

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 3: Karma-Yoga

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YouTube Link: https://youtu.be/O9skzVK_78Q

The Spirit of Sacrifice and Gratitude Must be Seen in every Action

The third chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā is called **Karma Yoga - The Yoga of Action**.

The session began with a prayer to Maa Saraswati, Gītā Mata, Ved Vyasa ji, Dhyaneswar Maharaj ji and Gurudev. and a lighting of lamps.

दीपवत् स्वयं जले, भरे प्रकाश से दिगन्त, हम कदम कदम चलें गीता का महान पन्थ ।

The lamps burn to fill the world with light, while we progress step by step on the path of Gītā.

This third chapter tells us to worship and seek HIM by performing our duties, with the belief that karma is worship. Lokmanya Tilak ji considered this chapter as an important chapter. While in jail in Mandalay, he wrote the Gītārahasya, a Marathi translation and critical commentary on the Gītā based on the third, fourth and fifth chapters of the Bhagavad Gītā.

It was reiterated again as to how in the second chapter Bhagavān began to inspire and instruct the dejected Arjuna through HIS divine speech. From the eleventh verse of the second chapter, this stream of instructions and eternal knowledge began to flow, which even today, after thousands of years, gives a new direction, a new outlook to every person's life, showing the way of progress. Awakens a new sense of perception to look at life.

According to Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, Gītā is a beautiful and magical sermon to show Arjuna the way to happiness Dnyaneshwara Maharaj described Gītā as a Saptashati as it comprises of 700 shlokas:

गीता हे सप्तशती, मन्त्र प्रतिपाद्य भगवती।

मोह महिषा मुक्ति, आनन्द निश्चित।।

The mere recitation of the shlokas causes a chain reaction within us and the society and removes Mahishasura cloaked as Moha (delusion) within us, which is the strong sense of attachment to

elements of creation. This attachment is a roadblock to the knowledge of the Self.

The creation in which we are born is our karmabhoomi our field of action. Bhagavān has assigned a duty to every living being as our Dharma - one's duty to perform.

The Bhagavadgītā hymn begins with the words of the delusional blind Dhritarashtra:

dharm-kṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ |
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva kim akurvata sañjaya || 1 ||

And the hymn concludes with Sanjay's divine verse wherein Bhagavān opens the doors of intellect.

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pāṛtho dhanurdharaḥ |
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir **mama** || 78 ||

In the seven hundred slokas contained in **Dharma** and **Mama**, Bhagavān has given the knowledge that "**Mama Dharma**" means **MY DUTY**. It is as if the entire ocean is present in a pitcher. But to begin with Arjuna's pitcher was emptied and then the stream of eternal knowledge flowed into it. Self-knowledge is said to be all-encompassing. Arjuna wanted to run away from the battlefield, from his field of action.

Any act we do has the potential of creating turmoil and chaos. We worry about the results. One may also challenge the very reasoning of conducting work that causes distress to anyone. For instance, should a jailor not hang a condemned prisoner because he worries about the impact of that hanging?

Bhagavān asks that you not be bound to the results but try your best to be dispassionate while doing your assigned duties.

The analogy of the jailor who is performing his duty is brought forward again. In this case, despite the distress he will certainly cause others, he himself will be unaffected as he is fulfilling his prescribed duties. Bhagavān in the Gītā gave a solution to all these; one should do the deed only as a duty and be free from the consequences.

jyāyasī cet karmaṇas te matā buddhir janārdana |
 tat kiṃ karmaṇi ghore mām niyojayasi keśava || 1 ||

But Arjuna accuses Krishna of confusing him with his sweet voice and reasoning.

Arjuna wanted to give up the war, so he asked the question, "You are urging me to do this heinous deed. You are confusing me more and more with your convoluted talk. Exacerbating my problems instead of solving them."

Bhagavān points out that Arjuna is not yet ready for the path of Jnana Yoga. It must be preceded with action. HE elaborates further:

karmaṇy evā**dhikāras** te mā phaleṣu kadācana || 47 ||

That action is a matter of competence and ability and is not an issue of a 'rights' ("adhikara in sanskrit does not mean 'one's rights' but means "competency") The end result is reached in different ways depending upon one's development. You may leave the battlefield, but your mind will be consumed with the possible events of the battlefield. Therefore, it is wise to go on the path of action. Every act is a matter of action - listening, sitting, speaking - everything.

Indeed, we see this in the preceding shloka:

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥ ४॥

You may be afraid of the results, but you must perform the actions that are appropriate and correct for you. Your dharma and duty are paramount.

Vinoba Bhava says some of us are assigned to depending on where and when we are born. The rest depends on our day-to-day context and our karma may be necessary on a daily basis.

Now, says, Bhagavān, this is your dharma, and you cannot escape from it. It is better to act rather than avoid it. If you do not do so, your body will not be able to perform even the most natural tasks. It may be true that we seek development and progress. But not at the cost of internal peace. If everyone performs his duties according to his ability and competence, how wonderful the world would be. These acts (of sacrifice) are the same as performing a yajna.

Golwalkar said, for example, spoke about his work as a sacrifice to the nation.

“राष्ट्राय स्वाहा, इदं राष्ट्राय इदं न मम”-

This is not mine; nothing is mine. Everything belongs to the Nation, and I offer it to the Nation.

And therefore, Bhagavān says these beautiful words:

3.9

**yajñārthātkarmaṇo'nyatra, loko'yaṃ(ñ) karmabandhanaḥ,
tadārthaṃ(ñ) karma kaunteya, muktasaṅgaḥ(s) samācara. 3.9**

Man is bound by his own action except when it is performed for the sake of sacrifice. Therefore, Arjuna, do you efficiently perform your duty, free from attachment, for the sake of sacrifice alone.

Work must be done as a sacrifice to Bhagavān; otherwise, work causes bondage in this world. Therefore, O son of Kunti, perform your prescribed duties, without being attached to the results.

The analogy of the jailor who is performing his duty is brought forward again. In this case, despite the distress he will certainly cause others, he himself will be unaffected as he is fulfilling his prescribed duties.

Man sometimes fears the consequences of karma and fruits. Because it requires favorability, not adversity. One kind of karma can lead to both kinds of consequences. A person who does not perform karma in the form of yajna is bound by karmabandhana. Letting go of the feeling that one is doing the work for oneself, one should be free from attachment and do the work with the yajna feeling that it is only a duty entrusted to me by God. If you do this, you will be freed from this karmic bond, says Bhagavān.

Hearing the word yajna, one may think of the fire pit of the yajnavedi where sacrifices are made for the deities. But it is not the only type of sacrifice. In this type of Yajna, sacrifices are made to the fire to maintain the balance of the universe made up of Pancha Mahabhutas, Vayu Devas, Water Devas etc. Then they become balanced. This is also an important sacrifice. It is described in the Vedas in the form of rituals.

This is also described in the fourth chapter of the Gītā. Any good deed done in the spirit of yajna, organized good deed done for the welfare of others, good deed done for creation can be included in the concept of yajna. In this Yagya of Gītā, every seeker is sacrificing something according to his ability. Discussions, sutras, prayers, lighting of lamps, listeners listening to the discussions are all part of the Yagya. A speaker has no importance if there is no audience.

This is beautifully put forth by Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji:

म्हणौनि वक्ता तो वक्ता नोहे । श्रोतेनिविण ॥ २९ ॥

if the listeners do not pay attention, the sentiments get dried up.

Various types of Yagnas are going on in creation. Explaining why there should be this sense of sacrifice, Bhagavān says, Prajapati Brahmā ji has created this creation with sacrifice. This creation is interdependent. No one can live alone here. If anyone thinks that he is self-sufficient, he is delusional. Because he has been nurtured by others since childhood. None of us are self-made. It would be delusional to assume so. Even air and water were not created by us.

**क्या धरा हमने बनाई। क्या बनाया हमने गगन।
क्या हमारी ही वजह से बह रहा सुरमीत पवन।
या अगन के है स्वामी नियंता जगधार के
या जगत के सूत्रधार नियामक संसार के ॥**

3.10

**sahayajñāḥ(ph) prajāḥ(s) sṛṣṭvā, purovāca prajāpatiḥ,
anena prasaviṣyadhvam, eṣa vo'stviṣṭakāmadhuk. 3.10**

Having created mankind along with Yajña, at the beginning of creation, the creator, Brahmā, said to them, "You shall prosper by this; may this yield the enjoyments you seek.

We have four yugas - satya, treta, dvapar and kali. When these four happen in a cycle of thousand, we say that it is equivalent to a day of Brahmā ji. This called Kalpa.

With a yajna, creation begins. All possible life forms are created from this yajna. Through karma yoga, we progress towards the fulfillment of his desires and needs. We also seek the elimination of unnecessary desires and ambitions.

For this, the entire creation works in tandem. Everything is TEAMWORK -:

T - Together

E - Everyone

A - Achieves

M - More

स्वर्धमु जो बापा । तोचि नित्ययज्ञु जाण पां ।

म्हणौनि वर्ततां तेथ पापा । संचारु नाहीं ॥ ज्ञानेश्वरी ३.८१ ॥

Jnaneshwar Maharaj ji says that even if we cannot do major Yagnas, we can still do small ones that are within our capabilities. Acting in accordance with one's own svadharma is the daily *yajna* and acting in that manner keeps one free of sins.

3.11

**devānbhāvayatānena, te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ,
parasparam bhāvayantaḥ(ś), śreyaḥ(ph) paRāmavāpsyatha. 3.11**

Foster the gods through this sacrifice, and let the gods foster you. Thus, each fostering the other selflessly, you will attain the highest good.

Help each other's progress and work for the happiness of others.

Think about it: schools, libraries, nature, trees - all these things have been created by others and we take advantage of them and are indebted to them.

We have four types of debts: devatas, rishis, our parents and societal.

The first is the **Devata Rhin** created fire and other natural elements. We experience life because of them.

क्या धरा हमने बनाई। क्या बनाया हमने गगन।
क्या हमारी ही वजह से बह रहा सुरमीत पवन।

The second debt is - **Rishi Rhin**. The principles that the rishis absorbed from the universe (cosmic intelligence) and passed them on to us for us to benefit. Who wrote the books of engineering, for example? These are debts. Another example from recent times: vaccines are the results of the work of Scientists.

In the third instance, **Pitr Rhin** (ancestors) also accumulated wealth and other things including education, taking care of us during times of illness. We remember how our father looked after our financial wellbeing and our mother took care of our sustenance, selflessly.

In the fourth instance, we speak of **Samaj Rhin** (societal debt). When we help others in need, we get a sense of peace. Last week, there was a severe flood that destroyed several homes in Nagpur. During that time, the RSS made sure that people were encouraged to help others. This was like a societal Yagna.

To reduce our debts to these four sources, we must do good work.

Param Pujya Swami Govinddev Giri ji Maharaj's slogan:

गीता पढे, पढाये, जीवन में लाये।

This is an example of the Gītā being brought into practice.

3.12

**iṣṭānbhogānhi vo devā, dāsyante yajñabhāvitāḥ,
tairdattānapradāyaibhyo, yo bhuñkte stena eva saḥ. 3.12**

Fostered by sacrifice, the gods will surely bestow on you unasked all the desired enjoyments. He who enjoys the gifts bestowed by them without offering their share to them, is undoubtedly a thief.

those who receive the gifts of the Gods, it is important that you share with others. If not, you are no better than a thief. You must equally share strength, time, talent and knowledge. If you do not do so, you are no better than a thief, who merely takes but never donates and shares.,

Jnaneshwar Maharaj eloquently said:

म्हणौनि स्वधर्मु जो सांडील । तयातें काळु दंडील ।
चोरु म्हणौनि हरील । सर्वस्व तयाचें ॥ ११२ ॥

He who makes no attempt to reduce his debt, will suffer over time. He will be punished by Srishti.

An egocentric life must yield to make it geocentric and then further dedicate to the Almighty. Such a person will have his sins erased.

3.13

**yajñaśiṣṭāśinaḥ(s) santo, mucyante sarVākilbiṣaiḥ,
bhuñjate te tvaghaṁ(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.

A life is dependent on others. It is a mistake to imagine that you do not depend on others. Vandana ji cited the example of a lady who claimed that she was completely dependent. That is not true as the tablets she consumed for her health were created by others. Similarly, the electricity we use was brought to you by others. We must cultivate a sense of gratitude.

The vedas advise that we must first sacrifice before we accept and use. Such a person's sins will be erased. Those who do not do so will not be given amrit.

म्हणौनि स्वधर्में जें अर्जे । तें स्वधर्मेंचि विनियोगिजे ।
मग उरे तें भोगिजे । संतोषेंसीं ॥ १२५ ॥

Therefore, a person should earn riches lawfully, utilise them in performing his duty and then enjoy in contentment whatever is left.

Jnaneshwar Maharaj says that every selfless act is an act of devotion (giving to birds, watering the plants and so on). Then take whatever is left with reverence.

3.14, 3.15

**annādbhavanti bhūtāni, parjanyaḍdannasaṁbhavaḥ,
yajñādbhavati parjanyo, yajñaḥ(kh) karmasamudbhavaḥ. 3.14
karma brahmodbhavaṁ(ṽ) viddhi, brahmākṣarasamudbhavam,
tasmātsarvagataṁ(m) brahma, nityaṁ(ṽ) yajñe pratiṣṭhitam. 3.15**

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

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.

Food keeps the world going. These are created by rain and nature. Doing work for nature to enable it to continue is also a form of sacrifice. These include planting trees, being sensitive to pollution and

not harming nature directly or indirectly.

In Canada, there are 8000 trees per person. In China, there are 108 trees per person. In India it is only 28. Therefore, it is necessary to sustain the forces of nature by performing sacrifices. You can create the path and do your bit as an act of gratitude.

Where is the force of nature? These are available in Yajnas and sacrifices.

Yajna produces rain. Yajna is produced by ritual or good deeds. Karma originates from the Vedas. And from the imperishable Supreme Soul originates the Vedas (Brahman). Therefore, wherever the power (Brahman) that governs creation is found, it is revered in the Yajna. Wherever the Mahayagna of Gītā takes place, Parabrahman Paramātmā is there.

Swami Samarth Ramdas ji says:

वदनी कवळ घेता नाम घ्या श्री हरीचे।
सहज हवन होते नाम घेता फुकाचे।
जीवन करी जीवित्वा अन्न हे पूर्णब्रह्म।
उदरभरण नोहे जाणिजे यज्ञकर्म ।। -

Recite the name of Srihari while taking grass in the mouth. Havan is done easily (like a yajna) by simply taking the name. Food that nourishes the body is purnabraham. It is not to fill the stomach, but to accept it as a sacrifice.

There is a nice poem in Marathi by Poet Kusumagraj. In this prayer song, the poet is praying to Bhagavān and requesting HIM to take us from darkness to light. He is also telling HIM to give us the strength to face all our problems and difficulties. Those who wipe the tears of the unfortunate will find their paths to moksha. Where there is selfless sacrifice, Bhagavān exists there.: A few lines of the poem:

सर्वात्मका शिवसुंदरा

श्रमतोस तू शेतामधे
तू राबसी श्रमिकांसवे
जे रंजले वा गांजले
पुसतोस त्यांची आसवे
स्वार्थाविना सेवा जिथे तिथे तुझे पद पावना।।

You not only toil in the fields but you dwell among hard working labourers. You wipe off the tears of all those you are sad and suffering. Where ever there are people serving others selflessly, your footprints are present there.

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.

Those who do not sustain nature waste their lives. He is caught in the play of his senses and lives a selfish life with no value. The Bhagavad Gītā gives us wonderful direction.

Once an old man was planting a mango sapling. A few young boys passing by and laughed at him. They mocked at the old man and asked if he knew when mangoes would bear fruit. Will you get the mangoes? You may be dead by then!

The old man answered, the mangoes that I ate in this lifetime were from trees that someone else planted. Similarly, the tree that will yield mangoes after several years will be enjoyed by others.

In that sense, the old man was speaking about his debt to nature.

Thus, we have a debt from nature in so many ways.

The session concluded with a prayer.

Question & Answer Session

Kirti ji

Question: We are seeing that nature is being destroyed systematically. Farmers are leaving their lifestyles and moving to cities, which are also falling part. We look at pollution, environmental degradation and so on. Farmers are in debt and often commit suicide. Why do we commit sins like this?

Answer: We do get the fruits of our action. Man, today is only concerned with saving taxes, making money and so on. If attitudes change and distribute wealth and goodness to society, things will change. Just because someone is NOT doing something, we cannot use that as an excuse to also not to something. Depending on our capacity, we must do something to relieve the burden on society. When society at large changes its direction, these negative situations will reduce and vanish one day.

Sapna ji

Question: Is it important to maximize marks in the Gītā exams?

Answer: We must just do our exams as best as we can and leave the results to destiny. We should do not worry about the marks but make an effort to apply the learnings.

Ram Narayan ji

Question: What if people do wrong acts and claim that it is dedicated to Bhagavān ?

Answer: Ideally, we would not be able to do anything wrong. However, we see that battles have been fought to establish the alleged superiority of their beliefs. Any act that causes distress to others (killing etc.) is unacceptable to Bhagavān. It is hoped that one day, the Bhagavad Gītā will be accepted by the entire world.

Vrunda ji

Question: Should The Gayatri mantra not be recited by women?

Answer: Men and women are different. Women have to undergo pregnancy and so much more. This is a great responsibility given by nature. We therefore respond to mantras and vibrations in different way. It does not imply there is any discrimination.



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Thank you-For reading the summary

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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