

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 3: Karma-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/pte320p8dDY>

Conquering Desire & Anger: The Path to Liberation & Spiritual Harmony

Bhagavad Gītā Chapter 3: Karma Yoga - The Yoga of Action

The session began with the auspicious lighting of the traditional lamp, symbolizing the steadfast flame guiding us on the path of Dharma. This flame represents the cleansing of our Antaḥkaraṇa (inner conscience) through knowledge, dispelling the darkness of ignorance. The atmosphere was enriched with the following prayers:

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः।

गुरुः साक्षात्परब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः।

gururbrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ gururdevo maheśvaraḥ

guruḥ sāṁśāt parabrahma tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ

The guru is Brahmā, the guru is Viṣṇu, the guru is Maheśvara (Śiva), and the guru is the self-revealing limitless Brahman. Salutations to that revered guru.

कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय हरये परमात्मने।

प्रणतः क्लेशनाशाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः।

kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmāne

praṇataḥ kleśanāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ

Salutations to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, Hari the Paramātmā, and Govinda. We bow to You for the destruction of all grief.

नमामि सद्गुरु शान्तं सच्चिदानन्द विग्रहम्।

पूर्णब्रह्मपरानन्दमीशं आलन्दिवल्लभम्।

namāmi sadguru śāntaṁ saccidānanda vigrahaṁ

pūrṇabrahmaparānandamīśaṁ ālandivallabhaṁ

We bow to the peaceful Sadguru, the embodiment of Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss, who is the

Supreme Brahman, the ultimate source of joy and eternal delight.

रत्नाकराधौतपदां हिमालयकिरीटिनीम्।
ब्रह्मराजर्षिरत्नाढ्यां वन्दे भारतमातरम्।

*ratnākarādhauṭapadāṃ himālayakirīṭinīm
brahmarājaṛṣiratnāḍhyāṃ vande bhāratamātaram*

One who is washed by the ocean and crowned with the Himalayas, resplendent with the gems of sages and kings, we offer salutations to Mother Bharat.

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं।
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारते।
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीमष्टादशाध्यायिनीम्।
अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम्।

*om pāṛthāya pratibodhitāṃ bhagavatā nārāyaṇena svayaṃ
vyāseṇa grathitāṃ purāṇamuninā madhye mahābhārate
advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇīm bhagavatīmaṣṭādaśādhyaīnīm
amba tvāmanusandadhāmi bhagavadgīte bhavadveṣiṇīm*

Taught to Arjuna by Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa Himself and composed by Vyāsa in the Mahābhārata, we meditate upon the Gītā, the divine mother who showers the nectar of Advaita and removes past karma.

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशालबुद्धे।
फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र।
येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः।
प्रज्वलितो ज्ञानमयः प्रदीपः॥

*namo'stu te vyāsa viśālabuddhe
phullāravindāyatapatranetra
yena tvayā bhāratatailapūrṇaḥ
prajvalito jñānamayaḥ pradīpaḥ*

Salutations to Vyāsa, the one with vast intellect and lotus-petal eyes, who lit the lamp of wisdom with the oil of Bhārata, illuminating the path of knowledge.

After these prayers, heartfelt salutations were offered to Swami Govind Dev Giri Maharaj Ji and all the Gītā Sādhakas attending the vivechan session.

Karma Yoga: An Accessible Path for All

Among various forms of Yoga—Aṣṭāṅga Yoga, Rāja Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga—Karma Yoga stands out as a path accessible to all. Each chapter of the Bhagavadgītā represents a unique Yoga, beginning with Arjuna Viśāda Yoga and concluding with Mokṣa Sannyāsa Yoga. Karma Yoga, the Yoga of selfless action, is simple and universally implementable.

In Chapter 2, Bhagavān highlighted the importance of both knowledge (jñāna) and action (karma), which left Arjuna confused. Arjuna questioned why Śrī Bhagavān encouraged him to fight if knowledge was deemed superior. His query, presented in Chapter 3, sets the stage for a deeper exploration:

अर्जुन उवाच।
ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन।
तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव॥ 3.1॥

arjuna uvāca

jyāyasī chet karmanas te matā buddhir janārdana

tat kiṃ karmaṇi ghore māṃ niyojayasi keśava

Arjuna said: If You consider knowledge superior to action, O Janārdana, then why do You urge me to engage in this dreadful war, O Keśava?

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे।

तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ 3.2 ॥

vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena buddhiṃ mohayasīva me

tad ekaṃ vada niścitya yena śreyo 'ham āpnuyām

You seem to confuse my intellect with ambiguous instructions. Please tell me decisively the one path by which I may attain the highest good.

Śrī Bhagavān clarified that both jñāna (knowledge) and karma (action) lead to the same ultimate goal. However, the path must align with one's nature and capacity. For Arjuna, action was indispensable. Bhagavān explained that no one can remain inactive, even for a moment:

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ 3.5 ॥

na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛt

kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ

No one can remain inactive even for a moment, as everyone is compelled to act according to the qualities born of nature.

If this is the reality, would it not be wise to convert karma into Karma Yoga? Bhagavān explained that even mundane actions could lead to liberation if performed selflessly and offered to the Divine. He illustrated this by categorizing people based on their approach to action:

1. Those who act out of necessity for sustenance.
2. Those who avoid action and shirk responsibility.
3. Those who lapse into lethargy despite wealth.
4. Those who work selflessly for the greater good.

Śrī Bhagavān emphasized the highest ideal as selfless action for societal welfare. He said:

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन।

नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ 3.22 ॥

na me pārthāsti kartavyaṃ triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana

nānavāptam avāptavyaṃ varta eva ca karmaṇi

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.

He added:

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत।

कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ 3.25 ॥

saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṃso yathā kurvanti bhārata

kuryād vidvāṃs tathāsaktaś cikīrṣur loka-saṅgraham

As the ignorant act with attachment, so should the wise, but without attachment, to inspire and guide others.

Śrī Bhagavān's Key Teaching

Śrī Bhagavān summarized Karma Yoga with this powerful verse:

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः॥ 3.30॥

*mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātma-cetasā
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ*

Renounce all actions to Me with a focused mind, free from desire and attachment. Perform your duties with serenity, unperturbed by anxiety.

Swami Govind Dev Giri Ji's Motto

Swami Govind Dev Giri Ji inspires all with the motto for Gītā Pariwār:

गीता पढ़ें, पढ़ाएं, जीवन में लाएं।

Gītā parhein, parhāyen, jīvan mein lāyen.
Learn Gītā, Teach Gītā, and Live Gītā!

By teaching Gītā, one deepens understanding; by living its principles, one elevates oneself and others.

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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān assures Arjuna that those who faithfully follow His teachings with sincerity and without criticism can free themselves from the karmic cycle. This teaching emphasizes surrender, devotion, and trust in the divine wisdom imparted by Bhagavān.

- **ye me matam idaṃ nityam:** Refers to those who consistently adhere to Bhagavān's teachings as their guiding principles.
- **anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ:** Those who practice this teaching in their daily lives with dedication and discipline.
- **śraddhāvantaḥ:** Individuals endowed with unwavering faith in Bhagavān's instructions.
- **anasūyantaḥ:** Refers to those free from criticism, jealousy, or doubt regarding the teachings.
- **mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ:** Such individuals are liberated from the bondage of karma, as their actions are aligned with divine wisdom.

Śrī Bhagavān encourages us to embrace the teachings of Karma Yoga with faith and dedication, ensuring that our actions are guided by divine principles. Through this practice, one can transcend the bindings of karma and move closer to liberation.

Practical Application: Living Karma Yoga Daily

The *Bhagavadgītā* is not merely a philosophical text but a *Yog Śāstra*—a science of spiritual practice. Like any scientific discipline, its true understanding lies in its application. Therefore, the teachings of Karma Yoga must not remain theoretical but be implemented in daily life to yield transformational results.

Include a daily prayer to set the intention of performing actions as an offering to Bhagavān:

कर प्रणाम तेरे चरणों में,
लगता हूँ अब तेरे काज।
पालन करूँ तव आज्ञा में,
नियुक्त होता हूँ आज।

*Kar pranām tere charaṇoṃ me,
Lagata hu ab tere kāj.
Pālan karu tava ājñā mein,
Niyukta hotā hu āj.*

I bow at Your feet, O Bhagavān,
I now dedicate myself to Your tasks.
I shall act as per Your divine instructions,
And today, I appoint myself to serve You.

This prayer sets the mindset of offering all actions to Bhagavān. Such an attitude ensures that:

1. **Avoidance of wrongdoing:** When every action is performed as an offering to Bhagavān, the thought of engaging in any unrighteous act becomes inconceivable.
2. **Excellence in work:** Knowing that the work is for Bhagavān inspires one to deliver the highest quality, ensuring devotion in every task.

Upon completing the work, it should be offered back to Śrī Bhagavān with the realization that the actions were His, executed through the individual. This attitude transforms even mundane actions into acts of worship, providing a sense of liberation and fulfillment.

Key Insight

This verse highlights the transformative power of faith and discipline. By sincerely following Bhagavān's teachings without harboring doubt or criticism, one can navigate the complexities of life, neutralize the impact of past actions, and achieve freedom from the endless cycle of karma.

3.32

**ye tvetadabhyasūyanto, nānutiṣṭhanti me matam,
sarvajñānavimūḍhāmstān, 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.

Śrī Bhagavān, in this verse, contrasts the attitudes of the faithful and the skeptical toward His divine teachings. He asserts that rejecting or criticizing His guidance not only prevents spiritual progress but leads to ignorance and delusion. Those who fail to follow the path of wisdom and duty become disconnected from higher truths, entangled in the material world, and ultimately lost in the grand purpose of life.

- **ye tv etad abhyasūyantaḥ:** Refers to individuals who harbor doubt, ego, or criticism toward Bhagavān's teachings.
- **na anutiṣṭhanti me matam:** These individuals disregard the principles of Karma Yoga, neglecting their prescribed duties.

- **sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhān**: Such people are deluded in all forms of knowledge, failing to grasp both spiritual and worldly truths.
- **viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ**: They are considered "lost," their consciousness clouded, leaving them disconnected from divine wisdom.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj beautifully illustrates this through metaphors:

पहा शवाहार्ती दिधले । जैसे की रत्न वाया गेले ।
अथवा जन्मांधा उजाडले । समजेना; ॥१९७॥

*pahā śavāhātīm didhale, jaise kī ratna vāyā gele,
athavā janmāndhā ujāḍale, samajena;*

- "Bestowing precious gems upon a corpse is futile; such wealth has no value in that context."
- "If someone born blind speaks about the sunrise, their words lack authenticity, for they have never truly seen the light."

These analogies highlight the futility of rejecting divine teachings. It equates such rejection to wasting treasures or speaking without genuine understanding, showing how skepticism toward Bhagavān's words obstructs spiritual progress and leaves one spiritually bereft.

Key Insight

This verse serves as a cautionary reminder about the dangers of pride and skepticism. Bhagavān emphasizes that ego-driven criticism and neglect of His teachings lead to ignorance, confusion, and disconnection from divine purpose. Embracing humility, faith, and devotion allows one to transcend such pitfalls, aligning oneself with the eternal truths of Karma Yoga and the path to liberation. By following His guidance sincerely, one attains clarity, purpose, and spiritual progress.

3.33

**sadrśaṃ(ñ) ceṣṭate svasyāḥ(ph), prakṛterjñānavānapi,
prakṛtiṃ(ṽ) yānti bhūtāni, nigrahaḥ(kh) kiṃ(ṇ) 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.

Śrī Bhagavān highlights the profound influence of inherent tendencies (prakṛti) on human behavior. He explains that actions are often shaped by one's natural disposition, even in the case of the wise. Attempting to suppress these tendencies through forceful restraint alone is futile; genuine transformation requires self-awareness, spiritual growth, and alignment with higher values.

- **sadrśaṃ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛteḥ**: Every individual acts according to their prakṛti, which shapes their inclinations and behavior.
- **jñānavān api**: Even those with wisdom and knowledge are not exempt from the influence of their inherent nature.
- **prakṛtiṃ yānti bhūtāni**: All beings inevitably follow the pull of their prakṛti, which includes physical, emotional, and mental conditioning.
- **nigrahaḥ kiṃ kariṣyati**: External suppression alone cannot bring lasting change; transformation occurs only through understanding and mastery of one's inner tendencies.

Śrī Bhagavān underscores the nature of **Prakṛti** elaborated elsewhere in the Bhagavad Gītā. In the **7th**

Chapter, He introduces **Aṣṭadhā Prakṛti** (eightfold material nature), comprising the five gross elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether—and the three subtle elements—mind, intellect, and ego. These elements represent the lower prakṛti (apara), while the conscious Jīvātmā, His higher prakṛti (para), animates the material world.

In the **14th Chapter**, He explains that Prakṛti is governed by three Guṇas:

- **Sattva**: Associated with purity, harmony, and wisdom, it elevates consciousness.
- **Rajas**: Linked to passion, activity, and desire, it fuels restlessness and attachment.
- **Tamas**: Representing inertia, ignorance, and darkness, it binds through delusion.

These Guṇas influence every aspect of life, binding individuals to the material world. Liberation is achieved by rising above their sway through self-awareness and devotion.

Self-Restraint vs. Suppression

Nigraha (restraint) must evolve from self-awareness rather than forceful suppression. The **6th Chapter** discusses methods to control the mind effectively, emphasizing the importance of even a small spark of discernment (vivek). This vivek acts as a guiding light to choose the righteous path amidst challenges.

The dual potential of vivek is beautifully symbolized in the verse:

एक बची चिंगारी, चाहे जले दीप, चाहे जले चिता।

A small spark—whether it lights a lamp or ignites a pyre.

This metaphor reminds us that vivek can illuminate wisdom or burn away ignorance. It inspires perseverance, even when the mind seems difficult to control, with the conviction that consistent effort will lead to success.

Key Insight

This verse emphasizes the futility of mere external control over one's tendencies without addressing their root cause. Śrī Bhagavān urges us to cultivate self-awareness, accept our nature, and strive for inner transformation. By nurturing vivek and aligning our actions with spiritual principles, we transcend the limitations of prakṛti and progress toward liberation.

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.

Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the natural dual forces of attraction (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*), which are inherent in every interaction with the world through the senses. These forces, when unchecked, drive attachments and repulsions, leading to emotional turmoil and distraction from the spiritual path.

- **indriyasya indriyasyārthe rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau**: Each sense naturally gravitates towards objects it finds pleasurable and resists those it finds unpleasant. This tendency is universal and instinctive.
- **tayor na vaśam āgacchet**: Bhagavān advises that one should not become a slave to these tendencies, as succumbing to them fosters impulsive behavior and material attachments.
- **tau hy asya paripanthinau**: Attraction and aversion are described as the two chief obstacles

(*paripanthinau*) that hinder spiritual growth by keeping the mind entangled in the material world.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj offers a profound analogy to illustrate this teaching:

एरवी इंद्रियांकरिता । हवे ते विषय पुरविता । संतोष होईल चित्ता । साचचि गा ॥२१०॥
परि ती चोरांची संगत । जो अल्पकाळ राही स्वस्थ । नगरसीमा ओलांडीपर्यंत । सावाऐसा ॥२११॥

"Even if the senses are provided with all the pleasures they desire, the mind may feel temporarily satisfied. However, this satisfaction is neither true nor lasting. It is like associating with thieves who appear calm and harmless for a brief moment but ultimately disrupt and harm once they cross the city boundaries."

This analogy cautions against blindly indulging the senses. Such indulgence may bring fleeting pleasure but ultimately leads to chaos and harm, much like trusting thieves.

Another metaphor compares this to a fish tempted by bait in a trap, which, in its greed, becomes ensnared. Similarly, seekers may fall into the trap of sensory gratification if they fail to exercise restraint.

Key Insight

This verse calls for mastery over one's senses and a balanced approach to life's dualities. Śrī Bhagavān teaches that while attraction and aversion are natural, allowing them to dictate actions perpetuates bondage to the material world. By cultivating self-awareness, restraint, and mindfulness, one can transcend these tendencies, paving the way for lasting peace and self-realization. This wisdom encourages a mindful and detached engagement with the world, ensuring spiritual progress and inner harmony.

3.35

**śreyānsvadharmaḥ viguṇaḥ(ph), paradharmātsvanuṣṭhitāt,
svadharme nidhanaṁ(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.

Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of embracing one's svadharma, the duties aligned with one's innate nature and role in the cosmic order. Each person is uniquely equipped to fulfill specific responsibilities, and doing so fosters authenticity and spiritual growth. Even if such duties are carried out imperfectly, they are more beneficial than excelling in someone else's role, which can lead to inner conflict, fear, and instability.

- **śreyān svadharmaḥ viguṇaḥ**: Following one's own duties, despite challenges or imperfections, is more fulfilling and aligned with personal evolution.
- **paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt**: Performing another's duties—even with excellence—creates misalignment and fails to contribute to spiritual progress.
- **svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ**: Even facing death while adhering to one's own duty is noble, as it reflects integrity and alignment with one's true purpose.
- **paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ**: Assuming the duties of another breeds fear and instability, as it disconnects one from their natural path and creates inner discord.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj offers profound metaphors to explain this concept:

येरी जिया पराविया | रंभेहुनि बरविया |
तिया काय कराविया | बाळकें तेणें ? ॥ ९२८ ॥

Even the most beautiful woman, like Rambha, holds no greater value for a child than its own mother.

This metaphor illustrates how svadharma, like a mother's unconditional support and nourishment, is uniquely significant and irreplaceable.

अगा पाणियाहूनि बहुवें | तुपीं गुण कीर आहे |
परी मीना काय होये | असणें तेथ ॥ ९२९ ॥

Although ghee may be more valuable than water, it is of no use to a fish, which depends on water for survival.

In the same way, one's svadharma is as essential as water for the fish, offering sustenance and purpose, while the paradharma, though seemingly superior, cannot fulfill one's inner needs.

Key Insight

This verse is a timeless reminder of the value of authenticity and self-alignment. Śrī Bhagavān teaches that the path to spiritual fulfillment lies in embracing one's unique role and responsibilities, rather than imitating others. Performing one's svadharma fosters personal growth, harmony, and liberation, even amidst imperfections. It underscores the wisdom that true progress is achieved not by comparison but by honoring one's own journey.

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?

In this verse, Arjuna voices a profound and universal question about human nature. He asks Śrī Bhagavān to explain the mysterious force that compels individuals to engage in sinful actions, even when they consciously wish to avoid wrongdoing. This inquiry highlights the inner conflict between a person's understanding of what is right and their inability to act accordingly.

- **atha kena prayuktaḥ ayam:** Arjuna asks about the cause or force that drives a person toward sinful behavior.
- **pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ:** Why does a person, despite their better judgment, commit wrongful acts?
- **anicchannapi vārṣṇeya:** Arjuna notes that this happens even when a person lacks any conscious desire to sin.
- **balād iva niyojitaḥ:** The compulsion feels as though an external or internal force overpowers their will.

Arjuna's question reflects a universal human experience: the struggle between intention and action. Despite knowing what is right, individuals often find themselves acting against their conscience.

Illustration from Life and Scriptures

Consider a smoker who knows that smoking harms their health but continues due to an irresistible craving. This example mirrors the struggle Arjuna describes, where desires overpower reason.

In the Mahābhārata, Duryodhana candidly confesses this very dilemma:

जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः।
जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः।
केनापि तत्त्वे हृदिस्थितेन।
यथा नियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि॥

I know what is Dharma, yet I am not inclined toward it.
I know what is Adharma, yet I cannot desist from it.
By some principle established in my heart,
I act as I am directed.

Despite his knowledge of dharma, Duryodhana's inability to follow it reflects the very force Arjuna is asking about.

This dilemma is beautifully captured in the Marathi proverb:

कळते पण वळत नाही

It is understood, but it doesn't translate into action.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaji says:

साध्वी शांती नागविली । मग माया मांगी शृंगारिली । तियेकरवीं विटाळविलीं । साधुवुंदें ॥ २५१ ॥

The chaste figure of peace has been ravished by them and having adorned lowborn delusion with ornaments, through her they have polluted numberless sages.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj compares this force to a heinous act like rape, illustrating how such overpowering impulses can rob individuals of self-control and moral judgment. This example underscores the gravity of desires and the destructive consequences of succumbing to them.

Key Insight

Arjuna's question sets the stage for Śrī Bhagavān to explain the root causes of sinful behavior: **desire (kāma)** and **anger (krodha)**. These arise from the mode of passion (rajas) and are the primary forces that lead individuals astray. Śrī Bhagavān's response highlights the importance of self-awareness, discipline, and spiritual practice to overcome these impulses. This teaching serves as a reminder of the need for inner mastery to align one's actions with dharma and achieve true self-control.

3.37

Śrībhagavānuvāca :
kāma eṣa krodha eṣa, rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ,
mahāśano mahāpāpmā, viddhyenamiha 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.

Śrī Bhagavān identifies **desire (kāma)** and its transformation into **anger (krodha)** as the root causes of human turmoil and sinful behavior. These forces originate from **rajas**, the mode of passion, which generates agitation, attachment, and longing. When desires remain unfulfilled, they erupt as anger, creating chaos and destructive tendencies. Bhagavān emphasizes that these forces are not just emotions but powerful adversaries that devour inner peace, wisdom, and spiritual growth.

- **kāma eṣa krodha eṣa**: Desire and its inevitable transformation into anger are highlighted as the primary instigators of harmful actions.
- **rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ**: These arise from the rajas guṇa, which fuels restlessness and material cravings.
- **mahāśano mahāpāpmā**: Desire is insatiable ("mahāśano") and the root of grave sin ("mahāpāpmā"), illustrating its all-consuming and destructive potential.
- **viddhi enam iha vairiṇam**: Śrī Bhagavān calls upon Arjuna to recognize these forces as the ultimate enemies obstructing the path to spiritual progress.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj elaborates:

हे जळेंवीण बुडविती । आगीवीण जाळिती । न बोलतां कवळिती । प्राण्यांतें ॥५७॥
हे शस्त्रेंवीण साधिती । दोरेंवीण बांधिती । ज्ञानियासी तरी वधिती । पैज घेऊनी ॥५८॥

"They drown without water, burn without fire, and silently devour lives.
They strike without weapons, bind without ropes, and even defeat the wise, staking a challenge."

These poetic lines vividly portray **desire and anger** as subtle yet devastating enemies. They operate silently and stealthily, overwhelming even the most discerning individuals. Desire, by its very nature, is insatiable, and its transformation into anger only compounds its destructive power.

A person consumed by these internal adversaries suffers a fate akin to being drowned or burned by unseen forces. Overcoming **kāma** and **krodha** demands awareness, self-restraint, and unwavering effort, as these forces are deeply rooted within human nature.

This verse highlights the need to address the insatiable and destructive nature of desire and anger. Left unchecked, they perpetuate dissatisfaction and obstruct the path to self-realization.

Key Insight

Śrī Bhagavān reveals that the real enemies of spiritual progress are not external but internal—desire and anger. These forces, arising from the mode of passion, bind individuals to a cycle of longing and frustration. To transcend their influence, one must cultivate self-awareness, inner discipline, and detachment. Recognizing and mastering these enemies is crucial for attaining inner harmony and spiritual liberation.

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.

Śrī Bhagavān employs three vivid metaphors to explain how **desire (kāma)** veils the inherent clarity of knowledge (jñāna), preventing individuals from realizing their true essence:

- **dhūmena āvriyate vahniḥ**: Fire, though naturally luminous, is temporarily veiled by smoke. This represents mild obscuration, where knowledge can still shine through with effort.
- **yathā adarśaḥ malena ca**: A mirror covered with dust cannot reflect clearly. Similarly, desire clouds the mind, obstructing clarity of thought and self-reflection.
- **yathā ulbena āvṛtaḥ garbhaḥ**: An embryo enclosed in the amnion is completely hidden, symbolizing the most profound concealment where knowledge is deeply enveloped by desire.
- **tathā tena idam āvṛtam**: Just as these objects are obscured, so too is the light of wisdom concealed by desire, creating ignorance and binding one to worldly illusions.

These metaphors highlight varying levels of obstruction caused by desire, showing that while the soul's knowledge and wisdom are inherently present, they require effort and purification to be revealed.

1. **Fire and smoke**: Represents mild obstruction where the light of knowledge is dimmed but not extinguished. It can be cleared with minimal effort.
2. **Mirror and dust**: Denotes moderate obscuration requiring deliberate purification and inner cleansing.
3. **Embryo and amnion**: Suggests complete concealment of knowledge, requiring significant spiritual effort to uncover the truth.

Desire, depending on its intensity, veils the natural brilliance of the soul, creating layers of ignorance that must be addressed through discipline and self-awareness.

Key Insight

This verse emphasizes that **desire is the root cause of ignorance**, veiling the light of true knowledge. Śrī Bhagavān uses these metaphors to urge us to recognize and remove the coverings of desire through self-discipline, meditation, and spiritual practice. By doing so, we can restore the clarity of our inner wisdom, allowing it to illuminate our path to self-realization.

3.39

**āvṛtaṁ(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.

Śrī Bhagavān unveils the insidious nature of desire (kāma), emphasizing its role as the primary hindrance to wisdom and spiritual growth. Desire acts as an eternal enemy, relentlessly clouding discernment and binding individuals to a cycle of craving and dissatisfaction.

- **āvṛtaṁ jñānam etena**: Knowledge, though inherently luminous and transformative, is veiled

by desire, obscuring one's ability to see truth and act wisely.

- **jñāninaḥ nityavairiṇā**: For even the wise, desire remains an ever-present adversary, challenging their resolve and obstructing their spiritual progress.
- **kāmarūpeṇa kaunteya**: Desire manifests in myriad forms, influencing thoughts, emotions, and actions, weaving a web of attachments and dependencies.
- **duṣpūreṇa analena ca**: Like an unquenchable fire, desire grows stronger with each indulgence, perpetuating a cycle of longing and dissatisfaction.

Desire arises from the mode of passion (rajas), fueling a relentless pursuit of fulfillment that ultimately deepens one's bondage to worldly attachments. Fulfillment of one desire inevitably gives birth to another, creating a never-ending cycle of longing. This makes desire not just a distraction but a potent adversary to self-realization.

Śrī Bhagavān underscores that **desire is the root cause of ignorance and delusion**, clouding the light of knowledge and keeping individuals trapped in material pursuits. To address this, Śrī Bhagavān promises to reveal its dwelling places in the next verse, offering guidance on how to identify and overcome its grip.

Key Insight

Desire is the primary impediment to self-knowledge and spiritual freedom. Like an insatiable fire, it consumes one's peace and wisdom, perpetuating ignorance. Recognizing desire as the true enemy is the first step toward liberation. Śrī Bhagavān encourages us to master this powerful force through awareness, discipline, and inner strength, paving the way for clarity, peace, and self-realization.

3.40

**indriyāṇi mano buddhiḥ(r), asyādhiṣṭhānamucyate,
etaivimohayatyeṣa, 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.

Śrī Bhagavān reveals the internal strongholds of desire—senses, mind, and intellect—where it operates to cloud wisdom and trap the soul in ignorance. By targeting these faculties, desire exerts a powerful influence over thoughts and actions, steering individuals away from spiritual clarity.

- **indriyāṇi**: Desire first anchors itself in the senses, luring individuals toward sensory indulgence and pleasures.
- **mano**: The mind, swayed by these sensory inclinations, magnifies cravings and strengthens attachments.
- **buddhiḥ**: Even the intellect, the seat of discrimination and reason, is not immune to desire's grip, often rationalizing harmful actions.
- **asyādhiṣṭhānam ucyate**: These three—senses, mind, and intellect—are the identified bases where desire firmly establishes itself.
- **etaivimohayati eṣaḥ**: Through these channels, desire deludes the embodied soul, creating confusion and leading to misguided actions.
- **jñānam āvṛtya dehinam**: By obscuring the light of true knowledge, desire perpetuates ignorance, binding the soul (dehinam) to worldly attachments.

This verse vividly portrays how deeply embedded desire is within the human psyche. It not only manipulates external behaviors but also distorts internal thought processes, making it a formidable adversary. Fighting an enemy hidden within—desire—requires greater vigilance and self-awareness than

battling external foes.

The analogy resonates with Bharat's history, where internal challenges have often posed more significant threats than external invasions. Similarly, internal enemies like desire must be identified and addressed to restore harmony within.

Key Insight

Desire's stronghold over the senses, mind, and intellect highlights its pervasive and subtle nature. Śrī Bhagavān encourages us to recognize and combat this internal adversary by cultivating discipline over the senses, mindfulness in the mind, and clarity in the intellect. Mastery over these faculties can weaken desire's grip, unveiling true knowledge and paving the way to liberation.

3.41

tasmāttvamindriyāṇyādau, niyamya bharatarṣabha, pāpmānaṁ(m) prajahi hyenaṁ(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).

Śrī Bhagavān offers Arjuna a practical approach to overcome the powerful influence of desire. Recognizing that desire clouds both intellectual and experiential understanding, He emphasizes the necessity of self-discipline, beginning with mastery over the senses.

- **tasmāt tvam indriyāṇi ādau niyamya:** Bhagavān advises that the journey to self-mastery must start with regulating the senses, as they are the primary conduits through which desire enters and influences the mind.
- **bharatarṣabha:** Addressing Arjuna as "best among the Bharatas," Bhagavān reminds him of his inner strength and capacity to undertake this essential discipline.
- **pāpmānaṁ prajahi:** Desire is identified as the root of sin, and Bhagavān emphasizes its complete eradication to liberate oneself from its grip.
- **hy enaṁ jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam:** Desire is described as an adversary that not only obscures Jñāna (theoretical knowledge of ultimate reality) but also Vijñāna (direct, experiential realization of the Divine).

Desire acts as a persistent force, binding the senses, mind, and intellect to material pleasures, thus veiling the soul's true nature. Self-control is presented as the first step to reclaiming clarity and inner freedom.

In **Ashtanga Yoga**, as described in Chapter 6 (*Ātma-Samāyama Yoga* or the Yoga of Self-Control), the foundational practices of **Yam** (ethical restraints) and **Niyam** (positive observances) are prerequisites for higher spiritual practices. Śrī Bhagavān highlights a similar progression, beginning with sense control, as a gateway to dismantling desire and restoring one's inner equilibrium. This approach aligns the aspirant with the path of righteousness and self-realization.

In the verses that follow, Śrī Bhagavān elaborates on the precise methods to master the senses and regain control over the mind and intellect, paving the way for spiritual progress.

Key Insight

Śrī Bhagavān underscores that sense control is indispensable for overcoming the destructive force of desire. By mastering the senses and cultivating discipline, one can dismantle the root cause of ignorance and pave the way for both intellectual clarity and spiritual liberation. This teaching serves as a reminder

that the battle against desire begins with self-mastery, a foundational step in the journey toward ultimate freedom.

3.42

**indriyāṇi parāṇyāhuḥ(r), indriyebhyaḥ(ph) paraṁ(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.

Śrī Bhagavān unveils the hierarchy of human faculties, guiding seekers to progressively master their inner being and ultimately realize the eternal Self. This structure provides a clear understanding of the levels of control and refinement required on the spiritual journey.

- **indriyāṇi parāṇi āhuḥ**: The senses are superior to the body as they enable interaction with the external world, serving as the gateway to perception and experience.
- **indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ**: The mind surpasses the senses, as it organizes sensory input and drives emotional and mental responses, shaping desires and intentions.
- **manasastu parā buddhiḥ**: The intellect is superior to the mind, as it provides the power of reasoning, discernment, and clarity, allowing one to rise above impulsive actions and align with long-term goals.
- **yo buddheḥ parataḥ tu saḥ**: Beyond the intellect lies the Self (Ātman), the ultimate, unchanging essence of existence, which is the source of peace, wisdom, and eternal truth.

This layered framework demonstrates how an individual can ascend from the external to the internal:

1. **Control the senses** to prevent distractions and indulgences.
2. **Govern the mind** by directing it toward noble aspirations and away from fleeting desires.
3. **Use the intellect** to discern between right and wrong, aligning actions with higher truths.
4. **Realize the Self**, transcending all lower faculties to achieve spiritual fulfillment.

Consider a practical example: A student aiming to excel in studies or a person committed to improving health may face temptations such as entertainment or indulgent foods. Here, the intellect acts as the higher guide, directing the mind to restrain the senses and remain focused on the ultimate goal. This interplay underscores the importance of a disciplined intellect in mastering the lower faculties.

Śrī Bhagavān teaches that aligning the intellect with the Self, and ultimately connecting the Self with the Supreme (Paramātmā), enables one to transcend worldly distractions and achieve liberation. The next verse elaborates on the method to accomplish this.

Key Insight

This verse illuminates the path of self-mastery by highlighting the hierarchical relationship between the body, senses, mind, intellect, and Self. Śrī Bhagavān urges seekers to recognize the Self as the highest reality and to progressively refine their faculties to align with this eternal essence. By following this roadmap, one can overcome distractions, realize inner clarity, and experience the bliss of true self-awareness.

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.

Śrī Bhagavān concludes the chapter with a call for inner mastery, urging Arjuna to confront and vanquish the internal adversary—desire. This verse serves as a practical guide for overcoming obstacles to spiritual progress and achieving self-realization.

- **evaṃ buddheḥ paraṃ buddhvā:** Recognize the Self (Ātman) as superior to the intellect. The Self is the eternal, unchanging essence of being, the source of wisdom and strength.
- **saṃstabhyātmānam ātmanā:** Steady the mind through self-discipline and the discriminative power of the intellect. This requires focused effort to align the mind with higher goals.
- **jahi śatruṃ kāmarūpaṃ:** Destroy the enemy that appears in the form of desire, which binds the soul and obstructs spiritual growth.
- **durāsadam:** Understand that desire is a formidable and persistent foe, requiring unwavering determination to conquer.

Śrī Bhagavān underscores that the true battle lies within. Victory in this internal struggle depends on awakening and utilizing the immense potential already present within oneself. This is illustrated by the story of a stone breaker's son:

The boy, adept at breaking stones, aspired to gain supreme power. He prayed to the Sun, who told him that the clouds were stronger as they could block sunlight. The clouds directed him to the wind, which could scatter them effortlessly. The wind pointed to the mountain, which resisted its force. Finally, the mountain revealed that the ultimate power lay in the stones within, which the boy himself could shatter. The boy realized he had been searching outwardly for the strength that was already within him.

This story teaches that self-mastery begins with realizing and awakening one's inner power. Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes aligning the intellect with the Ātman, which is connected to the infinite Paramātmā. When the intellect governs the mind and the mind controls the senses, one gains mastery over desires and distractions.

An inspiring real-life example of determination is seen in the life of the legendary singer, Late Smt. Lata Mangeshkar Ji. To protect her voice, she refrained from drinking cold water throughout her life, demonstrating extraordinary self-discipline and dedication to her art.

Śrī Bhagavān's teaching highlights the importance of setting a clear life goal. When the intellect is firmly anchored in a higher purpose, it becomes a guiding force to discipline the mind and senses. This alignment ensures the conquest of desire and paves the way for spiritual progress.

Key Insight

This verse encapsulates the essence of self-mastery in Karma Yoga. Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the hierarchy of Self, intellect, and mind, guiding us to recognize and overcome desire—the root cause of bondage. By channeling the intellect with determination, one can conquer internal adversaries and achieve liberation. This teaching inspires us to harness our inner strength, aligning every action with higher values and spiritual goals.

The session concluded with a collective dedication of the learning at the lotus feet of Paramātmā, followed by a vibrant Question and Answer session.

Question and Answer

Suman Rastogi Ji

Q: I often face episodes of depression and have a neurological condition. While I rely on medication, how can I better manage this situation?

A:
The **Bhagavad Gītā** serves as a profound guide for overcoming emotional and mental struggles. Reflect on Arjuna's despair on the battlefield of Kurukshetra—when faced with the dilemma of fighting his loved ones, he was consumed by grief and hopelessness. Through Śrī Bhagavān's teachings, he regained clarity, strength, and purpose.

The Gītā offers tools for mental resilience through its timeless wisdom. Regular study and reflection on its verses provide inner strength and emotional balance. Moreover, the Gītā is **Mantramayi**—infused with divine vibrations. Reciting its verses can calm the mind and has been found to have therapeutic effects even for conditions like schizophrenia. Think of the Gītā as a nurturing mother whose comforting touch soothes the heart and brings peace.

To complement medical treatments, integrate daily practices such as reciting relevant verses, meditating on Śrī Bhagavān's teachings, and maintaining unwavering faith in the transformative power of the Gītā. These practices harmonize your inner being, creating a space for healing and strength. With dedication and patience, the Gītā becomes a lifelong companion in overcoming challenges and attaining mental well-being.

Kumari Madhuja Ji

Q: What is Aṣṭadhā Prakṛti?

A:
In Chapter 7 – **Jñāna-Vijñāna Yoga**, Śrī Bhagavān reveals two aspects of His divine nature:

1. **Aṣṭadhā Prakṛti** (lower, material nature).
2. **Para Prakṛti** (higher, spiritual nature—the Jīvātmā).

Aṣṭadhā Prakṛti (Eightfold Material Nature)

Śrī Bhagavān describes His material energy (*apara prakṛti*) as comprising eight elements, categorized into:

1. The Five Gross Elements (Pañchatattva):

- **Earth (Pṛthvī):** Stability, structure, and physical existence.
- **Water (Āpaḥ):** Fluidity, nourishment, and adaptability.
- **Fire (Tejas):** Energy, transformation, and illumination.
- **Air (Vāyu):** Motion, life force, and connectivity.
- **Ether (Ākāśa):** Space and openness, the foundation for all existence.

2. The Three Subtle Elements:

- **Mind (Manas):** Emotions, desires, and thought processing.
- **Intellect (Buddhi):** Discrimination, reasoning, and understanding.
- **Ego (Ahaṅkāra):** Sense of individuality and self-identity.

These eight elements together form Śrī Bhagavān's **Aṣṭadhā Prakṛti**, which is responsible for the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the material universe.

Para Prakṛti (Higher Spiritual Nature)

Śrī Bhagavān further explains that the Jīvātmā (conscious soul) is His **para prakṛti**—the higher, spiritual energy that animates life. Unlike the transient material nature, the **para prakṛti** is eternal and connects all beings to the Divine.

By understanding this distinction, a seeker realizes that the material world is impermanent, while the Self is eternal. This wisdom inspires deeper spiritual awareness and detachment from material bondage.

Malay Ji

Q: In this chapter, Śrī Bhagavān has identified Kāma (desire) and Krodha (anger) as the two main enemies hidden within us. However, in Chapter 16 – Daivasura Sampad Vibhāga Yoga, Śrī Bhagavān also mentions Lobha (greed). Why is it not elaborated here?

A: Śrī Bhagavān highlights Kāma and Krodha in this chapter because they are the foundational forces that give rise to other negative traits, including Lobha.

1. **Kāma** (*desire*) is the root.

- When fulfilled, Kāma often evolves into **Lobha** (*greed*), an insatiable craving for more.
- When obstructed, Kāma transforms into **Krodha** (*anger*), which disrupts clarity and leads to destructive actions.

2. In **Chapter 16 – Daivasura Sampad Vibhāga Yoga**, Śrī Bhagavān expands the list of negative tendencies, including Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Mad (*arrogance*), Moha (*delusion*), Mātsarya (*envy*), and Ahankāra (*ego*). These traits collectively form the demonic (āsuric) qualities, yet all stem from Kāma.

Not All Desires Are Harmful

Desire in itself is not inherently negative. Śrī Bhagavān clarifies this in Chapter 7, Verse 11:

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ।

dharmāviruddho bhūteṣhu kāmo 'smi bharatarṣhabha

“I am desire in living beings that is not contrary to Dharma, O best of the Bharatas.”

When aligned with Dharma (righteousness), Kāma becomes constructive, motivating actions that benefit oneself and society, such as the pursuit of knowledge, service, and love for family. Such desires are essential for personal and societal growth.

The Four Puruṣārthas and Kāma

Among the four Puruṣārthas (*goals of human life*):

1. **Dharma** (*righteousness*).
2. **Artha** (*material prosperity*).
3. **Kāma** (*desires*).
4. **Mokṣa** (*liberation*).

Kāma holds an important place. When guided by Dharma, Kāma leads to positive outcomes, helping one progress toward Mokṣa. However, when unregulated, Kāma becomes destructive, evolving into Krodha or Lobha and entangling the soul in suffering.

Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes mastering Kāma by aligning it with Dharma. This transforms desire from a

destructive force into a motivator for spiritual and personal growth. Recognizing Kāma as the root of other negative tendencies empowers seekers to address the core issue, paving the way for inner harmony and ultimate liberation. Through self-awareness and discipline, one can transcend Kāma, overcome Krodha, and neutralize Lobha, achieving freedom from the bonds of ignorance and suffering.

**Om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyām(ŷ) yogaśāstre śrīkrṣṇārjunasaṃvāde
karmayogo nāma tṛtīyo'dhyāyaḥ**



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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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