

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 2: Sāṅkhya-Yoga

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YouTube Link: [https://youtu.be/CUy1r\\_w6Q-o](https://youtu.be/CUy1r_w6Q-o)

## The Eternal Soul and the Warrior's Duty: Overcoming Fear and Attachment

The second chapter of Srimad Bhagavadgītā is called 'Sāṅkhya Yog - The Yoga of Knowledge. The central teaching of Sāṅkhya Yog being the immortality of atma.'

The session began with the auspicious lighting of lamps followed by prayers.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।  
गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

नमामि सद्गुरुं शान्तं सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहम् ।  
पूर्णब्रह्मपरानन्दम् ईशमाळन्दिवल्लभम् ॥

यानन्द श्रुतिमंत्र शक्ति महती ब्रह्मात्म विद्यावती  
यासूत्रोदित शास्त्रपद्धतिरीति प्रद्योदिनान्तरद्युतिः ।  
या सत्काव्यगतिप्रसादितर्मतिर्नानागुणालंकृतिः  
सा प्रत्यक्ष सरस्वती भगवती मान्नायतां भारती ॥

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयम्  
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।  
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीमष्टादशाध्यायिनीम्  
अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

नमोस्तुते व्यास विशाल बुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।  
येन त्वया भारत तैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमय प्रदीपः ॥

Offering countless prostrations at the divine feet of Bhagavān Vedavyāsa, Śrī Jñāneśvar Mahārāj, and

Sadguru Swāmī Govind Dev Giri Ji Mahārāj, the speaker extends a humble and affectionate greeting to all Gītā-loving seekers.

The Bhagavad Gītā, sung by Bhagavān Himself in the midst of the great battlefield, is an incomparable celestial song. May the melody of this divine song reverberate within the depths of the seeker's being, so that one may live life in harmony with its sacred rhythm.

The sages have described the Gītā in this celebrated manner:

**“मलनिर्मोचनं पुंसां जलस्नानं दिने दिने ।  
सकृद्गीताम्बसि स्नानं संसरमल नाशनम् ॥”**

Just as a person cleanses the body every day through physical purification, through excretion, bath, and daily ablutions, so too must the mind be cleansed. The body's impurities can be washed with water, but how does one wash the impurities of the mind?

Living in the world, the mind constantly absorbs the qualities and defects of those it moves among. Impressions from experiences, interactions, and events settle deeply and form layers of inner residue. These accumulated impurities, these invisible distortions, cling to the subtle mind.

The sages advise a profound remedy:

**“जलस्नानं दिने दिने, सकृद् गीता-अम्बसि स्नानम् ।”**

Physical water may cleanse the body, but it is the waters of the Gītā, the ambrosial teachings issuing from the mukhāravinda of Bhagavān, that purify the inner being.

This nectar of wisdom, flowing directly from Him, gradually washes away the thick mud of worldly impressions, just as the waters of a pond settle and clear until even the objects lying at its bottom become visible.

In the same manner, when the mind becomes purified, the concealed Self, the ātma-tattva, shines forth. That Self, hidden under layers of mental impurities, becomes perceptible through the constant bathing of the mind in the divine waters of the Gītā.

### **Arjuna's Condition - The Human Condition**

In life, one often becomes discouraged and weighed down by despondency. Arjuna's life reflects this same human condition. Arjuna was Narottama, the noblest of men, the finest archer, a warrior victorious in countless battles. Yet even he fell prey to confusion and inner collapse.

Śrī Jñāneśvar Mahārāj describes Arjuna's earlier prowess:

**“तुवां संग्रामीं हरु जिकिला । निवातकवचांचा ठावो फेडिला ।  
पवाडा तुवां केला । गंधर्वासीं ॥ १० ॥”**

Arjuna, who conquered mighty foes, who won Draupadī by piercing the revolving fish-eye target, who defeated the invincible Nivātakavaca demons and rescued the Devas—such a one was suddenly overwhelmed by delusion.

**अर्जुन मोहे कवला क्षणा माझी-**

In an instant, Arjuna was seized by delusion.

This moha, attachment is one of the ṣaḍ-ripu (six inner enemies): kāma, krodha, mada, matsara, lobha, and moha. And this particular moha was the moha for his own kinsmen.

Jñāneśvar Mahārāj beautifully analyzes this:

Moha appears gentle, tender, and soft, but this very gentleness makes it the most difficult bond to break.

A person may end a relationship with one who has harmed or insulted him, but bonds formed from affection and tenderness, ***komala-bandhana***, are the hardest to break.

To illustrate this, Jñāneśvar Mahārāj gives the example of the bhavra (bumblebee):

“जैसा भ्रमर भेदी कोड़ें । भलतैसैं काष्ठ कोरडें ।  
परि कळिकेमाजी सांपडे । कोंवळिये ॥ २०१ ॥”

The bumblebee is strong enough to bore through wood, yet when it enters a lotus flower in the evening and the petals close at sunset, the bee, though powerful, cannot break through the soft, tender petals. That tenderness is precisely what traps it.

So too with Arjuna. Before him stood the soft bonds of affection, Bhīṣma, Droṇa, brothers, relatives—bonds far more difficult to sever than any physical obstacle.

### **The Presence of the Divine Charioteer**

Arjuna had, right beside him, the supreme guide, the one who held the reins of his chariot, Bhagavān Himself. Yet, lost in delusion, Arjuna’s attention was not upon Him.

This is the condition of all human beings. The inner charioteer, the Self, the indwelling consciousness, is ever-present, yet forgotten.

Jñāneśvar Mahārāj adds another ovi:

“तेथ उत्तीर्ण होईल प्राणें । परि तें कमळदळ चिरूं नेणें ।  
तैसैं कठिण कोवळेपणें । स्नेह देखा ॥ २०२ ॥”

Even if the bee were to give up its life, it cannot split the lotus petals.  
Such is the difficult nature of tender attachments.

Bhagavān thus directs Arjuna’s attention away from these tender worldly bonds and towards the changeless, imperishable Self.

When Arjuna realizes his utter confusion, he falls at the feet of Bhagavān and declares:

कार्पण्य दोषोपहतस्वभावः, पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः।  
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे, शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नं॥ 2-7॥

“I am Your disciple; instruct me. I seek refuge in You.”

Once a seeker enters the spirit of discipleship and surrender, the heart opens, and the Guru’s grace flows.

Thus begins the timeless stream of divine wisdom that even after 5,000 years continues to offer guidance, solace, and clarity to seekers across the world.

### **The Imperishable and the Perishable - The Two Realities**

Bhagavān’s teaching begins from the 11th verse of the second chapter, gradually leading Arjuna toward a profound vision of reality.

Bhagavān explains that all beings are composed of two aspects:

- **Sthūla** (gross, visible, perishable) — the body
- **Sūkṣma** (subtle, consciousness, imperishable)

Whatever action or experience occurs in the universe takes place through the conjunction of these two.

The body is jāḍa (insentient), visible, and ever-changing. The Self is chaitanya (consciousness), unseen, unchanging, and eternal.

Bhagavān declares that the deha (body) is perishable, but the dehī (the indwelling Self) is eternal, indestructible, unchanging.

This Self cannot be demonstrated externally; it is svayam-prakāśa, self-revealing, apprehended through inner knowledge.

The principle resembles the modern law of conservation of energy, *energy cannot be created or destroyed; it merely transforms.*

But here, the teaching goes deeper:

- The indwelling reality is not mere energy, it is consciousness (jñāna-svarūpa-cetanā).
- It illumines, understands, and enables experience.

Thus Bhagavān instructs: Those who believe the Self is destroyed when the body is destroyed do not truly understand.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna a profound and fundamental truth concerning the nature of the Self. The verse addressed here is:

यः एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश् च एनं मन्यते हतम् ।  
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ २.१९ ॥

Whoever considers this Ātman to be the slayer, or whoever believes It to be slain, both fail to understand. This Ātman neither kills nor can be killed.

Bhagavān clarifies: one who imagines Ātman to be “the killer,” and one who imagines Ātman to be “killed,” both misunderstand Its true nature. The Self is never an agent of killing, nor is It ever subject to death.

### **The Body and Consciousness Work Only Through Mutual Association**

Just as electricity alone cannot perform any function unless appropriate equipment is connected, similarly:

- Consciousness (Caitanya) by itself cannot perform worldly actions.
- The body (deha) by itself cannot perform anything either.
- Only when the body and consciousness come together does activity take place.

In all of creation, every functional process arises from such a saṃyoga, a union of two complementary realities.

To explain this deeply and beautifully, Jñāneśvar Mahārāj presents a profound illustration demonstrating how the body (sthūla), the subtle principle (sūkṣma), and the reflected consciousness (cidābhāsa) coexist.

## **Jñāneśvar Maharaj's Analogy of the Pot, Water, and the Sun's Reflection**

Jñāneśvar Mahārāj uses the example of a pot filled with water. When the pot contains water, the reflection of the sun appears in it. If the water is poured out, the reflection disappears. If the pot breaks, the reflection also vanishes. But the Sun, the original source, remains completely unaffected.

In his own divine ovis, he says:

कां पूर्ण कुंभ उलंडला । तेथ बिंबाकारु दिसे भ्रंशला ।

परी भानु नाही नासला । तयासवे ॥ १४१ ॥

When a full pot is overturned, the water flows out and the reflected form of the sun disappears. Yet, the Sun in the sky remains entirely untouched.

He gives another analogy of space inside a room:

ना तरी मठीं आकाश जैसें । मठाकृती अवतरले असे ।

तो भंगलिया आपैसें । स्वरूपचि ॥ १४२ ॥

Space inside a room appears to have the shape of the room. When the room is demolished, that interior space does not perish; it simply merges back into the vast, infinite space outside.

Finally, he concludes the principle:

तैसें शरीराच्या लोपीं । सर्वथा नाशु नाहीं स्वरूपीं ।

म्हणौनि तू हे नारोपी । भ्रांति बापा ॥ १४३ ॥

Similarly, when the body perishes, the true essential nature, the Ātman, never meets destruction. Therefore, considering oneself as the killer or the killed is mere delusion.

## **The Reflection of Paramātmā in Every Being**

Just as the sun's reflection in the pot's water is not the sun itself but only its appearance, so too:

- The Supreme Brahman, the Paramātmā, remains unchanged, infinite, and unaffected.
- In every body, there appears a reflection of that Supreme, known as cidābhāsa.
- When the body is destroyed, this reflected consciousness merges back into its original source; the original Paramātmā remains perfect and undiminished.

This is the vision Jñāneśvar Mahārāj presents with luminous clarity.

## **Bhagavān Leads Arjuna Toward the Highest Truth**

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa brings Arjuna's mind toward this ultimate reality. Arjuna thinks: "By killing these warriors, I will destroy them."

But Bhagavān corrects this misconception gently yet firmly.

- What appears destroyed is the body, which is perishable by nature.
- The Ātman residing within is imperishable, unborn, undying, eternal.
- This imperishable Self simply moves from one body to another.

This transition is explained through another famous verse:

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।

तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ २.२२ ॥

Just as a person discards old, worn-out garments and wears new ones, the embodied Self (dehī) leaves behind an old or diseased body and takes up a new body in a new womb.

Thus, Bhagavān begins by revealing the supreme and unchanging truth to Arjuna, who is standing in deep grief and confusion. Only after establishing this highest principle does He proceed to elaborate

its subtler implications.

Bhagavān, after describing the nature of the Self, unborn, eternal, unchanging, gradually leads Arjuna to the next crucial instruction, culminating in the 23rd verse

Edit

## 2.23

### **nainaṃ(ñ) chindanti śastrāṇi, nainaṃ(n) dahati pāvakaḥ, na cainaṃ(ñ) kledayantyāpo, na śoṣayati mārutaḥ. 2.23**

Weapon can not cut it nor can fire burn it; water cannot wet it nor can wind dry it.

Bhagavān first reminds Arjuna of the essential nature of the Ātman with words that dispel every panic about killing and being killed.

No weapon cuts It; no fire burns It; no water wets It; no wind dries It. This Ātman is untouched by the instruments that affect the body.

Bhagavān wants Arjuna to understand what the Ātman is like. People have, through repeated hearing and reading, grown familiar with the language of the Ātman, yet that familiarity often remains only intellectual, an idea on a page, because direct experience has not been reached. The Bhagavad Gītā's purpose is to carry one from mere reading to that lived, transforming realisation. When the Ātman becomes "a jewel in the hand", the union of the individual with That becomes established. That is what the Bhagavad Gītā seeks to awaken: "You are not merely this body. Within you is that consciousness. You are That Ātman."

#### **Analogy: The Lioness and the Hidden Identity**

To make this vivid, Prabhu often recalled a story Thakur Rāmakṛṣṇa used to tell. A lioness, pregnant, springs upon a herd of goats. The blow and the leap cause such shock that the unborn cub is torn from the womb and is born amid the goats. The newborn grows among the goats, imitates their noises, grazes like them, and learns their ways. Years pass, and the cub grows into a full-fledged lion yet remains unaware of its true nature. One day another lion finds him: startled at the sight of this large "goat-living" creature, the lion wakes him in secret and says, "Follow me." At the lake's edge he shows the creature its reflection and cries: "Look, you are not like these goats; you are a lion."

In the same way, the guru seeks to awaken the disciple to the Ātman: "You are not the body; you are a fragment (aṃśa) of Paramātmā, alive and indestructible." Bhagavān thus instructs Arjuna in precisely this awakening, for Arjuna has accepted discipleship. Bhagavān tells him: know the other, inner form of yours; recognise It. Ignorance has caused the person to forget one's own essence.

#### **Science and the Spiritual Corroboration**

Even modern science gives a parallel:  $E = mc^2$  indicates a fundamental relation between energy and matter. In spiritual terms this points to a relationship between the inert and the conscious. Energy, like consciousness, does not perish. Yet because the mind and body identify so strongly with the bodily instruments, a man assumes, "I am merely body." Bhagavān says: grasp your Ātman that dwells within you and within everyone standing before you. The relatives and kin who are present also possess that same Ātman which cannot be touched.

Hence the significance of the verse: No weapon (śastra) can cut It; no fire (pāvaka) can burn It; no

water (kleda) can wet It; no wind (māruta) can dry It. These attributes are proclaimed first so that Arjuna, caught in deep despondency, may be shaken out of his depression. Sometimes, when grief or confusion is intense, one must first be guided to the final immutable truth; with that as a basis further exposition becomes possible. In ordinary life, when people quarrel over property, someone will point out: “What will you actually take? The property will remain; the dead do not go anywhere; ornaments do not go with you.” In the same way, Bhagavān first gives the ultimate principle.

### **Shifting from Body-identification to Ātma-recognition**

Because living beings are used to the body as identity, hunger, thirst, names, family roles, the external world recognizes persons by their bodily traits: “What is her colour? Is she tall or short? Fat or thin?”, and thus the Self gets forgotten. Bhagavān says: understand that prior identity, the real identity inside you. That recognition frees one from illusion.

A notable example of this conviction appears in the era of the Indian freedom struggle. Revolutionaries such as Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru, when arrested in the bomb case and facing the certainty of execution, were in the bloom of youth. Yet they recited this very śloka:

**नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।**

**न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥**

Their understanding was clear and unwavering: “That Ātman within cannot be cut by your weapons. It cannot be burned by your fire. It cannot be drenched by your water. It cannot be dried by your winds. The noose of your gallows cannot touch It.”

With such clarity, they declared:

“Our conscious Self is untouched, pure, indestructible. What can be harmed is only the body. Therefore, we offer this body to the Motherland like a flower. You may destroy the body, but you will not even graze the Ātman.”

Thus, this śloka, originally spoken by Bhagavān to uplift Arjuna from grief, became, in the hands of these young revolutionaries, a mantra of fearlessness and supreme sacrifice. Their offering was not out of despair but out of the realisation that the true Self, the imperishable, unassailable Ātman, remains ever beyond the reach of death.

### **Why Bhagavān States These Attributes**

Bhagavān enumerates the Ātman’s attributes to dispel the immediate panic in Arjuna’s heart. Arjuna’s grief makes him imagine that by killing the kinsmen he will be the cause of their annihilation. Bhagavān counters that what one sees as destruction is only the perishable body; the Ātman within is immortal. By first stating this supreme principle, Bhagavān prepares Arjuna to act from right knowledge rather than from sorrow and identification.

These declarations are the stepping stones: having shown the indestructible nature of the Ātman (that it cannot be cut, burned, wetted, or dried), Bhagavān moves Arjuna forward from grief to clarity. The purpose is remedial: to uplift a disciple who has fallen into despair and to place him on the ground of eternal truth, from which the duties and responsibilities of life can be rightly understood and fulfilled.

## **2.24**

**acchedyo'ya madāhyo'yam, akledyo'śoṣya eva ca,  
nityaḥ(s) sarvagataḥ(s) sthāṇur, acalo'yaṁ(m) sanātanaḥ. 2.24**

For this soul is incapable of being cut, or burnt by fire; nor can it be desolved by water and is

undriable by air as well; This soul is eternal, all-pervading, immovable, constant and everlasting.

Bhagavān now lifts Arjuna's vision away from the fleeting, ever-changing world towards that which never undergoes modification. If everything in the world is constantly in flux, then logically something must exist that does not change, otherwise change itself could never be perceived. The transient can appear transient only upon the background of the eternal.

To establish this truth, Bhagavān makes Arjuna face the intrinsic characteristics of the Ātman, the changeless substratum amidst a changing universe.

Arjuna is instructed to recognise that this Ātman, his own deeper identity, his subtle, conscious essence is:

- **acchedya** — no weapon can cut It,
- **adahya** — no fire can burn It,
- **akledya** — no water can moisten It,
- **aśoṣya** — no wind can dry It.

Bhagavān then enumerates five fundamental qualities of the Ātman:

- **nitya** — eternal, without beginning or end;
- **sarvagata** — all-pervading, present everywhere;
- **sthāṇu** — steadfast, unmoving;
- **acala** — not subject to motion from place to place;
- **sanātana** — timeless, primordial, ever-existing.

Bhagavān distinguishes between vyāpaka (all-pervading) and vyāpta (that which is pervaded). The body is vyāpta, pervaded by consciousness; the Ātman is vyāpaka, the all-pervading reality. Their characteristics differ accordingly. If one mistakes the body for the Self, one can understand only the body's properties; but the Ātman has entirely different attributes, unchanging, immovable, eternal.

This Ātman, though ever-pure, appears as jīvātman when it identifies with the body and absorbs bodily vāsanās. As long as this identification continues, the jīvātman cannot unite with the Infinite Paramātmā. Therefore, the Śāstras direct one again and again to seek one's own substratum.

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, following the same principle, points the seeker to enquiry: “ko'ham?” “Who is this 'I'?”

He guides the student towards the realisation *so'ham*, ‘He am I’.

“Who is the one saying, ‘my body’, ‘my eyes’, ‘my hands’, ‘my feet’?  
Who is this 'I'?”

The body changes, Bhagavān has already explained:

**देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।**

The body undergoes childhood, youth, old age; every cell replaces itself within twelve years. But the Ātman remains ever the same—sanātana, sthāṇu, acala.

Thus Ādi Śaṅkarācārya proclaims in Nirvāṇa-ṣaṭkam:

**शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम् ।**

**न मृत्युर्न शङ्का न मे जाति भेदः ।**

पिता नैव मे नैव माता न जन्म ।  
न बन्धुर्न मित्रं गुरुर्नैव शिष्यः ।  
चिदानन्द रूपः शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम् ॥

Those great Mahātmas who attained Self-realisation, Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, Bhagavān Ramana Maharṣi, sought to awaken this recognition in every seeker.

### **The Guru Teaches the “Language of the Ātman”**

Once, a Guru was explaining in his maṭha how the Ātman cannot be cut, cannot be burnt, cannot be soaked, cannot be dried. Some representatives of the media were present. They challenged him, saying:

“Why do you mislead people with ideas you cannot prove in a laboratory? You cannot show the Ātman, so why teach this?”

The Guru calmly asked one of them, “What book is that in your hand?”

It was a book with text written in Urdu.

The Guru said, “Read what is written here.”

The reporter read it out correctly.

The Guru replied, “I do not think that is written there. To me it appears that some crow walked over the page with its ink-stained feet. Why are you misleading me?”

The reporters protested: “To know what is written, one must first learn the language!”

The Guru smiled and said: “Exactly. That is why I teach the language of the Ātman. Only when the language is learned does its nature become evident.”

Thus, all Gurus attempt to teach this subtle language, so that someday the disciple’s mind may awaken to the longing that Arjuna is expected to feel: “May I too discover this Self. May I too realise my changeless essence.”

When this yearning awakens, the individual becomes eager for sādhana. The grip of dehābhimāna weakens, and the mind moves from contraction to vastness, from restlessness to infinitude, from limitation to boundlessness.

It is for this reason that Bhagavān again and again defines the nature of the Ātman, to inspire in Arjuna the desire to reach that supreme state, that ultimate destination.

## **2.25**

**avyakto'yama cintyo'yam, avikāryo'yamucyate,  
tasmādevaṃ(ṽ) viditvainam(n) nānuśocitumarhasi.2.25**

This soul is unmanifest; it is incomprehensible and it is spoken of as immutable. Therefore, knowing it as such, you should not grieve.

Bhagavān explains to Arjuna that **ayam avyaktaḥ**, “this (Ātman) is unmanifest.” The term avyakta

here means hidden, unseen, unrevealed, subtle, changeless. It does not appear to the physical eye. Just as electricity is not visible to anyone, yet when it reaches the home, it expresses itself through various devices: in a bulb as light, in an air-conditioner as coolness, in a geyser or heater as heat, similarly, the Ātma-tattva, though inherently unmanifest, becomes manifest only through the body or equipment it inhabits.

Electricity is one, but its expressions differ according to the instrument. In the same way, Ātman, though “a-vyakta, unmanifest,” reveals itself according to the type of body (deha) with which it comes into association.

Bhagavān further states that the Self is nirākāra (formless). Because it is formless, acintyaḥ, “unthinkable through form-bound imagination.” One cannot mentally picture something that has no form. Therefore, for the sake of devotion, humans see the Supreme (Parabrahma Paramātmā) in divine forms such as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rāma, or Jagadambā. These forms help the mind contemplate the formless. But in truth, that Paramātmā-tattva is nirākāra, acintya, and avyakta.

Bhagavān also calls it avikārya, free from all modification or mutation. One may consider an example: When a spoonful of curd is mixed into a small pot of milk, the milk becomes curd. A modification occurs. But imagine an ocean of milk, a kṣīra-sāgara. If one were to pour a spoon of curd into it, the ocean would not turn to curd. Why? Because the more expansive a substance is, the less it is affected by external modification.

Bhagavān desires that the human mind become similarly expansive, free from petty disturbances and minor agitations.

Therefore HE instructs:

**अव्यक्तोऽयमुच्यते... तस्मादेनं एवं विदित्वा नानुशोचितुमर्हसि**

“O Arjuna, knowing this Ātman to be unmanifest, unthinkable, and unchanging, one ought not to grieve.”

HE reminds Arjuna that the Self cannot be harmed, and that sorrow arises only from misunderstanding its true nature.

### **The Six Modifications of the Body**

Bhagavān describes the inevitable six transformations (ṣaḍ-vikāras) of the physical body:

- 1. Birth (jāyate)** - The body is born; it comes into existence.
  - 2. Growth (vardhate)** - The body grows for a period of time.
  - 3. Existence / Sustenance (asti)** - The body remains in a stable condition for some time.
  - 4. Transformation / Modification (vipariṇamate / vivakṣate)** - The body undergoes changes — ageing, illness, and other alterations.
  - 5. Decline / Decay (vipakvate)** - The body begins to weaken; its systems deteriorate.
  - 6. Destruction (apakṣīyate / naśyati)** - The body eventually wastes away and dies.
- These six modifications apply only to the deha, never to the Dehī, the Ātman. Therefore HE tells Arjuna: “This (Ātman) is avikārya — it does not undergo any of these changes.”

### **Energy and Matter: Vedānta and Modern Science**

In science, one learns of the relationship between matter and energy, expressed in the renowned equation:

$$E = mc^2$$

Science commonly begins with matter (jaḍa) and discovers within it the presence of energy — electrons, protons, neutrons, ever-vibrating.

But Vedānta reverses the order. It proclaims:

- First is Energy (Caitanya), then comes Matter (Jaḍa).
- Energy condenses, becoming gross, and matter is formed.
- One can understand this through the development of an embryo.
- A fetus forms in the womb only when the spark of caitanya (consciousness) enters.

Thereafter, cell-division begins, growth proceeds, and the physical body, jaḍa, is gradually shaped. Thus, creation emerges from subtle to gross (sūkṣma → sthūla).

Bhagavān asks Arjuna to contemplate this subtle-to-gross process to understand the continuity and indestructibility of the Self.

### **Arjuna's Doubt and Bhagavān's Compassionate Assurance**

Sensing hesitation or an unexpressed question on Arjuna's face, Bhagavān tells him:

Even if HE chooses not to accept these statements, still Arjuna has no basis for grief.

Even from the standpoint of ordinary reasoning or worldly logic, mourning is inappropriate, because the essential Self is untouched and unmoved by bodily changes.

Thus, HE concludes that grief arises only from confusing the perishing body with the imperishable Ātma

## **2.26**

**atha cainaṃ(n) nityajātaṃ(n), nityaṃ(ṁ) vā manyase mṛtam,  
tathāpi tvaṃ(m) mahābāho, naivaṃ śocitumarhasi.2.26**

And, Arjuna, if you should assume this soul to be subject to perpetual birth and death, even then you should not grieve like this.

Bhagavān addresses Arjuna, emphasizing the eternal nature of the Self and the futility of sorrow over what is impermanent. HE says: "O mighty-armed Arjuna, the Self is eternal, ever-born (nityajāta), and never truly dies (nityamṛta). Yet you grieve, as though HE were mortal and perishable. Even though you may believe that birth implies death, it is not so; you are mistaken. Therefore, you have no reason to mourn."

Bhagavān points out that Arjuna mistakenly attempts to connect the impermanent world with permanence. HE explains that you cannot pair that which is ever-changing with the immutable, and thus sorrow arises only from misperception.

To illustrate, Bhagavān offers analogies:

- **A spinning wheel:** When a wheel rotates, its axis appears stationary. It is this stable axis that allows the wheel to appear in motion.
- **Ocean waves:** Waves move visibly, yet the ocean beneath remains calm, silent, and unmoved.
- **Parallel trains:** If two trains move side by side at the same speed, a passenger looking at the

other train perceives both as stationary. Only when a fixed object, a pole, a house, a tree, comes into view does motion become perceptible.

Similarly, the changes observed in the human body, childhood, youth, old age, are only apparent changes, because behind them lies an unchanging element. This immutable essence is the Self (Ātman), the very form of the Paramātmā, which remains beyond birth, growth, decay, or death.

Bhagavān asserts that even if one refuses to accept this truth intellectually, sorrow is still inappropriate. Why? Because the one who is born cannot truly die, for the Self is eternal. Death affects only the body, not the Ātman.

HE further emphasizes that this principle is universal: historically and in contemporary experience, countless lives and bodies perish. The recent COVID-19 pandemic, the devastation of wars, in every era, the dance of death (mṛtyu-tāṇḍava) is visible. Yet, the Self remains untouched, beyond all these apparent transformations.

Thus, this teaching highlights a profound and essential Shloka: one should not grieve for the body or for what is ephemeral, for the Ātman is immutable, eternal, and beyond all change.

## 2.27

### **jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ(r), dhruvaṃ(ñ) janma mṛtasya ca, tasmādaparihārye'rthe, na tvaṃ(m) śocitumarhasi. 2.27**

For, in that case death is certain for the born, and rebirth is inevitable for the dead. You should not, therefor, grieve over the inevitable.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna the fundamental principle governing creation and the Self: “O Arjuna, understand this: for one who is born (jāta), death (mṛtyu) is certain (dhruva). Likewise, for one who has died, birth is inevitable. Therefore, you have no reason to grieve (na śocitum arhasi).”

Here, Bhagavān explains the universal law of creation:

- **Jātasya dhruva mṛtyuḥ** — For the born, death is fixed, certain, and unavoidable. If one identifies oneself solely with the body, then death seems absolute.
- **Mṛtasya dhruva janma** — For one who has died, the subtle consciousness (caitanya-tattva) must be reborn. Birth is therefore also fixed and inevitable.

The principle underlying this is that the conscious essence never truly dies. Energy can neither be created nor destroyed; it only transforms. Similarly, the Ātman, the subtle conscious element within all beings, is imperishable. Hence, birth and death are inevitable components of creation, not arbitrary or personal events.

Bhagavān points out that this law ensures constant renewal in the cosmos. If there were no death, how would the world sustain itself? Resources would be exhausted; population would grow unchecked. Therefore, through death, Bhagavān provides the universe with eternal novelty and balance. This nitya-nūтана (perpetual renewal) is essential and unavoidable (aparihārya).

Śrī Jñāneśvar Maharāj beautifully elaborates this principle in his commentary:

**उपजे ते नाशे । नाशले पुनरपि दिसे । हे घटिकायत्र जैसे । परिभ्रमे गा ॥ १५९ ॥**

“Whatever is born eventually perishes; and that which has perished manifests again. This is like the turning of a wheel, constantly revolving.”

This shloka illustrates the cyclical nature of birth and death:

- What arises must eventually vanish.
- What vanishes, sooner or later, reappears in some form.
- Birth and death are as unavoidable and continuous as the rising and setting of the sun.

Bhagavān emphasizes that understanding this principle intellectually is one thing, but experiencing it in practical life is more challenging. When a loved one or a close family member dies, the saguna (form-based) aspect of that being disappears, leaving behind the nirguna, formless conscious essence, which is imperceptible. The visible, tangible form vanishes, while the eternal Self cannot be seen directly.

Despite this difficulty, the teaching is clear: the law of birth and death is invariable and unchangeable. Accepting it is crucial. This acceptance is the key to understanding the eternal novelty and continuity in creation (nitya-nūтана). It frees the mind from unwarranted grief, allowing one to see beyond the impermanent forms to the imperishable Self.

## 2.28

### **avyaktādīni bhūtāni, vyaktamadhyāni bhārata, avyaktanidhanānyeva, tatra kā paridevanā. 2.28**

Arjuna, before birth beings are not manifest to our human senses; on death they return to the unmanifest again. They are manifest only in the interim between birth and death. What occasion, then, for lamentation?

Bhagavān explains to Arjuna the nature of beings (bhūtāni) in relation to the manifest and unmanifest: “O Bhārata, know this: before birth, all beings (bhūtāni) exist in an unmanifest state (avyakta).”

Here, Bhagavān clarifies what is meant by bhūtāni. These are all entities composed of the five great elements (pañca mahābhūta), earth (pṛthivī), water (āp), fire (tejaḥ), air (vāyu), and ether (ākāśa). The term bhūtāni does not imply spirits or ghosts (piśāc); rather, it refers to all material forms arising from these elements.

- **Avyakta-dhīnā bhūtāni** — Before birth, they are unmanifest, hidden from perception, invisible.
- **Vyakta-madhyāni** — In between, during a certain period, these beings become manifest, appearing in a body or form.
- **Avyakta-nidhana** — After this period, they return to the unmanifest state.

Bhagavān illustrates this with an analogy: just as electricity remains unseen until a bulb is switched on, the manifestation occurs only temporarily. Press the switch, and the light appears; turn it off, and the electricity returns to invisibility. It was never truly absent; it was merely in a state not perceivable by the instruments available. Similarly, the Ātman or the subtle energy within beings manifests only under certain conditions.

Further, Bhagavān draws a parallel with waves in nature. There exist sound waves, ultrasound, and infrared waves, frequencies beyond human perception. We can hear only the sound waves within our sensory range. Ultrasound and infrared are not absent; they are simply imperceptible to our senses. To assume that “what cannot be perceived does not exist” is ignorance, as Einstein himself critiqued. The observable universe is not the full reality.

Bhagavān emphasizes:

- **Avyaktād bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni Bhārata** — “O Arjuna, you can perceive only that which is manifest. The states before birth and after death remain beyond the scope of your senses.”
- **Tatra kā paridevana** — Therefore, you must not grieve for what you cannot perceive. Grief arises from misunderstanding the limits of sensory perception.

After hearing this, Arjuna and many others experience various reactions:

- Some are astonished, deeply reflecting on this truth.
- Some react with wonder, talking endlessly about it.
- Some hear it but remain indifferent, failing to make any attempt to understand.
- Some remain so steeped in ignorance that even the opportunity to learn does not reach them.

Bhagavān’s teaching here highlights a profound principle: human perception is limited to the manifest. What is unmanifest exists beyond sensory awareness, yet it is no less real. Grief arises only from failing to recognize this eternal reality.

## 2.29

**āścaryavatpaśyati kaścidenam,  
āścaryavadvadati tathaiva cānyaḥ,  
āścaryavaccainamanyaḥ(ś) śrṇoti,  
śrutvā'pyenaṃ(ṽ) veda na caiva kaścit.2.29**

Hardly any great soul perceives this soul as marvellous, scarce another great soul likewise speaks thereof as marvellous, and scarce another worthy one hears of it as marvellous, while there are some who know it not even on hearing of it.

Bhagavān explains to Arjuna that different people respond to the teaching of the Ātman in distinct ways.

This can be understood as follows:

- **Āścaryavat paśyati** — Some people perceive it as wondrous or astonishing (paśyati). Here seeing does not mean literal vision; rather, it signifies mental contemplation or insight. These individuals recognize the teaching of the Ātman as something extraordinary, beyond ordinary experience.
- **Āścaryavat vadati** — Some speak about it in amazement. They try to describe the qualities or characteristics of the Self as they have heard or understood them. However, whether they have truly experienced Ātman-knowledge themselves is unknown. They may recite, narrate, or philosophize without direct realization.
- **Āścaryavat manyoti** — Some, upon hearing or contemplating, accept it as a truth, yet their acceptance is intellectual or conceptual, not experiential. They recognize the principle, but it has not yet penetrated their consciousness fully.
- **Śrutvā ca eva kaścit** — Even after hearing extensively, reading from scriptures, or receiving instructions from a guru, many do not actually reach Ātman-realization. All that remains is the process of listening, speaking, and reading about it. The essence remains beyond their direct experience.

Bhagavān emphasizes that the knowledge of the Ātman (ātma-jñāna) is not merely theoretical. Listening, reading, or repeating alone is insufficient. True realization requires deep inner inquiry and

experiential understanding.

Yet, some people develop genuine aspiration: a sincere desire arises within them to penetrate this knowledge, to understand their true nature (svarūpa) and attain direct awareness of the Self. This is the beginning of the path toward realization, where wonder transforms into understanding.

## 2.30

### **dehī nityamavadhyo'yaṃ(n), dehe sarvasya bhārata, tasmātsarvāṇi bhūtāni, na tvam(m) śocitumarhasi. 2.30**

Arjuna, this soul dwelling in the bodies of all, can never be slain; therefore, you should not mourn for any one.

Bhagavān continues to instruct Arjuna on the nature of the Ātman and the futility of grief over the body: “O Bhārata, first understand this: the body is perishable, but the Ātman within every being is imperishable (avadhya). HE is indestructible, beyond all harm, and unassailable. Therefore, you have no reason to grieve for any living being.”

Bhagavān explains:

- **Avadhya** — The Self is that which no one can destroy; it is imperishable. It resides in all beings, and its nature remains unchanged despite the apparent birth and death of the body.
- **Tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni** — Since this Ātman exists within all beings, sorrow for the body or its passing is inappropriate.

Śrī Jñāneśvar Maharāj beautifully reinforces this teaching:

**तैसें आदीचि जें नाही । तयालागीं तूं रुदसी कायी । तूं अवीट तें पाहीं । चैतन्य एक ॥ १६९ ॥**

“Do not weep for that which is imperishable. You may grieve for what appears perishable, but fix your vision and mind upon the one Consciousness, the eternal, unchanging Ātman. This is the essence.”

Bhagavān emphasizes that the mind (manas) plays a crucial role in this understanding. The mind is the junction between the body (jada) and the conscious Self (caitanya). Its quality is determined by what it attaches to:

- If the mind identifies with the body as “self,” it becomes material or inert.
- If the mind identifies with the Ātman, merging its awareness with the eternal Consciousness, it aligns with true Ātman-nature.

Thus, Bhagavān instructs Arjuna to withdraw grief from the body and focus the mind on the imperishable Ātman.

**जडाजडम मनोविद्धिः।**

He further explains the nature of worldly experiences:

- Sukha (pleasure) and duḥkha (pain) arise in life continuously.
- Pleasure, if fixed upon, leads to euphoria.
- Pain, if clung to, leads to grief or depression.

Even the lives of the great saints (mahānubhāva) experience these fluctuations, but they do not allow attachment or aversion to fixate, because life’s chariot must keep moving.

Bhagavān also highlights the role of a spiritual charioteer. Just as a charioteer guides a chariot steadily, the Bhagavad Gītā itself serves as a charioteer (vāṇmaya Kṛṣṇa-mūrti).

## जयत जयतु गीता वांगमय कृष्ण मूर्ति

- This means that the Gītā is Kṛṣṇa in literary form, a guide for the mind and intellect.
- Friendship with the Gītā leads to friendship with Bhagavān.
- Memorizing and reflecting on its verses allows Bhagavān to become one's charioteer, philosopher, and guide, steering the mind away from grief and toward realization.

At this point, for the first time in the discourse, Bhagavān Himself utters a word of deep significance. HE begins with the essence of His teaching, signaling the entry into direct instruction of wisdom.

### 2.31

#### **svadharmamapi cāvekṣya, na vikampitumarhasi, dharmyāddhi yuddhācchreyo'nyat, kṣatriyasya na vidyate. 2.31**

Besides, considering your own duty too, you should not waver, for there is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war.

At this juncture in the discourse, Bhagavān introduces the concept of Svadharma for the first time in HIS words: **svadharmamapi caveksya..**

The Gītā begins in the Dharmakshetra, Kurukshetra, the “field of dharma”, with the opening verse:

**धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः।**

**मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥**

And the first chapter, from beginning to end, frames the discussion in terms of dharma: it begins with dharma and concludes with mama dharma — “my duty.” The essence of dharma in the Gītā is action in alignment with one's prescribed role and responsibilities, not religious denomination.

Here, it is clarified:

- Dharma does not mean Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, or Christian religion.
- Dharma is not sectarian practice or ritual alone.

Dharma, in the context of the Bhagavad Gītā, refers to the principle that sustains and upholds one's duty in society, family, and life.

For instance, we speak of Rāṣṭra Dharma (duty toward the nation), Pitr-Dharma (duty toward parents), Mātṛ-Dharma (duty toward mother/family), and Samāj Dharma (duty toward society). There is no such thing as being “adharmic” by nature”, every citizen, every individual, has responsibilities in their roles. Dharma is action in accordance with one's role, the sustaining duty that maintains the fabric of life and society.

Bhagavān then focuses on Arjuna's specific Svadharma:

Arjuna's duty as a Kṣatriya (warrior) is Svadharma.

Bhagavān instructs: **Svadharme nidhanam śreyaḥ** — fulfilling one's own duty, even if difficult or dangerous, is superior to adopting another's dharma.

Aparadhama, engaging in another's duty, is fraught with fear, confusion, and harm.

Bhagavān emphasizes:

- A Kṣatriya's dharma is to protect society, safeguard the nation, and maintain the order of the

people.

- If called upon for battle, engaging in this war is the righteous duty of the Kṣatriya, and nothing else can be more beneficial or fruitful.
- Bhagavān underscores: one must act without hesitation, with courage and conviction, in alignment with one's prescribed role.

In practical terms, HE explains:

Consider a soldier or officer stationed at the border, defending the nation is his responsibility.

Likewise, Arjuna, as a Kṣatriya, has been placed in a battlefield where protecting dharma and righteousness is HIS duty.

Thus, Bhagavān prepares Arjuna to understand that this war is not a mere conflict, but an opportunity to uphold dharma through action, in accordance with HIS Svadharma as a warrior.

## 2.32

### **yadṛcchayā copapannaṃ(m), svargadvārāmapāvṛtam, sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ(ph) pārtha, labhante yuddhamiḍṛśam. 2.32**

Arjuna, fortunate are the Kṣatriyās who get such an unsolicited opportunity for war, which is an open gateway to heaven.

He declares that when a Kṣatriya, such as Pārtha, attains a duty like this on its own, yad accha, it is spontaneously given, not requested or demanded. The battle, such as this one, apāvṛtam svargadvāram ida ḍṛṣṭam yuddham, becomes the threshold of heaven itself.

In life, any duty or responsibility that one undertakes, any difficulty faced, serves to enhance one's inner strength. These challenges act as catalysts for personal refinement. Just as a diamond is cut and polished to reveal its radiance, life's trials, its heat, challenges, and duties, shape the individual, bringing forth brilliance.

For instance, a severe illness of an elder in the household demands attentive care; an accident witnessed on the street may call for immediate intervention. These situations, though difficult, are the crucibles through which the soul is refined. Bhagavān points out that such experiences, pain, responsibility, and the earnest fulfillment of duties—polish life in the same manner that intense heat transforms raw metal into pure gold (kundan).

When a Kṣatriya encounters such a duty of this magnitude, Bhagavān explains, it is akin to the doors of svarga opening spontaneously. If one simply passes life idly, doing nothing of real consequence, then life remains unilluminated and unfulfilled.

Thus, the supplication:

**हे नाथ अब तो ऐसी दया हो, जीवन निरर्थक जाने न पाए।**

"He Nātha, now grant such compassion that life may not pass away in vain;

He Nātha, now grant such mercy that life may not be wasted."

The human existence is not meant to be frivolous. Even amidst suffering, one must live for the welfare of others, performing one's duties and refining one's own character. When such duties are fulfilled under challenge, it is as though svarga's door has opened. The quality of one's struggle reveals the measure of one's life.

Later, observers may remark: "Truly, this was a life of tremendous difficulty. Yet this individual faced all challenges with courage, completing every duty, smiling even through adversity." Bhagavān emphasizes:

**"Svarga-dvāraṃ sukhina kṣatriyā pārtha labhate yuddham daśam iha dṛṣṭam"**

The fortunate, the truly valorous, encounter such a battle. A stagnant, overly comfortable life, even in comfort, becomes burdensome and can prick the soul.

**सुख पण टोचतं**

Hence, Bhagavān underscores that such a battle is not sought for oneself but granted spontaneously.

Indeed, Arjuna did not go seeking this war. His true aim was peace. Bhagavān Himself came as the envoy of peace, requesting merely five villages for the Pāṇḍavas. His mission was to prevent bloodshed, avert destruction, and uphold justice. Yet Duryodhana refused. Even after seizing lands, wealth, and dishonoring others, including attempting to disrobe Draupadī, he denied even these five villages, stating that he would not yield even the tiniest fraction of land.

Thus, Bhagavān asserts, this duty, the war, was spontaneously conferred upon Arjuna. It was not only necessary, but it was the threshold to svarga. Therefore, Arjuna should neither flee nor turn away in despair. To show one's back to battle is the ultimate dishonor for a Kṣatriya, a dishonor beyond any measure.

At this point, Bhagavān transitions from philosophical exposition to practical guidance. Initially, He spoke in the language of the soul: the bodies before Arjuna are transient; the eternal, indestructible essence remains. Now, He speaks in the practical, worldly language: this battle has spontaneously arisen, not at Arjuna's request.

Moreover, Arjuna is the son of a Kṣatriya lineage. Bhagavān emphasizes the practical consequence of shirking duty: if Arjuna were to refuse, history would record him as a fugitive, a dhanu-dhārī (master archer) who abandoned his responsibilities, despite being trained by Dronācārya, the greatest teacher of arms. Whether Arjuna had engaged in penance or not is irrelevant—his legacy would be tarnished. Bhagavān clearly communicates that abandoning one's duty in the face of challenge results in societal censure and personal dishonor.

In essence, Bhagavān intertwines the spiritual with the practical: the battlefield is both the external challenge and the means for inner refinement. It is the spontaneously granted arena where duty, courage, and virtue are tested, polished, and immortalized. Such a life, though fraught with difficulty, leads to svarga, not merely as reward, but as the recognition of righteous action, valor, and the steadfast fulfillment of one's dharma.

**2.33, 2.34**

**atha cettvamimaṃ(n) dharmyaṃ(m), saṅgrāmaṃ(n) na kariṣyasi,  
tataḥ(s) svadharmāṃ(ñ) kīrtiṃ(ñ) ca, hitvā pāpamavāpsyasi. 2.33  
akīrtiṃ(ñ) cāpi bhūtāni, kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām,  
saṃbhāvitasya cākīrtiḥ(r), maraṇādatiricyate. 2.34**

Now, if you refuse to fight this righteous war, then, shirking your duty and losing your reputation, you will incur sin.

Nay, people will also pour undying infamy on you; and infamy brought on a man enjoying popular

esteem is worse than death.

He explains that if one were to avoid this duty, this dharma-yuddha, even after every effort to prevent it, then the consequences would be severe.

The term dharmayukta saṅgrāma (duty-bound battle) is used deliberately. This is not a battle of convenience, or a secretive war launched for hidden motives. Bhagavān emphasizes that every effort was made to avert conflict. This is a dharma-yuddha precisely because HE, Himself, came as the envoy of peace, seeking reconciliation. Unlike clandestine or unjust wars, such as modern-day terrorist attacks where innocent civilians are targeted, here, both sides are trained warriors, facing each other openly, skilled in the art of combat.

Historically, even centuries later, the Gītā was banned in some regions, such as Russia, because authorities misunderstood it as promoting war. In reality, the Gītā does not incite violence. Bhagavān Himself had sought peace on behalf of the Pandavas. Yet, when one refuses dharma, the ramifications are unavoidable.

If Arjuna, or any Kṣatriya in such a circumstance, were to avoid this dharma-yuddha, HE would destroy not only his own dharma and fame (kiirti) but also bring upon himself sin (pāpa). Here, pāpa includes the loss of one's reputation, honour, and the dharmic purpose that defines a Kṣatriya.

Śrī Jñāneśvar Mahārāj elucidates this in his commentary:

**असती कीर्ति जाईल । जगचि अभिशापु देईल । आणि गिंवसित पावतील । महादोष ॥ १९८ ॥**

“The honour and fame (kiirti) will be destroyed. The world will shower curses, and calamity will follow. This is a great sin (mahādoṣa).”

By fleeing, one destroys all prior honour. One's name becomes synonymous with disgrace (apayaś), for the world records what is seen and remembered. History will ask: What was the reason for this failure? What justification could be provided? The media, scholars, and observers of future generations will speak: “Arjuna fled the battle; he abandoned his dharma. He was fearful.”

Even if one were to explain privately, no one can seal every mouth or silence every observer. Public perception and historical record cannot be controlled by excuses. Hence, avoiding such a dharma-yuddha leads not merely to loss of fame but to *mahādoṣa*, a grave blemish on the soul and one's legacy.

Bhagavān impresses the critical point: the avoidance of duty, even under extreme emotional or moral conflict, is not a private matter. A Kṣatriya's actions in the battlefield are inseparably tied to dharma, honour, and societal recognition. Turning away from the fight at such a moment ensures the perpetuation of sin (pāpa), the loss of one's kiirti, and the descent into disgrace that cannot be remedied by personal rationalizations.

In essence, Bhagavān instructs that dharma must be upheld even when challenging, unavoidable, and fraught with personal distress. The battlefield, though perilous, is the arena where honour is preserved, sin avoided, and the dharmic legacy maintained. To shy away in such a moment is to invite not only historical condemnation but a spiritual blemish that overshadows one's entire life.

**2.35**

## **bhayādraṇāduparataṃ(m), maṃsyante tvāṃ(m) mahārathāḥ, yeṣāṃ(ñ) ca tvāṃ bahumato, bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam. 2.35**

And the warrior-chiefs who thought highly of you, will now despise you, thinking that it was fear which drove you away from battle.

He explains that all bhūtāni, all living beings composed of the five great elements (pañcamahā-bhūt), will inevitably recount tales of dishonour.

The term avyayām signifies that such infamy is long-lasting. It does not fade quickly; it persists through time, like dust that cannot be swept away. Even today, the media functions much the same way as it did in the past. Human nature has remained constant across millennia. Desire, anger, pride, envy, greed, attachment, these vices endure even as circumstances change. Therefore, Bhagavān teaches the Gītā as a discourse on the eternal flow of ignorance (avidyā), which shapes human perception and attention.

**Sambhāvitās** refers to an esteemed or honourable person. For such a one, infamy (akīrti), even more than death, becomes a source of distress. A virtuous person cannot tolerate falsehoods being spoken or written about him. Bhagavān questions: can one endure this? Even the most celebrated kiirti can vanish in a moment under the weight of slander.

### **यषाम् त्वम् बहुमता भूत्वा लाघवम् यासि**

“You, who are widely revered (bahumatā) and honoured in the eyes of many, shall experience the loss of all such esteem (lāghava).”

Here, bahumatā refers to the multitude who regard one as a model of virtue, those who hold deep respect for the individual. In Arjuna’s case, it includes not merely his mastery of archery and martial skill through relentless practice, but also his character: his courage, humility, sensitivity, and adherence to dharma, including obedience to his mother’s counsel and respectful conduct toward his brothers and wife. These qualities made him a role model, deeply admired by many.

Yet, Bhagavān points out the cruel irony (mahā-vidambana) of human life: a lifetime of virtue can be overshadowed by a single incident of perceived dishonour. A single lapse, however understandable or compassionate, may cause lasting infamy.

He continues: "Mahārathā tam bhayāt raṇāt upartam manaste"

Even the greatest warriors, the mahārathīs, observing the battlefield, will perceive that one fled out of fear (tam bhayāt raṇāt upartam). They will not acknowledge the inner sensitivity, ethical restraint, or the humane intent behind the act. The subtle, refined motives of a virtuous person are often inaccessible to others, especially to those who judge only by visible actions.

Even well-meaning observers (sajjana) may interpret the flight as cowardice. Those who act unjustly (durjana) may rejoice, claiming dominion because of the perceived absence of resistance. Virtue, sensitivity, and noble intent, though present, remain unseen. This is why Bhagavān stresses the profound consequences of shirking dharma: external perception, historical record, and spiritual standing all become tainted by a single act of omission.

Even a Kṣatriya of supreme courage and dharmic adherence can have his fame (kiirti) threatened by circumstances beyond his control. Thus, Bhagavān’s counsel is both practical and deeply philosophical: the battlefield is as much about preserving dharma and kiirti as it is about physical

combat.

## 2.36

### **avācyavādāṃśca bahūn, vadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ, nindantastava sāmartyaṃ(n), tato duḥkhataraṃ(n) nu kim. 2.36**

And your enemies, disparaging your might, will speak many unbecoming words; what can be more distressing than this?

Param Pujya Gurudev beautifully describes Arjuna, illustrating his unique blend of qualities: unparalleled heroism, deep humility, and sensitivity. These virtues were expressed not only on the battlefield but also in his domestic and familial life, toward his newly wedded wife, toward his mother's instructions, and toward his brothers with whom property was divided. Arjuna faithfully followed the words of his mother, exhibiting obedience and integrity.

And yet, one striking truth of human life: despite living a life of virtue, one single incident can lead to defamation or misjudgment. Such was the situation with Arjuna. Bhagavān explains:

*"Maharatha tam bhayāt raṇāt upatam manaste"* , Even a great warrior (maharatha) is judged merely by the appearance of fear in battle. Those standing around him will not appreciate his sensitivity or his desire to avoid harming others; they will only see that he has fled from battle. Arjuna's internal virtues, his refined, sensitive nature, will not penetrate the understanding of others. They will merely judge based on external appearances.

The reality is profound: good, sensitive people often act to preserve dharma and the welfare of others, yet their actions may be misinterpreted. As Gurudev explained, noble individuals may choose to withdraw to prevent unrighteous people from seizing power. The intention is always dharmic, yet worldly perception often mistakes it as cowardice.

Bhagavān, as a profound psychologist, first presents the principle and then translates it to practical guidance, awakening Arjuna's inner self-confidence. Gurudev illustrated this through the following doha of Sant Jñāneśvar Mahārāj:

**हे म्हणती गेला रे गेला । अर्जुन आम्हां बिहाला । हा सांगें बोलु उरला । निका कायी ? ॥ २०८ ॥**

Here, Bhagavān explains: those who wish for Arjuna's harm, the enemies, will criticize his strength, calling him fearful and cowardly. They will use endless words to vilify him, speaking in ways he cannot bear to hear. Such is the nature of worldly fame and defamation; suffering arises not from reality but from others' judgments.

This is precisely the moment where Bhagavān awakens Arjuna from the depths of self-doubt. He poses the subtle challenge: can Arjuna endure this? Can he act according to dharma, overcome psychological paralysis, and pursue the path of self-realization? The human heart is tested not merely in action, but in the endurance of reputation and misunderstanding.

Sant Jñāneśvar Mahārāj further praises Arjuna:

**तैसी कीर्ती निःसीम । तुझ्या ठायीं निरुपम । तुझे गुण उत्तम । तिहीं लोकीं ॥ २११ ॥**

Arjuna's fame is limitless; it cannot be compared to anyone else's. His qualities are supremely excellent, visible across the three worlds. Here, Gurudev emphasizes: no matter how much the world vilifies, the intrinsic excellence of Arjuna's virtues remains undeniable.

Returning from battle, Arjuna is confronted with life itself. The true challenge is not merely the

battlefield but the consistent, vigilant engagement with dharma in life, refining oneself and ultimately attaining the goal. Bhagavān's discourse functions as a psychological masterstroke, moving Arjuna from despair and self-doubt toward courage, dharma, and spiritual focus.

Today's discourse, offered solely through the grace of Gurudeva, allowed us to touch but a single drop of the infinite ocean of wisdom that flows from the lips of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the heart of Sant Jñānēśvar Mahārāj.

**ज्ञानेश्वर महाराज की जय।**

**सद्गुरुदेव भगवान की जय।**

The session concluded with a heartfelt and engaging question-and-answer segment, filled with practical insights and spiritual clarity, guiding us to apply the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā in our everyday life, with clarity, courage, and a deep inner transformation.

### **QUESTION AND ANSWER**

**S.M. Sharma ji**

**Q: The soul neither dies nor takes birth. If there were a certain number of souls at the beginning, would the same number exist today?**

**Answer:** Souls undergo upliftment and transition. They cycle through 8.4 million life forms (yoṇīs). The increase in human population today occurs because the number of souls in other species has decreased correspondingly.

**Q: When the life force leaves the body, how long does it take for the soul to take rebirth?**

**Answer:** An exact answer cannot be given, as the journey of each soul is unique. According to its saṃskāras, it attains higher realms (sadgati) or other forms of existence. Time is relative, our moment and a cosmic moment are not the same. Therefore, a precise answer cannot be formulated as a fixed principle.

**Chandraesh ji**

**Q: We are a combination of body and soul. The body is our physical form, but if the soul is a part of Paramātmā, why do some people behave wickedly, exploiting others and the Earth?**

**Answer:** The conscious soul becomes vitiated when it identifies with the body. It perceives a distinction between self and others. When the soul is disturbed, it descends from its pure state associated with Paramātmā to a lower, disturbed level.

For example, if two children are each given two thousand rupees to use: one may buy good books and gain knowledge, while the other may squander it on entertainment or indulgences. This happens because the soul operates under the influence of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas. Understanding this is part of the process of purification.

Just as pure 24-carat gold is mixed with impurities to make jewelry, the functioning of the world requires that pure souls be mixed with some disturbance. As these impurities are gradually removed, the vitiated soul can reunite with the untainted Paramātmā. For this, one must purify the inner self. The mixture of guṇas explains why behavior and dispositions differ among individuals.

The discourse concluded with a prayer at the lotus feet of Śrī Hari, followed by the recitation of the **Hanumān Chalisa**.



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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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