

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 3: Karma-Yoga

3/3 (Ślōka 26-43), Sunday, 09 March 2025

Interpreter: SENIOR TRAINER SOU SHRADDHA JI RAODEO

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

The wise recognize that every being is controlled by Prakṛti, and surrender to Bhagavān's will, performing their karma selflessly, without attachment to the results.

Karma Yoga: The Yoga of Action (Chapter 3 of Srimad Bhagavad Gītā)

The session commenced with the auspicious lighting of the lamp, symbolizing the dispelling of ignorance and the invocation of divine wisdom. Prayers were offered to Ma Sharada, Bhagavān Sri Krishna, and the revered Swami Govind Dev Giri Maharaj before delving into the profound teachings of *Karma Yoga*.

Arjuna's Confusion

This chapter begins with a significant query from Arjuna, who expresses his confusion to Bhagavān Sri Krishna. He questions why at times Bhagavān emphasizes knowledge (*Jnana Yoga*) and at other times He stresses action (*Karma Yoga*), leaving him completely bewildered. Arjuna seeks absolute clarity in life, aiming for a path free of doubt and regret, one that leads to ultimate liberation (*moksha*).

He voices his confusion in the following verse:

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ 3.2 ॥

"You bewilder my intellect with mixed statements. Therefore, please tell me decisively the one path by which I may attain the highest good."

Clarifying the Path of Karma Yoga

Bhagavān gradually unfolds the wisdom that *Jnana Yoga* and *Karma Yoga* are not two separate paths but rather two interconnected approaches to the same ultimate goal. He explains that by sincerely performing one's prescribed duties (*swadharma*), one can attain supreme knowledge.

This is exemplified by great personalities like **King Janaka**, who, despite being deeply engaged in governance, attained the same knowledge that *Jnana Yogis* (*Shankhya Yogis*) achieve through meditation

and renunciation. Bhagavān assures that pursuing *Karma Yoga* with sincerity leads to the same ultimate destination—**liberation** (*moksha*).

Setting an Example for Others

Once a person attains realization, they must continue to perform their duties, not for personal gain but as a guiding force for society. Bhagavān highlights the importance of leading by example:

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ 3.21 ॥

"Whatever actions great persons perform, common people follow. Whatever standards they set, the world pursues."

This verse reinforces the responsibility of the enlightened to act selflessly, inspiring others to walk the righteous path of *Karma Yoga*.

Bhagavān's advise for the Wise

After expounding upon *Karma Yoga*, Bhagavān issues a word of advise to those who have attained knowledge. He reminds them not to abandon their duties and emphasizes how they should act in the world:

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ 3.25 ॥

"As ignorant people perform their duties with attachment, O Bharata, so should the wise act without attachment, for the welfare of the world."

Even the enlightened must continue their actions, but with detachment, serving as a beacon of wisdom for society.

3.26

**na buddhibhedaṃ(ñ) janayed, ajñānāṃ(ñ) karmasaṅginām,
joṣayetsarVākarmāṇi, vidvānyuktaḥ(s) samācaran. 3.26**

A wise man established in the Self should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant attached to action, but should get them to perform all their duties, duly performing his own duties.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains further as stated below:

The Approach to Karma: Ignorant vs. Wise

Bhagavān explains that people who are ignorant approach their karma (actions) with deep attachment, they see their actions as personal and are emotionally tied to the results. On the other hand, the wise must direct their karma for the benefit of society. This means they should never abandon the path of karma yoga.

Bhagavān's Advice to the Wise

Once a person has understood **the power of this knowledge**, Bhagavān gives a crucial **word of advice**:

- **Do not abandon the act of karma** – Even after realizing the **ultimate truth**, one must

continue to perform their duties.

- **Refrain from confusing the ignorant** – The wise should **not say or do anything** that causes the ignorant to **stray from their path** or lose motivation. By advising the ignorant that Jnana Yoga is superior to Karma Yoga or vice versa, the ignorant ones (who are yet to elevate to higher states of consciousness) will then be gripped by confusion.
- **Do not discourage those attached to action** – Instead of **detering** people from their natural inclination to karma, the wise should **inspire them** to continue on this path, as the path of karma yoga **gradually leads to supreme knowledge**.

The Influence of Prakṛti (Nature)

Some may wish to abandon karma by embracing dhyān yoga (meditation, renunciation, etc.), but they may struggle because they are still under the influence of Prakṛti (the three modes of nature which influences the innate tendencies). Their innate disposition may not allow them to simply detach from action. Thus, Bhagavān emphasizes on karma yoga, engaging in selfless action while remaining detached from its fruits.

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 explains the root cause of a deluded mind.

How Does the Mind Become Deluded?

The root cause of delusion is the sense of doership (**kartṛtva bhāva**). Due to ego (**ahankār**), one falsely believes, *"I am the one performing all actions."* This misconception leads to attachment and suffering. The one who functions with a sense of "I" or "ME" state of consciousness is gripped by the sense of doer-ship.

In reality, it is Prakṛti (Nature, the Supreme Force) that drives all actions and the actions are being done through us. We are merely instruments in the grand cosmic play.

Arjuna's Delusion: A Lesson for All

Even Arjuna, a warrior of great wisdom, fell into this delusion. He believed that he was the one killing or slaying his opponents in battle. But Bhagavān Śrī Krishna revealed the truth:

- Their karma was already determining their fate.
- Arjuna was merely a **nimitta** (instrument) in Bhagavān's divine plan.
- Prakṛti governs all actions—one cannot escape it.

Even if Arjuna had chosen sannyāsa (renunciation), his innate nature is that of a warrior. Hence, he would not have been able to abandon his karma. His nature as a warrior would instinctively bring him back to action.

The Ultimate Truth: Surrender to the Supreme Will

Everyone is controlled by Prakṛti. The wise recognize this and surrender to Bhagavān's will, performing their karma selflessly, without attachment to the results.

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.

A **Tattvavit** (one who knows the ultimate truth) realizes:

- Who is responsible for the creation of the universe.
- What drives the functioning of this world.
- That karma is influenced by the three Gunas of Prakriti - Sattva (mode of goodness), Rajas (mode of passion) and Tamas (mode of ignorance). The predominant Guna influences the nature of the Karma.

Understanding the Role of Gunas

All person's actions are influenced by their dominant guna (sattva, rajas, or tamas). No matter how much one tries to escape, their karma aligns with their inherent nature.

A **Tattvavit** understands this truth and, therefore:

- Remains unattached to the entire process of action.
- Performs karma without ego or the sense of doer-ship, knowing it is driven by Prakṛti.
- Neither resists nor runs away from his duties.

For a common person, however, this realization is not easy. Bhagavān offers guidance on how they should approach karma.

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.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains the difference between the **Tattvavit** (those situated in knowledge) and **Guṇasammūḍhāḥ** (the ignorant ones).

- **Guṇasammūḍhāḥ (The Deluded Ones)**
 - They remain attached towards the actions arising from the guṇas (*guṇakarmasu sajjante*).
 - Due to imperfect knowledge (*akṛtsnavido*) they falsely believe *they* are the doers.
 - Their ego binds them to their actions, preventing them from realizing the deeper truth.
- **Kṛtsnavinna (The Ones with Perfect Knowledge)**
 - They understand that all actions arise from Prakṛti and its guṇas, not from individual self.
 - Hence, they remain unaffected and are free from ego or the sense of doer-ship, knowing

that their role in life is assigned by Prakṛti. A teacher, for example, knows that he is in this profession because of his/her innate nature and does not try to become a soldier.

- Because of this wisdom, their mind remains steady and undisturbed.

Thus, those who truly know the totality of existence (*Kṛtsnavinna*) do not fall into the illusion of ego and attachment.

In the next shloka Bhagavān gives a master key to unbind from the effects of the karmas.

3.30

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

Renouncing all actions in Me, with the mind centred in the Self, free from hope and egoism, and from (mental) fever, engage in battle.

Bhagavān's Teaching on Karma Yoga

- **Mayi sarvāṇi Karmāṇi** – All actions (karmas) must be dedicated to Bhagavān (instead of selective Karmas)
- **Sannyasya Adhyātma Cetasā** – With an inner spiritual consciousness, one must offer all karma to Him without attachment.

The Right Attitude in Action

- **Nirāśīr Nirmamo Bhūtvā** – Perform actions with no expectations on outcome and by relinquishing the sense of ownership. Relinquish desires for personal gain is the state of detachment.
- **Yudhyasva Vigatajvaraḥ** – One must discard all mental burdens such as fear, reluctance, or hesitation in executing one's duty.

Consider the example where a person is engaged in some activity in a dark room, and a rope is thrown towards him. He is now gripped by fear as he feels that the rope is actually a snake. In the same manner, when discharging the Karmas or actions, we are gripped by delusion (i.e., attachment, expectation of outcome and the sense of doer-ship), from which arises the sense of fear.

By following this **selfless and detached approach**, one attains a **calm, fearless, and fever-free (vigatajvaraḥ) state**, free from anxiety and lethargy.

For an ordinary person, applying these lofty principles may seem challenging. Even if the person dedicates his Karma to the Supreme Divine, the person is gripped by anticipation of results the very next minute.

Selfless karma is not an overnight process, but a journey of gradual transformation. At this stage, one must contemplate: *What practical steps can be taken?*

Swami Giri Maharaj ji's Simple Yet Powerful Solution

Begin the Day with a Prayer – Every morning, start with a heartfelt prayer, dedicating the day's karma to Bhagavān. This aligns the mindset with surrender and detachment before engaging in worldly duties. Even if one cannot immediately renounce expectations or attachments, simply practicing awareness and offering actions to Bhagavān will gradually lead to inner transformation.

Morning Prayer

कर प्रणाम तेरे चरणों में लगता हूं अब तेरे काज ।
पालन करने को आज्ञा तब मैं नियुक्त होता हूं आज ॥

The seeker should remind himself that all Karmas that he performs is an act of service to the Supreme Divine. Hence, all Karmas are an offering to HIS lotus feet.

अन्तर में स्थित रह मेरी बागडोर पकड़े रहना ।
निपट निरंकुश चंचल मन को सावधान करते रहना ॥

The seeker prays to the Supreme Divine to hold the reins of his mind (as his mind is fickle), just like how HE held the reins of Arjuna's chariot.

अन्तर्यामी को अन्तः स्थित देख सशंकित होवे मन ।
पाप वासना उठते ही हो, नाश लाज से वह जल भुन ॥

The seeker prays to the Supreme Divine to suppress the desires which are a source of obstacles on the path of Karma.

जीवों का कलरव जो दिन भर सुनने में मेरे आवे ।
तेरा ही गुनमान जान मन प्रमुदित हो अति सुख पावे ॥

The seeker prays to silence the chattered if the mind and enable him to be absorbed in the Supreme Divine.

तू ही है सर्वत्र व्याप्त हरि ! तुझमें यह सारा संसार ।
इसी भावना से अन्तर भर मिलूं सभी से तुझे निहार ॥

The seeker perceives the all-pervading almighty, (who also resides within as the antaryamin) in one and all. When the heart is filled with this emotion, there is no distinction (Say for example, one has an equitable vision towards the daughter and daughter-in-law). Hence, the Karma is discharged from a pure state of consciousness.

प्रतिपल निज इन्द्रिय समूह से जो कुछ भी आचार करूं ।
केवल तुझे रिझाने, को बस तेरा ही व्यवहार करूं ॥

The seeker prays to the Supreme Divine that his five senses and the mind should be directed towards HIM at all times.

The insights from Bhagavān's teachings are not just for intellectual understanding. They must be cultivated from within. When we begin our day with such an emotion, it sets the tone for the entire day. Of course, it is natural for the mind to wander. But through consistent effort, we will gradually settle into this divine consciousness.

What Happens to Those Who Follow Bhagavān's Teachings Diligently? HE answers this in the next shloka.

3.31

**ye me matamidaṁ(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 Fate of Those Who Follow Bhagavān's Teachings Diligently

Bhagavān explains that those who embrace the below-given emotions with dedication experience a unique transformation:

- **Nityam Anutiṣṭhanti** – regularly follow these teachings, making them a part of their daily life.
- **Śraddhāvantaḥ** – practice with full faith, without doubt or hesitation.
- **Anasūyantaḥ** – are free from malice, meaning they do not criticize Bhagavān's wisdom or question the same from a state of doubt.

The Reward: Freedom from Karma's Bondage

Mucyante Te'pi Karmabhiḥ – *Such people are no longer bound by their karma.*

Because their actions are dedicated to Bhagavān without attachment, their karma no longer leads to worldly entanglements. Instead, it becomes a means of spiritual elevation and ultimate liberation (*mokṣa*). This profound assurance from Bhagavān shows that sincere, faithful, and selfless practice leads to freedom from suffering and a life of divine connection. On the contrary there are some who do not follow the above diligently. For them in the next shloka Bhagavān says:

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.

Those who do not follow the path of righteousness remain deluded and confused, devoid of true knowledge. They lack the eligibility to attain wisdom. However, if we continue steadfastly on the path of karma, we will also attain divine knowledge. It is through the sincere performance of our own duties that we can reach HIM.

Great saints like Sant Tukaram Maharaj exemplified this truth. He continued to perform his worldly responsibilities while simultaneously attaining spiritual enlightenment. This proves that knowledge and devotion are not separate from action; rather, they are realized through dedicated karma.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna that his preference of renouncing everything and live on **bhiksha** (alms) is not possible. He explains that renouncing action is not the path to liberation; instead, performing one's rightful duty with detachment leads to true realization.

The essence of Bhagavān's words is that action, when performed with sincerity and without attachment, becomes a means of attaining ultimate wisdom and liberation. True knowledge does not lie in mere words or renunciation but in performing one's duty with a pure heart, just as the great saints and sages have shown us.

3.33

**sadrśaṃ(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.

Bhagavān says that even the most knowledgeable person is bound by Prakṛiti. No matter how enlightened one is, their innermost state (**Antar Dhama**) remains the same, rooted in knowledge and stability. However, their external nature (Prakṛiti) manifests differently.

For example, we receive divine wisdom from Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, who is universally loved and attracts all whom HE meets. HIS internal state is that of a *Brahma Jnani* (knower of the Absolute Truth). Similarly, Shukhdev Maharaj is also a Brahma Jnani, but his nature is entirely different, He is **Sarva Sanga Parityagi**, completely detached from worldly associations.

Though their knowledge is the same, their Prakṛti expresses itself in different ways. Bhagavān Śrī Krishna remains engaged with the world, while Shukhdev Maharaj renounces all attachments. This illustrates that even the most enlightened beings cannot escape the influence of their inherent nature. A person's Prakṛti shapes their actions, behavior, and external expressions, and no one, regardless of their wisdom, can completely transcend it. The bindings that three gunas put on us come on in the form of actions of different sense organs.

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.

Bhagavān talks about a very important concept: every sense organ is naturally inclined toward certain subjects. For example, our eyes are drawn to visuals, and our mouth is engaged in speech. When our sense organs are involved in any action, they operate within two tendencies—**rāga** (attachment) and **dveṣa** (aversion).

Each person has preferences and dislikes. A student, for instance, may enjoy studying languages but struggle with math or science. Similarly, in household chores, some tasks are enjoyable while others feel burdensome. Just as our personal inclinations shape our experiences, our sense organs also exhibit attachment toward certain things and aversion toward others.

Bhagavān emphasizes that these attachments (**rāga**) and aversions (**dveṣa**) become obstacles in our *karma* (duties). Take, for example, a student preparing for board exams while the Cricket Champion Trophy matches are ongoing. Watching cricket is not inherently wrong, but excessive attachment to it distracts the student from studying. Likewise, during a *puja* (prayer ceremony), answering phone calls might seem trivial, but it disrupts the sanctity of the ritual.

Both attachment and aversion can obstruct our path. Just as attachment to distractions leads to negligence of duty, strong aversion to certain tasks may prevent us from fulfilling our responsibilities. *Bhagavān* explains that **rāga** and **dveṣa** act like thieves, robbing us of our *sādhana* (spiritual practice) and obstructing our journey of *karma*. Overcoming these tendencies is not easy, but it is essential. For this, Bhagavān advises cultivating the right insight, which HE elaborates on in the next *shloka*.

**śreyānsvadharṃo viguṇaḥ(ph), paradharṃātsvanuṣṭhitāt,
svadharṃe nidhanaṃ(m) śreyāḥ(ph), paradharṃo 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.

In this *shloka*, we need to focus on two words: **svadharma** and **paradharma**. Some people interpret these in the context of religion, believing that dying for one's *dharma* is better and that one should not follow another's *dharma* etc.. While this interpretation is valid in a certain context, we must understand these terms in the context of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

When Bhagavān spoke these words, various religions and *sampradayas* were not prevalent as they are today. Thus, Bhagavān was not referring to those. Instead, **svadharma** refers to one's own duty, while **paradharma** refers to another person's duty. Our *sanskriti* teaches us that our profession should be treated as worship.

The verse **śreyān svadharṃo viguṇaḥ** conveys that even if one sees flaws in their profession, they must understand that it is still the most important path for them. For example, a teacher may feel that their job does not pay enough, yet if their *gunas* (innate qualities) align with teaching, it is their *svadharma*. Merely switching to a managerial role for higher pay might not be the right choice for them.

Similarly, **paradharṃo bhayāvahaḥ** warns against abandoning one's natural duty. A teacher aspiring for a managerial role only for monetary gain, or a doctor switching to engineering due to financial concerns, might find themselves unfulfilled. A businessman should accumulate wealth with the intent of contributing to the nation's wealth prosperity. Scientists should work with the vision of national progress rather than choosing an alternate profession for short-term benefits. No shortcuts should be taken, one must do what is expected of them.

Every profession has a sacred purpose. A doctor and a nurse should see their patients as fragments of *Ishwara*. A teacher should understand that students are fragments of *Paramātmā*, and their school, hospital, or office is a temple of worship. By working with this mindset, one performs their duty in the best possible way and attains both knowledge and divine grace.

The Story of Pundalik

Pundalik devoted himself to serving his parents. While everyone else in his village went for *Vari* (the *darshan* of Vithal Bhagavān), he prioritized his duty of taking care of his parents. Even though he missed the opportunity to visit the temple, he remained steadfast in his service. What happened? Vithal Bhagavān Himself came to Pundalik and granted him *darshan*.

This story highlights the power of following one's *karma yoga*. Sometimes, another path may seem more appealing, but one's own duty remains supreme.

Consider the example of milk and water. Although milk is more expensive, yet only water can quench thirst. Similarly, *ghee* is superior to both milk and water, yet it cannot serve their purposes. In an aquarium, fish can survive only in water; if placed in milk or *ghee*, they would perish. Likewise, a person who abandons their **svadharma** and follows **paradharma** struggles and suffers.

Bhagavan insists that one's work must be regarded as the best. When a person approaches their duty with supreme dedication, seeing it as the highest and most fulfilling path, Swami Giri Maharaj ji says it becomes like **Kamadhenu** (the wish-fulfilling cow), granting all that one desires.

The key question is: **Do we truly love our job?**

Many of us want to do something but end up doing something else. This is our struggle. Arjuna, on behalf of all of us, expresses this curiosity and enquires further from Bhagavān in the forthcoming shloka.

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?

Arjuna understands that he should follow his *dharma*, but what if something within compels him to act otherwise? He raises an essential question: *What is it that drives us to commit sins or act against our duty?* Running away from the battlefield would be a sin for Arjuna, yet he feels an internal force pushing him toward that very action.

This is not just Arjuna's dilemma; it is a universal problem. Many people wish to study the *Bhagavad Gītā* or engage in righteous deeds but struggle to stay on the right path. What is it that compels us to turn away from our duty?

Even Duryodhana posed a similar question. He confessed:

jānāmi dharmam na ca me pravṛttirjānāmyadharmam na ca me nivṛttiḥ
kenāpi devena hṛdi sthitena yathā niyukto'smi tathā karomi

"I know what is righteous, yet I do not feel inclined toward it. I know what is unrighteous, yet I am not able to refrain from it. There is some unseen force residing in my heart that makes me act as I do."

This was Duryodhana's struggle 5,000 years ago, and it remains our struggle today. The *Duryodhana* within us often asks the same question: *Why do I do things I know I should not? Why do I avoid what I know is right? What is this force that pulls me away from my svadharma and onto the wrong path?*

In response, Bhagavān answers this profound query in the next *shloka*, revealing the inner force that drives human behavior.

3.37

Srībhagavānuvāca :
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.

Bhagavān provides a detailed and fundamental answer to Arjuna's question. This is not a superficial explanation but one that goes to the root of the problem: ***We are under the influence of Rajo Guna, and along with it come its two powerful warriors—Kāma (desire) and Krodha (anger).***

Bhagavān declares that these two are ever-present in each one of us, referring to them as ***viddhyenam***

iha vairiṇam—"Know them to be your enemies." Since they are our enemies, we must understand them completely. To highlight their danger, He uses two significant adjectives:

- **mahāśanaḥ** – They have an insatiable appetite. The more we indulge in desires, the stronger they become. Anger, too, feeds on itself and grows larger.
- **mahāpāpmā** – They lead us to commit great sins.

Bhagavān's teaching is beautifully illustrated through the story of King Yayāti. He realized the grip of *kāma* on his life and wished that no one else should suffer the same fate. He described *kāma* in an essential way, as seen in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (9.19.14):

न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।

हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥

na jātu kāmāḥ kāmānām upabhogena śhāmyati

haviṣhā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate

As supplying butter to a fire does not diminish the fire but instead increases it more and more, the endeavor to stop lusty desires by continual enjoyment can never be successful. [In fact, one must voluntarily cease from material desires.

The more we feed *kāma*, the stronger it becomes. It's like developing a habit, if we start eating outside frequently, the desire to dine out only increases. *Kāma* is not just about craving wealth or power; even small indulgences, such as breaking Ekadashi fasting for a tempting meal, strengthen its hold over us. Moreover, *kāma* never comes alone, it is always accompanied by its closest companion, *krodha* (anger). Together, they form our most dangerous enemies, leading us toward sin and away from our true path. Bhagavan does not stop here. HE gave a detailed analysis of their character in next shloka.

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.

Kāma and *Krodha* veil our knowledge and prevent us from realizing our true nature. Within each of us resides a fragment of *Paramātmā*, and with it, an innate wisdom. However, these two forces, *Kāma* and *Krodha*, act like obstacles, preventing us from accessing that divine knowledge.

Bhagavān illustrates this concept through three analogies:

- **Just as smoke covers fire** – Fire has the ability to illuminate, but when covered by smoke, its brightness is dimmed. Similarly, *Kāma* and *Krodha* obscure the divine wisdom within us.
- **Just as a dusty mirror fails to reflect** – A mirror covered in dust cannot show our true reflection. In the same way, worldly desires and anger cloud our inner vision, preventing self-awareness.
- **Just as the womb encloses the embryo (yatholbenāvṛto garbhaḥ)** – An unborn child is hidden within the womb, unable to see the outside world. Likewise, our knowledge remains covered by *Kāma* and *Krodha*, keeping us unaware of our true self.

Thus, **tathā tenedamāvṛtam**, these forces completely engulf and envelop the wisdom within us, making it difficult for us to connect with our higher self and spiritual truth.

The path to self-realization, thus, begins with overcoming *Kāma* and *Krodha*. By purifying our desires and controlling our anger, we gradually remove these layers and allow the divine knowledge within us to shine forth.

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.

In this shloka, Bhagavān continues to explain that desire (*Kāma*) has the power to overpower even the wisdom of the learned, luring them into fulfilling it. However, the more one tries to extinguish this fire, the stronger it burns. Bhagavān explains that just as knowledge is covered by *Kāma-rūpeṇa* (the form of desire), its effects are deeply destructive.

- **duṣpūreṇānalena** – *Kāma* is an unappeasable fire (*anala*), constantly consuming, yet never satisfied. Unlike a regular fire that burns externally, this inner fire burns us without visible flames, creating an unending cycle of craving.
- **nityavairiṇā** – Bhagavān does not merely call it an *enemy* (*vairiṇā*), but a *constant enemy* (*nityavairiṇā*). This highlights that desire is not a temporary adversary but a lifelong challenge that repeatedly arises in different forms.
- **Tied to Rajo Guna** – *Kāma* keeps us bound to *Rajas* (the mode of passion), leading to restless activity, dissatisfaction, and attachment to sensory pleasures.
- **Affects the senses** – Over time, unchecked desire distorts our perception, making us lose control over our sense organs. We chase fleeting pleasures, forgetting the higher purpose of life.

Thus, ***Kāma* does not simply tempt, it enslaves.** By recognizing it as a relentless enemy, we must remain vigilant and work towards transcending it through self-discipline and inner wisdom.

3.40

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

Bhagavān reveals that the dwelling place (*ādhiṣṭhāna*) of these enemies (*Kāma* and *Krodha*) is within us, taking hold of:

- **Indriyāṇi** (Sense organs) – Our senses constantly seek pleasurable experiences, making them easy gateways for desire to enter.
- **Manas** (Mind) – Once desire enters through the senses, the mind starts weaving thoughts around it, strengthening the craving.
- **Buddhi** (Intellect) – Even our intellect, which is meant to guide us with wisdom, gets clouded under their influence, leading us astray.

The Stealthy Invasion of Kāma and Krodha

etair vimohayatyeṣa, jñānam āvṛtya dehinam: Through these three gates (senses, mind, and intellect), Kāma and Krodha quietly infiltrate, gradually covering our wisdom (jñāna).

Their entry is subtle. For example, if a parent asks a child to fetch a glass of water and the child ignores the request, a tiny spike of Krodha arises. It seems insignificant, almost unnoticeable. But over time, small irritations accumulate, and when left unchecked, they erupt into uncontrollable anger. Similarly, Kāma sneaks in through small desires, what seems harmless at first can snowball into deep attachments.

Like Refugees Turning into Invaders

Bhagavān's analogy is profound. These enemies enter like refugees, appearing harmless and small, merely seeking a place within us. But over time, they grow in strength, demand more control, and eventually take over. If not kept in check, they enslave us, dictating our thoughts and actions.

What Should We Do?

The key to overcoming them lies in awareness and self-discipline. Just as a nation guards its borders, we must guard our minds, senses, and intellect, ensuring that Kāma and Krodha do not establish a foothold. Recognizing their presence early allows us to prevent them from overpowering our wisdom and leading us astray.

3.41

**tasmāttvamindriyāṅyādaḥ, niyamyā 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).

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains the importance of having a firm control over the senses.

Whenever a shloka begins with the word "**tasmāt**" meaning '**therefore**', it signals that Bhagavān is about to reveal a fundamental principle of the Gita. This is not merely guidance; it is an **order** from HIM. HE commands: **indriyāṅyādaḥ niyamyā** - First, rectify the habits of your sense organs. Eliminate all likes and dislikes.

Which Sense Organs Should Be Controlled?

The ones that allow us to acquire knowledge and those through which we perform actions. Once this discipline is in place, one can **conquer the sinful enemies** within (**pāpmānaṁ prajahi hyenaṁ**). Among them, **desire** is the most dangerous. These sinful tendencies destroy (**nāśanam**) both knowledge (**jñāna**) and realization (**vijñāna**).

What is the difference between jñāna and vijñāna?

- **Jñāna** refers to **knowledge** obtained through theoretical understanding.
- **Vijñāna** is the wisdom obtained through direct experience of the theoretical knowledge.

Everyone acknowledges that the Bhagavad Gītā is a sacred scripture filled with profound knowledge. But only a few live the Gītā—for them, it becomes vijñāna. Great figures like Swami Giri Maharaj Ji, Veer

Savarkar Ji, and Tilak Ji are examples of those who embodied its teachings.

This shloka warns us: **Sinful desires will not only destroy knowledge but also the realization gained from it.** Hence, controlling the senses is **not optional—it is essential.**

These internal enemies are formidable. That is why Bhagavān provides remedies in the next shloka.

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.

In this shloka, **Bhagavān presents a hierarchy**, guiding us toward the ultimate power within:

- **indriyāṇi parāṇyāhuḥ** – Our senses are powerful and seem to dictate our actions.
- **indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ** –The mind is superior to the senses because it is the one that interprets and experiences what they perceive.
- **manasastu parā buddhiḥ** – The intellect is even stronger than the mind, as it has the ability to analyze, reason, and exercise control.
- **yo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ** – Beyond the intellect lies the **divine soul (Paramātmā)**, which is the highest and most supreme force. Some scholars believe that **Saḥ** refers to desires.

Understanding the Hierarchy

Some may question whether the mind is truly stronger than the senses. For example: Eyes can see, but the mind cannot. However, it is actually the mind that experiences and enjoys the sight. While attending a vivechan session, if the mind is preoccupied with a cricket match, then effectively, the person is mentally present at the match, not the session. This shows that the mind controls perception, making it superior to the senses.

How do we control the mind?

The intellect has the power to redirect the mind—bringing it back from distractions (like cricket match) to focus on the vivechan session. By strengthening our intellect, we can discipline our mind and gain mastery over our senses.

The Ultimate Solution:

We need to attach ourselves to a higher entity in order to conquer the lower entity. Say for example, during a state of war, if a nation allies with a powerful nation, they can overpower the opponent. In the same manner, one needs to align with Paramātmā. Desire is the most dangerous enemy. To conquer it, one must align with a force more powerful than all, i.e., Paramātmā (the Supreme Soul). By seeking refuge in Him, we transcend worldly distractions and attain true mastery over our inner self.

3.43

**evaṁ(m) buddheḥ(ph) paraṁ(m) buddhvā, saṁstabhyātmānamātmanā,
jahi śatruṁ(m) mahābāho, kāmarūpaṁ(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.

In this shloka, Bhagavān continues to explain how desires can be slayed.

Friendship with Paramātmā: The Path to Conquering Desire

If we truly make friends with Paramātmā, He will conquer our desires on our behalf. This profound interpretation is often given by Swami Govind dev Giri ji Maharaj, who explains that we remain slaves to our desires because we have not yet formed a complete bond of friendship with HIM. Bhagavān urges us to cultivate this friendship with Paramātmā. How can we achieve this?

The Key to Friendship with Paramātmā, Bhagavān says, is discipline and self-control.

saṁstabhyātmānamātmanā : Through discipline and self-control, one can gradually overcome desires and build a relationship with Paramātmā. However, controlling desires on our own is nearly impossible. They are incredibly powerful. It is only by HIS grace that we can free ourselves from their grip.

Both Paramātmā and desires exist beyond intellect (**parā buddhiḥ**). This means that no matter how sharp or disciplined our intellect may be, it alone cannot subdue desires. But when we truly befriend HIM, HE HIMSELF ensures that Ram Rajya (a divine, peaceful kingdom) is established within our minds. It is HE who destroys desires for us.

The Example of Pradyumna: Destroying Desire at Its Root

Pradyumna, the son of Bhagavān Śrī Krishna and Rukmini was the reincarnation of Kamadeva, the deity of desire, who was burned to ashes by Shiva's fury, symbolizing the destruction of unchecked passion. Thus, if we truly befriend Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, who is the father of Pradyumna (the reincarnation of Kamadeva), then desire (Kama) will automatically be taken care of. The lesson is that Instead of struggling alone, surrender to Bhagavān and allow HIM to conquer your desires. This is the surest way to freedom and inner peace.

Question & Answers:

Snehal Ji

Q: A student has an intense liking for cricket matches. However, after considering everything, he chooses to study instead. Does his attachment to cricket still hinder him?

A: No! By prioritizing his karma (duty to study) over kama (desire for cricket), he has already conquered attachment. His decision reflects self-discipline and intellect (buddhi) guiding his actions. Since his mind is now aligned with his higher goal, the distraction of cricket no longer obstructs his path

Mukund Ji

Q: After listening to the discussion, my understanding is that there is a hierarchy. At a certain stage, we are left with two paths, one leading to Paramātmā and the other to desires (Kama). It is up to us to choose our way. Is my understanding correct?

A: Yes, Paramātmā is superior to everything else. However, Kama (desire) should not always be viewed negatively. Instead of suppressing it, we must control and redirect it towards Paramātmā. In Chapter 10 of the Bhagavad gītā, Bhagavān states that Kama is one of HIS Vibhūti (divine manifestations). This means that when desire is aligned with righteousness and devotion, it can become a force that brings us closer to HIM. Thus, rather than fighting or eliminating Kama, one should transform it into a desire for spiritual growth and union with Paramātmā. That is the path that ultimately leads to HIM.

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



We are sure you enjoyed reading the Vivechan write- up. Please invest three minutes of your time to provide us your feedback. Use the link below:

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/feedback/>

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

Har Ghar Gītā, Har Kar Gītā !

Let's come together with the motto of Geeta Pariwar, and gift our Geeta Classes to all our Family, friends & acquaintances

<https://gift.learngeeta.com/>

Geeta Pariwar has taken a new initiative. Now you can watch YouTube videos and read PDFs of all the interpretation sessions conducted earlier. Please use the below link.

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/>

Learn Geeta, Spread Geeta, Live Geeta

|| OM ŚRĪKRṢṆĀRPAṆAMASTU ||