Sunday, 19 November 2023

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/qGe-6bHtr3M>

The Real nature of Ātmā & the Relation with the Divine

The second chapter of Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā is called **Sāṅkhya Yoga - The Yoga of Divine Knowledge**.

The session commenced with the traditional rituals of Deep Prajwalan, and prayers to Sri Paramātmā, Gītā ma, and revered Guruji.

The second chapter, Sāṅkhya Yoga is also referred to as Yoga of Knowledge. In this chapter Śrī Krishna started imparting the divine knowledge to Arjun. HE has explained the immortal nature of the soul, which is eternal and imperishable. Śrī Krishna had to impart this knowledge when HE realized HIS very dear friend Arjuna who was also a very learned person, had become utterly confused and despondent, and was seeking his earnest guidance about his course of action. In the first Chapter, we saw how confused and baffled Arjuna was. He was in a runaway state of mind. It is considered the most disgraceful behavior on the part of a warrior, if he returns from a battlefield without fighting the enemy.

Śrī Krishna could understand Arjuna's mental condition and started advising him, from the 2nd Sloka.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।

अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ 2॥

Śrī Krishna being the know-all HIMSELF could realize how deluded Arjuna was at that moment when more of battle readiness was required out of him, and how disgraceful it would be for a warrior of his valor. Arjuna's mental condition was such that although he understood what Śrī Krishna said to him, yet he was unable to rationalize it. He was unable to convince himself, that he had to kill his elders and teachers. He refused to take part in such a battle and requested Śrī Krishna to be his spiritual teacher and guide him on the proper path of action. At this juncture, Śrī Krishna imparted the Tattva Jnana about the immortal soul to him.

Although Śrī Krishna knew pretty well the ideas and thoughts Arjuna was nurturing in his mind was incorrect and inappropriate, he waited for Arjuna to surrender completely before giving him the right knowledge.

In the Sloka no.7, Arjuna surrenders to Śrī Krishna:

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ 7॥

Thus said Arjuna, I am Your disciple, and I surrender to You. Please instruct me for certain what is best for me.

This shloka is the important key that opened the heart of Śrī Bhagavān, who went on to reveal the Bhagavad Gītā to us, in its true entirety. Arjuna discarded all of his ego, and surrendered totally to Śrī Krishna. Bhagavān comes down to rescue HIS subjects only when a person completely surrenders to HIM. A person can totally surrender only when he gives up all his ego. It is like the functioning of an exhaust fan. Just as the exhaust fan takes away all the bad air, similarly by surrendering completely one gives up all the ego he possesses. Then the divine grace is bestowed on him. Śrī Krishna did not get offended or irritated by Arjuna's naive arguments in the beginning, rather HE handled him with a serene and pleasant smile for Bhagavān knew Arjuna was talking innocently without proper knowledge. The smile of Śrī Krishna has a message for all of us - 'Do not worry. Live life happily as it comes.' The most relevant message of Gītā is to live in the present happily while doing the duties, without worrying about the future. Presently the world cup cricket match is going on. Most of us are worried and anxious about the outcome. The teachings of Bhagavad Gītā tells us to enjoy the match and let the players do their duties. Worrying does not lead to any solution. In the upcoming Slokas Bhagavān explains the temporariness of the manifested universe (Kshara) and the reason why one should not worry about the happenings.

The word:

"मा शुचः" --

"Do not fear" appears in many Slokas in the Bhagavad Gītā. It essentially tells us not to worry, but to leave everything to Parameswara because the embodiment of the Soul is temporary.

It is essential for all of us to shed off our ego like Arjuna, and surrender ourselves to the Paramātmā, so that HE can bless us with the intelligence to understand these difficult teachings. All our Hindu Scriptures including Bhagavad Gītā deal with difficult subjects difficult to comprehend by ordinary men. Scriptures can be classified into two:

- **simha mukhi gou** (one with a mouth of a lion and the end simple like a cow), that begin with a difficult topic and end in simpler ones
- **gou mukhi simha** (one with a mouth of a cow and the end complex like a lion), that begin with a simpler topic and gradually become complex.

Bhagavad Gītā belongs to the first category. These teachings are a little difficult to begin with, because they describe the destination first, even before the journey commences. To understand it simply, in any of our journey we tell our destination to our cab driver to enable him to take us there. Similarly, Śrī Krishna starts with imparting the knowledge of Atma Jnana to Arjuna, as it is the ultimate purpose of our life.

The knowledge of Atma Jnana helps a person to differentiate between the Brahman and the manifested universe and realize the eternal peace. This Tattva Jnana or knowledge of Atma is very

difficult to comprehend. Yet, one must endeavor to achieve this knowledge as that is the ultimate purpose of human life. Human form is the best embodied form, where one is bestowed with intellect to understand this supreme consciousness. This is the destination of human life and hence at the outset of the journey of human life this destination should be identified and then progress should be made towards the destination.

From shlokas 11 to 37 of this chapter, Śrī Krishna is giving an introduction about Atma Jnana.

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

Śrī Krishna said to Arjuna that the wise men lament neither for the living (*agata asūn*) nor the dead (*gata āsūn*). He was lamenting yet feeling that he was speaking wisely.

HE is taunting Arjuna that he was talking like a Pandita. Pandita means Wise and Learned. They are not identified by their attire but by their knowledge. Definition of Pandita in sanskrit is - '*Panda atma vishaya buddhih esham tehi panditah*'; the one who understands the knowledge of Atma'.

The origin of this word is PANDA, denoting intellect. Panda Buddhi means the knowledge of Atma. One having Panda Buddhi knows the distinction between Atma and Paramātmā, Pinda and Brahmānda, Sat and Asat, Kṣara

and Akṣara. Śrī Krishna told Arjuna, that he was talking like a wise man who really had understood these differences.

2.12

na tvevāhaṃ(ñ) jātu nāsaṃ(n), na tvam(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 expresses the eternity of the existence. HE said that there was never a time when HE did not exist. There was also never a time when neither Arjuna nor all these kings did not exist. Likewise, there will be no time in future when all of them will cease to exist. We have to understand the meaning of the 'existence' that Śrī Krishna is speaking about.

HE is not talking about the eternal existence of the physical body, but about the subtle aspect of our existence. The physical body is subject to changes and is perishable. It cannot be eternal. HE is speaking of something that is existing within us in a very subtle form, and that which is imperishable and indestructible. The "I" we always refer to is thus not the physical body. We have to find out the real 'I'.

2.13

dehino'sminyathā dehe, kaumāraṃ(ṽ) 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.

Every sentient being in this manifested world undergoes transformation through six stages

- Jayate (birth)
- Asti (existence)
- Vardhate (growth)
- Viparinamate (change)
- Apaksheeyate (decay)
- Vinashyate (death)

The physical body is produced out of the gross forms of the five basic elements (ether, air, water, fire, and earth), and is subject to the sixfold changes of birth, subsistence, growth, maturity, decay, and death. At death, the physical body perishes, and its five constituent elements are dissolved. Just as the embodied soul continuously passes from childhood to youth to old age, similarly, at the time of death, the soul passes into another body.

The wise are not deluded by this. They are aware of the immortal nature of the soul and the mortal nature of the gross body.

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.

The contact between the senses and the sense objects gives rise to experience of happiness and distress. These are non-permanent and come and go like the seasons. Śrī Krishna advises Arjuna to learn to tolerate these sensory experiences without being disturbed.

Let us first try and understand how these experiences come to us. When a sense organ meets a sense object, the mind reads it and interprets it as an experience. If the experience is to our liking it gives us pleasure; if it is not to our liking, it gives us displeasure.

For example, when our tongue comes in contact with rasagulla, the sweet taste is conveyed to our mind; our mind likes the experience, and the rasagulla taste is palatable to us. Similar is our experience of reading Bhagavad Gītā. Our ears listen to the Slokas; our mind likes it and we experience happiness. In winter, our skin experiences cold, and unless we protect our skin with warm garments our experience is not good. This experience may also vary from person to person.

Somebody taking a morning walk at sunrise will definitely like the early morning pleasant breeze and fragrance of flowers on the sidewalk, where as a person walking on the same road in the mid-day may have a negative experience due to the smell of rotten fish and vegetables sold on the roadside. Thus, no experience is permanent. Bhagavān emphasizes on the point that as no experience is permanent one need not feel sad or happy by these experiences. One should not get affected by these sensory experiences but should **learn to tolerate these experiences as they are transitory in nature.**

They come and go. One need not get entangled.

Śrī Krishna has also spoken about another quality – *titikṣhasva* ‘tolerance without complaint’. We should not only develop qualities to tolerate any situation that come in our way, but we should also learn to tolerate without complaining. Through Arjuna, Śrī Krishna is teaching all of us. We all must remember these teachings of Bhagavad Gītā in any difficult situation of our life. **Endurance without complaints is one of the keys to success.**

2.15

**yaṃ(m) hi na vyathayantye, puruṣaṃ(m) puruṣarṣabha,
ṣamaduḥkhasukhaṃ(n) dhīraṃ(m), so'mṛtatvāya kalpate. 2.15**

Arjuna, the wise man to whom pain and pleasure are alike, and who is not tormented by these contacts, becomes eligible for immortality.

Śrī Krishna said that a person who is not affected by happiness and distress, and remains steady in both, becomes eligible (kalpate) for liberation (amṛtatvāya).

In the earlier Sloka, Bhagavān advised us not to get carried away by the experiences experienced by the sense organs and to tolerate all situations. Here HE further elaborates that **being equipoised in all circumstances is a prime requirement for Mokshya Prapti or liberation.** There are always some basic requirements for getting anything we desire. One has to study engineering to become an engineer. To study engineering, one has to write the entrance test. That is the qualifying eligibility. Similarly for getting eternal happiness, one has to practice remaining steadfast, unwavering in all circumstances. Shri Krishna HIMSELF was always smiling and remained ever joyful. In HIS embodied form, HE had to endure many adverse situations, but HE always remained equipoised.

An incident from Mahabharata is worth mentioning. Once Śrī Krishna approached his aunt, Kunti Bua and requested her to ask for a boon from HIM. Kunti, who was a very pious and modest women requested Bhagavān to give more Dukha (sorrow) so that she can remember Bhagavān more often. This is the *Amrutatva* state in which one is neither happy nor sad. The same mental condition remains whether it is happiness or sorrow. There are also many other divine human beings like Sant Tukaramji, Swami Vivekananda ji and many other saints who were not affected by material distortions. They remained pristine and unaffected. Veer Saverkarji was so poised that he could write the best Marathi literature while being imprisoned!

2.16

**nāsato vidyate bhāvo, nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ,
ubhayorapi dṛṣṭo'ntaḥ(s), tvanayostattvadarśibhiḥ. 2.16**

The unreal has no existence, and the real never ceases to be; the reality of both has thus been perceived by the seers of Truth.

In this sloka, the distinction between *Sat* and *Asat* is further elaborated by Bhagavān. *Sat* is that which is real, eternal and everlasting. *Asat* is that which is subject to changes, is transitory in nature, and hence unreal. The appearance of the words ‘*Sat*’ and ‘*Asat*’ several times in Bhagavad Gītā imply the prime importance Śrī Krishna has laid on these terms.

Sat means one which is permanent and cannot be altered or destroyed. On the other hand, **Asat is subject to changes, and can be modified or destroyed.** It is temporary in nature. All

that we see around us is changeable, and perishable. Only the one who is observing/witnessing these changes is permanent. Who is that witnessing all these changes occurring in the phenomenal world? The one witnessing has to be different from the one witnessed object.

Let's take the example of a baby born in this world. Parents take photos of this baby at its birth, and thereafter on every subsequent birthday. Looking at the photos taken over the years, the person finds that his physical form is changing continuously, from baby hood through childhood to adolescence and adulthood. As years pass, the same person becomes old and eventually perishes. Now what or who perishes? The physical body was changing and has perished. The one who was witnessing these changes did not change at all. The physical body is *Asat* and the one witnessing these changes is permanent, and hence *Sat*. **It is imperative for us to realize that this witness which is Sat is only our ATMA.**

Another easy way to understand this phenomenon is our dream state and awakening state. In a dream, I ate Ladoos and relished its sweet taste. I wanted to share these Ladoos with my friend, but suddenly was woken up. My dream is shattered. I realize that my dream Ladoos are all unreal. My mind had framed them in my sleep state. They were all *Asat*. Similarly in our waking state also, the material world we see around us is all unreal, temporary and will perish one day or the other.

It will be more meaningful for a human being to contemplate and realize the permanent being inside him, rather than chasing sense objects. Hence, it is imperative for us to find out "who am I?". By repeating these words *Sat- Asat, Kshara -Akshara, Prakriti-Purusha* etc, Bhagavān is our focus to the everlasting subject, that is the imperishable Brahman. **He is teaching us to awaken from our dream-like state and realize that our world as we see it is Asat.** A person who has realized it is called *tattvadarśī*.

2.17

**avināśī tu tadviddhi, yena sarvamidaṃ(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.

Sat Tatva is *Avinashi* (indestructible) and pervades everywhere. Science has established that total energy remains constant. It can neither be created nor destroyed. This is with respect to only visible energy. But there is a supreme energy which is beyond our comprehension. Bhagavān says this **supreme consciousness pervades everywhere.**

Śrī Krishna establishes the relationship between the body and the Atma, by saying that the Atma pervades the body.

The Atma pervades the body by spreading its consciousness everywhere in it.

2.18

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

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

When a person dies, we say "*Dehanta Ho Gaya* ", meaning the body or *Deha* has ended.

The one who is embodied can never be destroyed. **The Soul is immortal and** has no end. Only the material body gets destroyed. So, Śrī Krishna asks Arjuna to go ahead and fight, as in any case he cannot destroy their Souls.

2.19

**ya enaṃ(ṽ) vetti hantāraṃ,(ṽ) yaścainaṃ(m) manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto, nāyaṃ(m) hanti na hanyate.2.19**

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 one who thinks the Soul can slay and the one who thinks the Soul can be slain, are equally ignorant. **The Atma neither kills nor can it be killed. It cannot be slayed or destroyed.** In these 2 shlokas, Śrī Krishna is stressing that the Soul is indestructible.

2.20

**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**

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.

The Soul is neither born, nor does it ever die. It can never cease to exist. It is without birth and death. It is eternal, immortal, and ageless. It is unborn and therefore cannot be destroyed when the body is destroyed. Just like the water in the pond is not affected by the rise of a ripple that arises on its surface, the Soul remains unchanged.

2.21

**vedāvināśinaṃ(n) nityaṃ(ṽ), 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 ?

Here again Bhagavan reiterates *Atma* or Soul is imperishable. HE further says that on destruction of the body, the soul takes on another body, just like how we change clothes.

The type of new body that it takes depends on the karmas performed during embodiment.

When we buy a new mobile phone, we change the SIM into the new handset and throw away the old handset. But the SIM remains the same. Similarly, the *atma* remains the same. As different types of handsets are available in the market, similarly different types of bodies like animal body, human

body, centipedes, millipedes, winged bodies, and aqua bodies are available. Depending on our past Karma, we get a new form.

Thus far we have seen Śrī Krishna had explained at length to a simple query that was raised by Arjuna with respect to Dharma and Adharma. Had Śrī Krishna simply asked Arjuna, to get up and fight, Arjuna would have definitely obeyed HIS instructions. But Śrī Krishna choose to explain in detail. This is because of two reasons.

Firstly, Śrī Krishna was surprised with the type of confusion a learned man like Arjuna was nurturing in his mind and hence wanted to give him a wholesome clarification.

Secondly, Arjuna was very dear to Śrī Krishna, hence HE wanted to clarify all his doubts and hence gave an in-depth knowledge about Atma. In the process all of us are also blessed to have received this special explanation from Bhagavān indirectly.

Let us surrender ourselves at HIS lotus feet and assimilate this Atma Jnana into ourselves.

The session ended with prayers and recitation of Hanuman chalisa.



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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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