

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 3: Karma-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/aaX260GB4fQ>

By understanding the Self, one can subdue the mind by reason and overcome desires.

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

The session began with lighting of the holy lamp followed by prayers to Maa Saraswati, Gītā Mata, Veda Vyasa ji, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji and Gurudev.

Our life is a journey of karma. Karma, as action, inevitably brings about a reaction. The reaction or result of karma may be favourable or unfavourable. Due to fear of these outcomes, individuals may sometimes avoid taking action. Arjuna, similarly, was afraid of the consequences of engaging in what he perceived as a futile war. He sought to escape from the conflict by proposing to adopt the path of jñāna yoga.

However, Bhagavān advised Arjuna that he was not yet ready for this path. Instead, he urged Arjuna to fulfil his duty by undertaking the assigned task, which was to follow karma yoga without attachment to the results.

Thus this chapter gives a new vision to us and teaches us how **to offer all our actions to the Almighty without expectation of results, and transform our Karma (action) to Nishkām Karma Yoga (The Yoga of Action)**.

Bhagavān explained to Arjuna that wise individuals do not become attached to their actions and do not harbour expectations for results. They work with complete concentration.

To illustrate this point, Bhagavān provides an example of HIMSELF

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ 22॥

There is no duty for Me to do in all the three worlds, O Parth, nor do I have anything to gain or attain. Yet, I am engaged in prescribed duties.

Bhagavān explained that the entire creation belongs to HIM, so HE is not bound by any duty. HE has no compulsion to act. However, HE diligently fulfils the responsibilities of the role assigned to HIM. Whenever HE incarnated in human form, wherever HE manifested, HE meticulously carried out the duties bestowed upon HIM. If HE were not to do so, others would disregard their duties, resulting in disruption to the order of creation.

Likewise wise men constantly work for the welfare of others setting the trend. Gurudev is one such example whose virtuous deeds are an inspiration for many. **"My nation first, My mission next, and Myself never"** is his principle of life. He has founded many institutions for the study of Vedas. He diligently carried out the task of the Treasurer for the construction of Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, and now has been assigned a similar task for the construction of the Krishna Temple.

Bhagavān said that those who are attached to the results of their deeds are ignorant or ajñāni.

**सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत |
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् || 25||**

As ignorant people perform their duties with attachment to the results, O scion of Bharat, so should the wise act without attachment, for the sake of leading people on the right path.

However, HE preached that the wise or jñāni should act without attachment to results, and also inspire the ajñāni to similarly perform their prescribed duties.

**न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् |
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् || 26||**

The wise should not create discord in the intellects of ignorant people, who are attached to fruitive actions, by inducing them to stop work. Rather, by performing their duties in an enlightened manner, they should inspire the ignorant also to do their prescribed duties.

This was illustrated with the life of Dnyaneshwar Maharaj.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj's father, guided by the wisdom of his Guru, relinquished the ascetic life of Samnyasa ashram, returning to the embrace of Grihasth ashrama, as his devoted wife, Rukmani Mata, undertook profound penance. However, their noble decision was not accepted by the Dharmasabha, which shunned them and denied them the sacred right to bestow the Upanayna Samskāra upon their three offspring—Nivrittinath, Dnyaneshwara, and Sopan. The Dharma Sabha decreed that the parents must atone for their transgression by sacrificing their lives. Both parents surrendered to the depths of the Indrayani river.

As Nivrittinatha, the elder brother of Dnyaneshwar ji, attained Brahmā knowledge, he imparted the essence of that wisdom to his devoted disciple, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj.

Nivrittinath ji inquired that there was no significance of Upanayana for those who had realised Brahmā. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj responded that by performing Upanayana Samskāra they would set an example for others, ensuring the smooth functioning of societal norms and inspiring future generations.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj said:

**देखें प्राप्तार्थ जाहले, जे निष्कामता पावले |
तयाही कर्तव्य असे उरलें, लोकांलागीं ||155 ||**

Nishkam Karmayogis, having attained Brahmā jnana (knowledge of the ultimate reality), dedicate themselves to selfless action for the benefit and welfare of others.

With such guiding actions, enlightened souls like them continually engage in righteous deeds, illuminating the path for others to follow. They understand that they are not the ultimate doers of actions, but rather instruments through which the play of the Gunas manifests.

3.27

**prakṛteḥ(kh) kriyamāṇāni, guṇaiḥ(kh) karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ,
ahaṅkāravimūḍhātmā, kartāhamiti manyate. 3.27**

In fact all actions are being performed by the modes of Prakṛti (Primordial Nature). The fool, whose mind is deluded by egoism, thinks: "I am the doer."

Bhagavān elucidated that actions are directed by the Ashtada Prakṛti, the eightfold nature comprising the five basic elements—Akāsha (Space), Vayu (Air), Agni (Fire), Jal (Water), Prithvi (Earth)—along with the faculties of mana (mind), buddhi (intellect), and ahankar (ego). Within this framework, the three gunas of Prakṛti—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas—play distinct roles: Sattva illuminates the mind with knowledge, Rajas incites productivity, while Tamas generates inaction.

This concept was likened to driving a car: The steering wheel, which provides direction, serves as an analogy for Sattvaguna. Just as petrol fuels the car's movement, Rajoguna propels action forward. And, the brakes, which bring the car to a halt, represent Tamoguna, inducing a state of inaction.

In Sanskrit, "Guna" translates to "rope." These Gunas serve as binding forces and bind the Self (Jiva) to the body (Deha). In other words they bind the subtle body (consciousness principle) to the gross body and induce the subtle body to perform action. However an egoistic person, does not understand the workings of HIS creation without knowing these qualities of nature. **Consequently, he mistakenly identifies himself with the physical body, erroneously assuming to be the sole doer of all actions.**

The mind serves as the connector between different realms of existence. When it aligns closely with the body, it attains a state of sentience, being deeply attuned to the physical sensations and experiences. Conversely, when the mind connects with consciousness, it transcends sentience, evolving into a state of true awareness and consciousness.

A realised soul, endowed with the knowledge of atma tattva (conscious principle), maintains a state of detachment from the sense of doership. In contrast, an individual distant from this profound understanding remains attached to the physical body (deha) and the notion of being the sole doer of actions.

Just as the sun remains a constant in the sky, devoid of any explicit action yet indispensable for sustaining life on Earth, so too does the atma tattva serve as the silent observer, essential for all bodily activity. The sun's presence causes day and night, brings about the changing of seasons, and fuels the vitality of our planet. Similarly, without the conscious principle, all bodily functions would come to a stand still emphasising its pivotal role in facilitating all activity within the human form.

3.28

**tattvavittu mahābāho, guṇakarmavibhāgayoḥ,
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta, iti matvā na sajjate. 3.28**

However, he who has true insight into the respective spheres of Guṇas (modes of Prakṛti) and their actions, holding that it is the Guṇas (in the form of the senses, mind, etc.) that move among the

Guṇas (objects of perception), does not get attached to them, Arjuna.

In this verse Bhagavān showcased the perspective of the wise.

HE elucidated that those who grasp the workings of Prakṛti and its Guṇas in shaping one's actions, remain detached to those actions. Instead, they free themselves from the notion of being the doer of those actions, assuming the role of sole observers.

In chapter 14, HE listed the traits of the Gunatita, one who has transcended beyond the three Guṇas. HE said the Gunatita are not disturbed when they see the guṇas functioning in the world, and their effects manifesting in persons, objects, and situations around them.

Kabir Ji said:

जो कुछ किया सो तुम किया, मैं कुछ किया नहीं
कहो कही जो मैं किया, तुम ही ले मुझ माहि

Whatever actions have been executed have been done in the presence of HIM (atma tattva). If someone attributes the role of doership to me, then it is through YOU (conscious principle) manifesting within me.

Shankaracharya Ji reiterated the same in his *Nirvana Shatakam*:

**mano buddhi ahankara chittani naaham
na cha shrotravjihve na cha ghraana netre
na cha vyoma bhumir na tejo na vaayuhu
chidananda rupah shivo'ham shivo'ham**

I am not any aspect of the mind like the intellect, the ego or the memory,

I am not the organs of hearing, tasting, smelling or seeing,

I am not the space, nor the earth, nor fire, nor air, I am the form of consciousness and bliss, am śiva (that which is not).

**na me dvesha ragau na me lobha mohau
na me vai mado naiva matsarya bhavaha
na dharmo na chartho na kamo na mokshaha
chidananda rupah shivo'ham shivo'ham**

There is no hatred nor passion in me, no greed nor delusion, There is no pride, nor jealousy in me,

I am not identified with my duty, wealth, lust or liberation, I am the form of consciousness and bliss, I am śiva (that which is not)...

The Atma jnani (realised souls) perceive themselves as manifestations of Paramātmā and humbly offer all their actions and their outcomes to HIM.

3.29

**prakṛterguṇasammūḍhāḥ(s), sajjante guṇakarmasu,
tānakṛtsnavido mandān, kṛtsnavinna vicālayet. 3.29**

Those who are completely deluded by the Guṇas (modes) of Prakṛti remain attached to those Guṇas and actions; the man of perfect Knowledge should not unsettle the mind of those ignorants of imperfect knowledge.

Gurudev says "**Do not destroy the system that you have used for your emancipation.**"

The system we use to progress must remain functional and intact. After crossing Ganga ji in a boat one should not destroy the boat. It should be safeguarded for further use.

Bhagavān explained that the ignorant are unaware of the role of Gunas, and think themselves to be the doers of their actions. Bound by these three Gunas, they work for the sole purpose of being able to enjoy sensual delights. Therefore they are unable to perform actions as a matter of duty, without desiring rewards.

However, HE advised that the *kr̥itsna-vit* (persons with knowledge) should not disturb the minds of the *akr̥itsna-vit* (persons without knowledge). This is because the flame of knowledge will not ignite in their minds and karma will also be neglected. Rather, they should instruct the ignorant to perform their respective karma, and slowly help them rise above attachment.

Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji said:

जें सायासें स्तन्य सेवी । तें पक्कात्रें केवीं जेवी ।
म्हणौनि बाळका जैशीं नेदावीं । धनुर्धरा ॥ ३.१७२ ॥

Arjuna, how can the child that suckles its mother with difficulty, eat sweetmeats? So, one should not give those to him.

Likewise, if a wise man advises other to abandon action, there will be a collapse of the entire system.

तैशी कर्मीं जयां अयोग्यता । तयांप्रति नैष्कर्म्यता ।
न प्रगटावी खेळतां । आदिकरुनी ॥ ३.१७३ ॥

One should not disclose even in fun, freedom from action to one who is not even fit for action.

Bhagavān advised the wise to steadfastly fulfil their duties without attachment to the outcomes. Similarly, Arjuna was counselled to carry out his duties as a Kṣatriya warrior, relinquishing attachment to the fruits of his actions and entrusting the consequences to the divine. This example serves to inspire others, especially those who are less enlightened, to emulate such selfless action and devotion.

3.30

**mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi, sannyasyādhyātmacetasā,
nirāśīrnirmamo bhūtvā, yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ. 3.30**

Therefore, dedicating all actions to Me with your mind fixed on Me, the Self of all, freed from desire and the feeling of meum and cured of mental agitation, fight.

HE advised to offer all the *niyat* karmas (prescribed duties) and the *vihit* karmas (obligatory duties) unto HIM. This creation belongs to HIM, and all actions are ultimately HIS. Therefore, whatever task is assigned to you, perform it as an offering to HIM, dedicating the outcomes to HIS divine will.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj also said:

तरी उचितें कर्म आघवीं । तुवां आचरोनि मज अर्पावीं ।
परी चित्तवृत्ति न्यासावी । आत्मरूपीं ॥ ३.१८६ ॥

Therefore, perform your legitimate duties and dedicate them to ME, all the time keeping your mind

fixed on ME. This is how karma yoga is obtained.

When one learns to transform their karma into Karma Yoga, the divine gracefully extends a guiding hand, leading them towards the ultimate goal. This process is akin to charging one's spiritual battery, with the energy of the Paramātmā, which is must to progress along the path of self-realization.

A famous Marathi saint Gora Kumhar was a potter. While making pots he would visualise Vitthala (Krishna) in his pots and address HIM -

वेडा (पगला) कुम्हार

O' Vitthala you are a mad potter

Marathi Poetess Sant Jana Bai wrote:

देव खाते, देव पीते, देवावरी मी निजले,
देव देते, देव घेते, देवा संगे व्यवहारिते।
देव येथे, देव तेथे, देवा विण नाही रीते,
जनी म्हणे विठाबाई, सबाह्य अभ्यन्तरी भरून राही।।

Herein she has beautifully explained her unison with the Supreme.

3.31

**ye me matamidaṃ(n) nityam, anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ,
śraddhāvanto'nasūyanto, mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ. 3.31**

Even those men who, with an uncavilling and devout mind, always follow this teaching of Mine, are released from the bondage of all actions.

The virtuous and devout people become free from the consequences of their actions by following the words of the Divine. Those who listen to their elders, their welfare is assured. Bhagavān said that by faithfully following HIS teachings one becomes free from the bondage of karma.

Herein HE explained there are 2 kinds of people

- **asūya:** One who sees faults even when there is no fault, jealous.
- **anasūya:** One who is free from envy and malice.

In the 9th chapter HE had described Arjuna as anasūya:

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनुसूयवे ॥9:01॥

The distinction between a karma yogi and someone engaged in mere karma was showcased through the analogy of a teacher. A conventional teacher imparts education with the expectation that his students will eventually secure respectable professions and contribute positively to society. Conversely, a karma yogi teacher imparts education to his students as an act of worship to the Divine. Sister Nivedita's example was shared. When asked what was she teaching: she responded that she taught nothing to her class. Rather, she viewed her teaching as an act of worship to the Almighty.

If a hangman or a soldier perceives his task as an act of killing, he will naturally be apprehensive of the consequences. However, if he fulfils his duty with the understanding that it is part of his duty, he

becomes liberated from attachment to the outcome.

Any action performed for the creator of this universe becomes divine. Just as a 2000 rupee note holds greater value than its counterfeit counterpart because it bears the signature of the Governor of the Reserve Bank, so too we must perform our actions with the signature of Bhagavān, thereby transforming karma into Karma Yoga.

Arjuna had surrendered to HIM as HIS disciple, thus HE was sure that he would follow HIS teachings. However, there would be some who would find fault with HIS teachings.

3.32

ye tvetadabhyasūyanto, nānutiṣṭhanti me matam, sarvajñānavimūḍhāṃstān, viddhi naṣṭānacetasaḥ. 3.32

But they, however, who, finding fault with this teaching of Mine, do not follow it, take those fools to be deluded in the matter of all knowledge as lost.

HE says there would be people who have the habit of finding fault with everything. Such people would also find fault in HIS teachings of Karmayoga, and preaching's of scriptures.

Their minds are conditioned to be deluded. Their knowledge is clouded by their desires for worldly sensual pleasures. They do not believe in contributing to this Universe but live for their own enjoyment. As they do not believe in HIS teachings they try to distract the believers or followers. Such people are to be ignored.

In Marathi there is a popular saying that '**follow what you preach**'. One is advised to follow those who themselves practice what they preach.

This was explained with the example of Ramdas Swami Ji.

A mother brought her child to him and asked him to advise the child not to eat a lot of jaggery. Swami ji told the mother to return after 15 days with the child. After a fortnight, Swami ji explained to the child the ill effects of eating too much jaggery and advised him to stop eating jaggery. The mother asked Swami ji that he could have said the same 15 days ago. Swami Ji replied that he could not preach because he himself was of the habit of eating jaggery. He had to practice not eating before he could preach and help the child imbibe the teaching.

3.33

sadṛśaṃ(ñ) ceṣṭate svasyāḥ(ph), prakṛterjñānavānapi, prakṛtiṃ(ṡ) yānti bhūtāni, nigrahaḥ(kh) kiṃ(ñ) kariṣyati. 3.33

All living creatures follow their tendencies; even the wise man acts according to the tendencies of his own nature. Of what use is restraint by force.

Once again Śrī Bhagavān touches upon the three Gunas or prakṛti of sentient beings. HE says everyone acts as per their predominant Guna.

Sri Bhagavān said there was no point in restraining anyone to do anything against their natural instinct. An aptitude test is held to gauge an individual's intellect and inclinations. Following their

miraculous escape from the Lakshagraha fire, the Pāṇḍavas, along with their mother Kunti, sought refuge in the village of Ekachakra. It was during their stay there that Draupadi's father, King Drupada, organised a *swayamvara* for Draupadi's hand in marriage.

Disguised as Brahmins, the pāṇḍavas attended the *swayamvara*. Arjuna, skilfully pierced the eye of the moving fish, thus winning Draupadi as his wife. Upon their return, Arjuna, eager to share his triumph with his mother, called her to witness his achievement. However, engrossed in her daily chores, Kunti assumed Arjuna wanted to share the day's alms (bhiksha) he had collected. Without even looking at what Arjuna was presenting, she instructed him to share it with his brothers. Arjuna dutifully obeyed his mother's command, and thus Draupadi became the wife of all the Pāṇḍavas.

King Drupad however was doubtful regarding the Brahmin who had displayed the skills of a Kṣatriya during Draupadi's *swayamvara*. To uncover the truth, he instructed his son, Drishtadyumna, to investigate further. Drishtadyumna invited the Pāṇḍavas where various artifacts (including clothes, books, scriptures, and weapons) from different fields were exhibited. Drishtadyumna observed the Pāṇḍavas and noticed that they were immediately drawn to the weapons section, displaying an innate familiarity and affinity with the arms. This observation led Drishtadyumna to conclude that the pāṇḍavas were indeed Kṣatriyas and not Brahmins, thereby revealing their true identity.

Bhagavān was aware that Arjuna with his Rājasika Prakṛti, would not have been successful to meditate on the banks of the Ganges and become a jnani, even if HE had given him the permission to do so. His restless mind would have wandered in the battlefield and not settle down to focus on HIM.

Thus an aptitude test serves to reveal an individual's innate nature and inclination. Bhagavān reveals the path of converting this natural affinity into Karma Yoga in the subsequent shloka.

3.34

indriyasyendriyasyārthe, rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau, tayorna vaśamāgacchet, tau hyasya paripanthinau. 3.34

Attraction and repulsion are rooted in all sense-objects. Man should never allow himself to be swayed by them, because they are the two principal enemies standing in the way of his redemption.

Our senses have a natural inclination to seek out their respective objects. The five Jñāna indriyās - eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and skin - facilitate the functions of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch, respectively.

Our intellect (*mann*) plays a crucial role in discerning whether the experiences provided by these senses are perceived as favourable or unfavourable. Consequently, **all sensory experiences are categorised into likes (*raaga*) and dislikes (*dvesha*).**

For instance, our eyes are drawn to beauty but recoil from scenes of ugliness, such as an accident. Similarly, our ears crave for soothing words but recoil from criticism. We enjoy good food but avoid that which does not taste good, and so on.

Just as a student who has to appear for his examination is distracted by a match being telecast on TV, and instead of studying for his ensuing exam he spends time watching the match and gets distracted from his correct path of studying.

A wise individual must recognise and not succumb to these two passions of likes and dislikes. **Likes foster**

attachment, while dislikes breed aversion. Therefore, one should strive to avoid being trapped in these inclinations of likes and dislikes, as they are a hindrance in the path of welfare.

A man of power is the one who says 'No' to a temptation.

3.35

**śreyānsvadharmo viguṇaḥ(ph), paradharmātsvanuṣṭhitāt,
svadharme nidhanaṃ(m) śreyaḥ(ph), paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ. 3.35**

One's own duty, though devoid of merit, is preferable to the duty of another well performed. Even death in the performance of one's own duty brings blessedness; another's duty is fraught with fear.

Bhagavān said that one's own duty (*Svadharmā*) might appear less appealing compared to others' duties is a common human experience. Sometimes, our responsibilities may seem burdensome or undesirable, especially when compared to the seemingly more attractive or easier paths chosen by others. However, the Gītā teaches that true fulfillment and spiritual progress come from embracing and executing one's own duty with dedication and sincerity, regardless of how it may be perceived by others.

In the context of the Bhagavadgītā dharma does not mean religion like Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian etc. Here dharma means one's inherent duties i.e.. Svadharmā. For example, matridharma, pitridharma, samaj dharma, rashtra dharma etc. These are our duties towards our mother, father, the society, the nation respectively.

Comparing one's own duties with those of others can often lead to dissatisfaction and disillusionment. As the idiom goes, **the grass may seem greener on the other side**, but closer inspection often reveals hidden challenges and obstacles. Bhagavān advised Arjuna that it is better to die fulfilling one's own duty (*svadharmā*) than to take up the duties of others, even if those duties may seem more appealing or advantageous.

Each individual is uniquely equipped with certain talents, skills, and inclinations that are meant to be utilised in the service of their own dharma or duty. By staying true to one's *svadharmā*, one not only fulfills their role in the cosmic order but also experiences inner harmony and fulfilment. This can be understood better with the example of a doctor and an engineer. An engineer cannot treat people who are ill. Likewise a doctor cannot be useful in construction activities. However both may be accomplished in their own work areas.

A Brahmin will not be found proficient in the use of weapons. He will be unsuitable for war. Therefore, it is imperative to discern one's inherent traits and align one's karma accordingly. Unfortunately, in contemporary times, individuals are predominantly focused on the salary packages rather than recognising their innate tendencies.

Draupadi's *Svayambar* concluded, with Arjuna successfully piercing the eye of the moving fish, thus winning Draupadi's hand in marriage. However, King Drupad remained uneasy, as the Pāṇḍavas, dressed as Brahmins, did not outwardly resemble Kṣatriyas. Desiring his daughter's happiness and safety, he sought advice from his son, Drishtadyumn. Together, they devised a plan for the Pāṇḍavas to visit an exhibition arranged specifically for them.

The exhibition featured distinct sections showcasing scriptures, weapons, attire, and various artifacts. Upon arrival, the Pāṇḍavas instinctively went towards the weapons section. Witnessing this, Drushtadyumn reassured his father that Draupadi's husband was indeed a Kṣatriya, not a Brahmin. He reasoned that had

they been Brahmins, they would have naturally inclined towards the scriptures section. This incident served as a testament to the inherent tendencies of individuals.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj explained the same in his following ovis:

यारी जिया पराविया रंभेहुनी बारविया
तिया कायम करविया बाळके येणे

Meaning a child will be happy in the care of his ugly mother. a beautiful apsara like Rambha is of no value to him.

One should be happy pursuing one's own svadharma even if it seems inferior.

अंगा पाण्याहून बरवे तुली गुणकार आहे
परी मीना काय होये असणे तेथ

Meaning ghee is more valuable than water. However, a fish will die if put in a bowl of ghee

Bhagavān advised again and again to discern one's innate tendencies and execute karma in accordance with them, dedicating the actions at HIS sacred feet. **Such devotion liberates one from the bondage of karma's outcomes.**

3.36

arjuna uvāca :
atha kena prayukto'yaṁ(m), pāpaṁ(ñ) carati pūruṣaḥ,
anicchannapi vārṣṇeya, balādiva niyojitaḥ. 3.36

Arjuna said :

Now impelled by what, Kṛṣṇa, does this man commit sin even involuntarily, as though driven by force?

Śrī Krishna belonged to the Vrishni clan. Hence, Arjuna addressed HIM as Vārṣṇeya in this verse.

Arjuna is perplexed as to why sin happens if all action was bound by Prakṛti. Is Prakṛti responsible for sin? This is an imperative question as all individuals struggle with this question too. Why do *paap* (bad deeds) and *punya* (good deeds) happen? The Pāṇḍavas and the kauravas were disciples of the same Guru Dronacharya. However, Pāṇḍavas were righteous and the kauravas were manipulative and criminal minded. Duryodhana was aware of his nature. When asked why he was following the wrong path, he famously said the following:

जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्ति-
र्जानामि पापं न च मे निवृत्तिः ।
केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यथा नियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि ॥

I know what is right (dharma), yet I cannot get myself to follow it. I know what is wrong (adharma), yet I cannot refrain from it. (It is not my fault) It is as if some unknown force dwells in my heart and impels me to do, what I do.

A couplet reads

पत्ता भी अगर हिलता है उसकी राजा से
बंदा जो गुनहगार है मालूम नहीं क्यों।

If we believe that even a leaf flutters at HIS will, then how can individuals be allowed to do crime.

In reality will is of the individual and the energy is of Paramātmā. A pickpocket steals due to his own tendencies or Vāsanās. Bhagavān never encourages to do such an act. HE only provides the energy for the act.

3.37

**Srībhagavān uvāca :
kāma eṣa krodha eṣa, rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ,
mahāśano mahāpāpmā, viddhyenamīha vairiṇam. 3.37**

Śrī Bhagavān said :

It is desire begotten of the element of Rajas, which appears as wrath; nay, it is insatiable and grossly wicked. Know this to be the enemy in this case.

Bhagavān said Desire and Anger are the root cause of all problems. They are generated by Rajoguna and makes one run around to attain it. They are insatiable. The problem however is if one desire is fulfilled 10 more are rearing their heads. Whatever one achieves, there is always something more that the mind desires. If one of the desires is not fulfilled then it creates anger in the mind for the situation or for the person who is the obstacle in the path of attaining that desire.

In this verse of the Gītā, beings characterised by such insatiable tendencies are described as great sinners, for their inclinations lead them astray onto the wrong path. Hence, they are to be regarded as adversaries or enemies.

Kabir ji said:

**चाह गई चिंता मिटी, मनुआ बेपरवाह।
जिनको कुछ नहि चाहिए, वे साहन के साह।।**

Satisfaction is the path of renunciation. Alexander, having conquered vast realms, commanded in his final moments that his hands be left outside the coffin, symbolizing to all that even a great conqueror like himself departed from this world without carrying any worldly possessions.

Bhagavad Gītā teaches us to be satisfied because unless there is satisfaction there is no peace. Life will end but this race will not end. **Desire is that state of mind which is always empty.**

Gurudev says **Gītā teaches one the Art of Living in this world and also the Art of leaving this world.**

3.38

**dhūmenāvriyate vahniḥ(r), yathādarśo malena ca,
yatholbenāvṛto garbhaḥ(s), tathā tenedamāvṛtam. 3.38**

As fire is covered by smoke, mirror by dust, and embryo by the amnion, so is knowledge covered by desire.

Just as a flame is covered by smoke, mirror by dirt, and embryo by the amniotic sac, so does desire cloud reasoning. The conscience often warns us when we are about to engage in wrongful actions to fulfil our desires. Whether it's the temptation to bribe someone or commit other sins, the inner voice of conscience serves as a moral compass, but the desire becomes so strong that the inner voice gets

suppressed.

There is a voice inside you that speaks all day long.

3.39

**āvṛtaṃ(ñ) jñānametena, jñānino nityavairiṇā,
kāmarūpeṇa kaunteya, duṣpūreṇānalena ca. 3.39**

And, Arjuna, Knowledge stands covered by this eternal enemy of the wise, known as desire, which is insatiable like fire.

Giving the example of fire, Bhagavān said that no matter how much ghee and wood is put in fire, it is not satisfied, it burns everything. Similarly, desires are never fulfilled. So, the wise do not follow them. They understand that this is an eternal enemy which obscures knowledge.

To attain the title of Brahmārishi, sage Vishwamitra undertook rigorous penance for 12 years. However, his dedication stirred concern in the heart of Indra, who saw this as a threaten to his own sovereignty. In a bid to disrupt the sage's meditation, Indra sent a celestial nymph (Apsara) Menaka, whose unparalleled beauty trapped Vishwamitra's attention, leading him astray from his spiritual pursuits.

Realising his mistake, Vishwamitra recommenced his penance with renewed determination. Indra, seeking to thwart the sage once more, sent another Apsara named Rambha. With each passing day, Rambha dutifully attended to the sage's needs, meticulously tending to his daily rituals and offerings. However, one day, Rambha intentionally neglected her chores, causing the sage to succumb to anger and thus shattering his penance. Desire in the first instance and anger in the second proved to be obstacles thwarting the sage's pursuit to attain the title of Brahmārishi.

The wise thus consider both Desire and Anger as eternal enemies.

3.40

**indriyāṇi mano buddhiḥ(r), asyādhiṣṭhānamucyate,
etairvimohayatyeṣa, jñānamāvṛtya dehinam. 3.40**

The senses, the mind and the intellect are declared to be its seat; covering the knowledge through these, it (desire) deludes the embodied soul.

Desires, emerging in the sensory organs, the mind, and the intellect, veil the knowledge of truth. The senses, lured by material pleasures, give rise to more and more desires. Engaging in comparisons with others and their possessions, the embodied soul finds itself devoid of happiness and peace.

Gurudev aptly says:

काम का प्रवेश राम को बाहर निकाल देता है।

The indulgence in desire drives one away from the divine presence within.

3.41

**tasmāttvamindriyāṅyādau, niyamyā bharatarṣabha,
pāpmānaṃ(m) prajahi hyenaṃ(ñ), jñānavijñānanāśanam. 3.41**

Therefore, Arjuna, you must first control your senses, and then kill this evil thing which obstructs Jñāna (Knowledge of the Absolute or Nirguṇa Brahma) and Vijñāna (Knowledge of Sākāra Brahma or manifest Divinity).

HE advised Arjuna to identify the root cause of the problems (desires) and control them at the very onset and restrain them by determination. Only through such mastery can one attain Jñāna, the profound understanding of the Absolute or Nirguṇa Brahmā, and Vijñāna, the practical realisation of manifest Divinity or Sākāra Brahmā.

Jñāna is the philosophical or theoretical knowledge and Vijñāna is the practical knowledge which one can experience.

To control desires one needs to first control the senses as they are the instruments of the mind. The mind effects the intellect and this leads to sin. In war too it is advisable to gauge the strength of the enemy in order to defeat it.

Likewise one should first **control the senses and defeat desires which undermine Jñāna and Vijñāna.**

3.42

**indriyāṅi parāṅyāhuḥ(r), indriyebhyaḥ(ph) paraṃ(m) manaḥ,
manasastu parā buddhiḥ(r), yo buddheḥ(ph) paratastu saḥ. 3.42**

The senses are said to be greater than the body; but greater than the senses is the mind. Greater than the mind is the intellect; and what is greater than the intellect is He, the Self.

In this verse Bhagavān draws our attention to the inferior gross (*sthool*) instruments and the superior subtle (*sukshma*) instruments of every individual.

HE described that the body is made of gross matter; superior to which are the five knowledge-bearing senses (i.e.. taste, touch, sight, smell, and sound). Beyond the senses is the mind. Superior to the mind is the intellect, with its ability to discriminate, but even beyond the intellect is the divine soul or the *atma tattva*.

Desires cling more to the subtle. Attachment to the body easily gives place to attachment to the senses; from the senses it shifts to the mind, and from the mind it rises to the intellect. Attachment to all these leads to bondage and prevents a person from doing the right thing and consequently brings untold misery for that person.

Just as a piece of ice melts into water, expanding to occupy more space. When this water is transformed into vapour it disperses into the air, displaying its nature of pervasiveness. What is gross in form occupies space extensively, while what is subtle pervades even more expansively. The *atma tattva* being the subtlest encapsulates the utmost comprehensiveness and infinitude, thereby deserving recognition as the Supreme Essence.

3.43

**evaṃ(m) buddheḥ(ph) paraṃ(m) buddhvā, saṃstabhyātmānamātmanā,
jahi śatruṃ(m) mahābāho, kāmarūpaṃ(n) durāsadam. 3.43**

Thus, Arjuna, knowing the Self which is higher than the intellect and subduing the mind by reason, kill this enemy in the form of desire that is hard to overcome.

The understanding that the Atma Tattva, transcends even the intellect in subtlety, one should strive to restrain desires by controlling the senses.

Ravana's downfall began because of his desires. Driven by his cravings, he committed the grievous act of abducting Mata Sita, prompting Sri Rama to confront and ultimately defeat him. Similarly by understanding the Atma Tattva, one can recognise the presence of the Divine. Through this connection with HIM, one can consciously align their desires with divine will. By choosing desires that are in harmony with this divine connection, one can attain victory over the temptations and challenges of life.

The chapter and the session concluded by offering prayers to the Almighty.

Question and Answers

Somnath ji

Question: My daughter always topped in all her academic courses. She started with a good career. However, she left that and took up a small job in a school in Mumbai which is not in accordance to her academic achievements. Is this the law of Prakṛti?

Answer: This is observed that toppers usually achieve less than the backbenchers in later life. This is because we weigh success with the salary package. However, this is not the right thing to do. If your daughter is content in what she is doing and is doing her duty with sincerity then she is on the right path. HE changed her path because she may excel more in this field than she may have in her original field.

Praveen ji

Question: How to eradicate Tamoguna?

Answer: Tamoguna is essential too. But to reduce Tamoguna one needs to increase Rajoguna. For Rajoguna to be virtuous, Sattvaguna should be elevated. Successful Guru and disciple pairs have showcased this. Eg. Arjuna and Krishna, Vivekananda ji and Ram Krishna Paramhansa ji etc.. Waking up early, exercise, Prāṇayam aasan, good eating habits are ways to reduce Tamoguna.

Madhuri ji

Question: I am appearing for class 10 exams. I have prepared well but I am apprehensive and worrying about results.

Answer: Bhagavān answered a similar question of Arjuna

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ 30॥

Performing all works as an offering unto Me, constantly meditate on Me as the Supreme. Become free from desire and selfishness, and with your mental grief departed, fight!

Some more helpful tips: Do not worry a lot because that may cause panic while writing the exams.

Pray to the Almighty to guide you while doing the exam. Meditate a little before starting preparation. This would increase focus and help to memorise better.

**Om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṃ(ṽ) yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṃvāde
karmayogo nāma tṛtīyo'dhyāyaḥ**

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the third chapter entitled "Karmayoga, or the Yoga of Action."



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Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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