

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 3: Karma-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/nBSnPMmS0Eg>

The Three-Step Strategy to Slay Inner Enemies

The 3rd chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is **Karma-Yoga - The Yoga of Action**.

The session began by invoking the grace of Paramujya Gurudev and Paramātmā.

*gurur brahmā gurur viṣṇuḥ gurur devo maheshvaraḥ |
gurur sākṣāt parabrahma tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ ||*

*kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmāne |
praṇataḥ kleśa nāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ ||*

*om pārthāya pratibodhitām bhagavatā nārāyaṇena svayam |
vyāsenā grathitām purāṇamuninā madhye mahābhāratam ||
advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇīm bhagavatīm aṣṭādaśādhyāyinīm |
amba tvām anusandadhāmi bhagavadgīte bhavadveṣiṇīm ||*

The discussion begins by revisiting the profound depths of **Karma Yoga** and the initial state of mind that led Arjuna to seek guidance. At the start of this chapter, Arjuna expresses his confusion to Bhagavān, feeling that the instructions he is receiving are contradictory. One moment, Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of **jñana** (knowledge), and the next, he stresses the necessity of **karma** (action).

Arjuna's confusion is voiced in the verse: "*vyāmiśhreṇeva vākyena buddhiṁ mohayasīva me*". He feels his intellect is being deluded. Arjuna's ultimate goal, however, is clear: he wants a happy life. Like all of us, he seeks a joyful journey free from regrets and bindings, a path that leads to higher liberation.

The Path to Knowledge through Action

Bhagavān gently resolves this confusion by explaining that knowledge and action are not separate destinations. By sincerely pursuing one's **swadharma** (personal duty) and performing actions beautifully, one can achieve the same supreme knowledge as the great Sankhya Yogis who spend their lives in *Dhyan*. The end result is identical. Bhagavān cites the example of *Janaka Raja* and other enlightened beings who attained perfection not by abandoning the world, but by fulfilling their duties. The key is to pursue the chosen path with absolute sincerity.

Leading by Example: The Role of the Wise

A significant portion of the discussion focuses on what happens after one attains supreme knowledge. Does a liberated soul stop working? Bhagavān says no. Even those who have reached the ultimate destination of liberation must continue to perform their karma. They must do this to set an ideal example for society.

This is captured in the principle: *yadyadācarati śreṣṭhastattadevetaro janaḥ* (whatever a great man does, others follow).

To illustrate this, we look at the example of two teachers. One proceeds on the path of "work as worship," while the other does the job merely for the sake of doing it. The distinct difference in their attitude completely changes the end result for them. The wise must lead by example so that others, looking at them, can follow the path of Karma Yoga.

Avoiding Intellectual Confusion (*buddhi-bhedam*)

Bhagavān gives a stern instruction to the knowledgeable - do not create *buddhi bhedh* (intellectual division or confusion) in the minds of those who have not yet reached that level of knowledge. Just as Arjuna was confused between the supremacy of knowledge versus action, a wise person should not unsettle the minds of the ignorant. Instead of telling them to abandon their actions for the sake of higher knowledge, the wise should:

- **Encourage** them to engage in their actions.
- ***joṣhayet sarva-karmāṇi*** - Inspire them to continue performing all their tasks.
- **Avoid Detours:** Do not detour them from the path of Karma Yoga by saying knowledge is greater.

One should not let the ignorant leave the attachment they have to their actions. Instead, let them remain attached for the time being while keep inspiring them to continue. This is the ultimate path that will lead them to the supreme knowledge.

The Influence of Prakṛti (Nature): It is not possible for anybody to leave all actions. Even if one decides that the path of action is not for them and they wish to become a **Dhyana Yogi**, it is simply not possible. This is because every living being is under the constant influence of *Prakṛti* (nature). Even if you want to stop, your nature compels you to act. Since action is inevitable, the focus must remain on how to perform those actions sincerely within the framework of Karma Yoga.

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."

The Illusion of the Doer

Bhagavān continues to unravel the mystery of human action by explaining how our nature (*Prakṛti*) functions. In this shloka, He introduces a profound truth about the forces at play. He explains that all actions are performed by the qualities of *Prakṛti* (nature). However, the one whose mind is deluded by ego (*ahankāra*) thinks, "I am the doer." Our minds become deluded and confused because of this ego. We fall into the trap of believing that all these actions are happening solely because of us. In this state of delusion, we forget the supreme force within us and the power of *Prakṛti* that actually drives these movements.

Arjuna's Misconception and the *Nimitta*

Arjuna is also suffering from this exact delusion. Arjuna is under the impression that he is the one killing his kinsmen, that he is the one who will slay everyone on the battlefield. In this ego-driven state, he forgets that it is the karma of those present that is responsible for what they are about to undergo. Arjuna is being reminded that he is merely a *nimitta* - a means or an instrument to achieve what Bhagavān intends to achieve.

Furthermore, Arjuna's own nature is that of a warrior, a Kshatriya. Bhagavān explains that even if Arjuna were to leave the battlefield now, he would not find happiness in a life of inaction. His deep-seated instincts and his very nature would eventually compel him to return to the fight.

The Control of *Prakṛti*

The core takeaway from this teaching is that everyone is controlled by *Prakṛti*. We are not independent agents operating outside the laws of nature; rather, our actions are a manifestation of the natural forces working through us. When we understand that nature is performing the work and we are but instruments, the burden of the "doer" ego begins to lift. This shift in perspective is essential for one to move from a state of confusion to the clarity of Karma Yoga.

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.

The Wisdom of the *Tattvavit*

Bhagavān deepens the explanation by distinguishing between those who are deluded and those who possess true insight. He uses the term **tattvavit** - the knower of the truth. A *tattvavit* is someone who understands the fundamental principles of the universe, the basics of creation, and the forces responsible for the functioning of this world.

The knower of the truth (*tattvavit*) understands the *guna karma vibhagayoḥ* - the distinction between the qualities of nature and the actions themselves. They recognize that all activities are merely the interaction of the three gunas: Sattvaguna (purity), Rajoguna (passion), and Tamoguna (ignorance).

The Interaction of Gunas

Depending on which of these three characteristics is prominent within a person, their karma is selected and performed. The *tattvavit* realizes that it is simply a case of "the qualities acting upon the qualities" (*guṇā guṇeṣu vartante*). Because they hold this understanding, they do not get attached. They do not claim ownership of the action. While a confused person might try to run away from their nature or escape their duties, the *tattvavit* knows that such an escape is impossible because we are all functioning within the framework of Prakṛti.

Action Without Attachment

By understanding that these actions are coming from the inherent qualities of objects and nature, the knower of truth remains stable.

- They are not bothered by the performance of work.
- They continue steadily on the path of action without confusion.

- They understand: "This is what I have to do, and I am going to do it."

Unlike those who are deluded by ego, the tattvavit does not try to stop themselves or run away from their karma. They perform their duties with a sense of detachment, knowing they are not the ultimate cause, but merely the field where the gunas are at play. This brings us to a vital question: If this is how the wise and the tattvavit remain unattached, what happens to the common people who are still bound by their perceptions?

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.

The Two Categories of Seekers

Bhagavān continues to analyze the human condition by contrasting two distinct types of people. The first category consists of those who are **prakṛiteḥ guṇa-sammūḍhāḥ** - those who are utterly deluded by the qualities of nature.

The word *kṛtsna* means "in totality" or "complete."

- **Kṛtsnavit:** One who possesses complete, perfect knowledge.
- **Akṛtsnavit:** One who has imperfect or incomplete knowledge.

Those with imperfect knowledge are referred to as *mandā*, meaning they are less intelligent or possess an unsettled mind. Because they do not understand that they are under the constant influence of the gunas, they become **sajjante guṇa-karmasu** - deeply attached to the functions of these qualities.

The Grip of Attachment

For the common person who lacks this total understanding, every action leads to a cycle of attachment, kaama (desire), and krodha (anger). They fail to see that their actions are merely arising from the gunas. On the other hand, the *kṛtsnavit* (the one with perfect knowledge) remains steady. If such a person is a teacher, they understand that their teaching is a manifestation of their nature, the *guṇa Prakṛti*. They know they are not meant to be a soldier or a Kshatriya because their internal qualities drive their specific path. This realization keeps their mind from being unsettled.

However, Bhagavān acknowledges a practical reality, not everyone can have such a perfectly settled mind. Not everyone can immediately grasp the deep truth of the universe or the subtle distinctions between the gunas. - Most people find themselves gripped by a "fever" - a state of mental agitation and fear. For Arjuna, this fever manifested as the fear of acting, a paralysis that deluded him from his karma. We too, often find ourselves gripped by similar fears that detour us from our duties.

The Master Key to Freedom

Since we are all bound by karma and influenced by nature, how can a common person rise above this binding? How do we find liberation when we are not yet fully enlightened tattvavits? Bhagavān prepares to reveal a "Master Key" in the following verse. This key is designed specifically to help those who feel covered by fear and confusion to perform their actions without being shackled by them. It is the secret to gaining freedom from the very work that seems to bind us.

mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi, sannyasyādhyātmacetasā, nirāśīrnirmamo 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.

The Master Key: Total Surrender in Action

In this verse, Bhagavān provides a clear roadmap for the common man to rise above the bindings of karma. He instructs us to perform all actions while being **adhyātma-chetasā** - with the intellect fixed on the inner consciousness or the subconscious mind. From our *antarman* (inner soul), we must dedicate and invest all our actions in Him (**mayi sanyasya**).

There are specific, non-negotiable conditions attached to this surrender:

- **Sarvāṇi karmāṇi:** This means **all** actions. We cannot pick and choose, offering only our "spiritual" work like learning the Gita while keeping our "secular" work for ourselves. Every single deed must be offered.
- **Nirāśīh:** This means "**without expectation.**" We often perform good deeds (satkarma) or prayers like a Satyanarayan Puja with a hidden hope for a specific result. Bhagavān says we must let go of all anticipation of fruits.
- **Nirmamaḥ:** This means "**without the sense of ownership**" or "mine-ness." We must leave behind the ahaṅkāra that "I am the doer" and the attachment that "these results are for my family, my wife, or my children."

Getting Rid of the Fever (Vigata-jvaraḥ)

- When these conditions are met, Bhagavān says we will automatically become **vigata-jvaraḥ** free from the "fever." This fever is not a physical ailment, it is the mental agitation arising from fear, greed, and delusion.

To illustrate this, consider a person who sees a rope in the dark and, imagining it is a snake, starts trembling with fear. The rope isn't a snake, but the *imagination* of the threat causes a very real, feverish chill of terror. Our fears regarding karma are exactly like that imaginary snake. By renouncing the "doership" and offering everything to Bhagavān, this illusory fever vanishes.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna to **yudhyasva (fight)**. While Arjuna is on a literal battlefield, for us, our life is the battlefield. We must perform our duties - our own *yuddhasva*, without the fever of anxiety.

Practical Implementation: The Morning Resolution

It is easy to listen to these "high-five" principles, but difficult to practice. We might offer our karma in the morning and five minutes later start anticipating results. To bridge this gap, Swamiji suggests starting the day with a specific prayer of surrender:

*Kar Pranam Tere Charnon Mein Lagta Hoon Ab Tere Kaaj □
Palan Karne Ko Aagya Tab Main Niyukt Hota Hoon Aaj □*

Every morning, remind yourself: "I am starting my day on Your orders, to do Your work." You can choose

any form of God you have faith in, but the emotion remains the same: "I am carrying out Your orders, please hold the reins of my life just as You held the reins of Arjuna's chariot."

Antar Mein Sthit Rah Meri Bagdor Pakde Rahana ☐
Nipat Nirankush Chanchal Man Ko Savdhan Karte Rahana ☐

Because the mind is naughty and tends to run everywhere, we pray for Him to stay in our heart and control our restless thoughts. Throughout the day, when desires arise to take us away from our path (like skipping a Gita discussion to watch a final match), we must visualize the *antaryāmi* (the inner dweller) and suppress those distracting desires.

Seeing the Divine Everywhere

The prayer continues by helping us transform our social interactions:

Jeevon Ka Kalrav Jo Din Bhar Sunane Mein Mere Aave |
Tera Hi Gunman Jaan Man Pramudit Ho Ati Sukh Paave ||

Throughout the day, we hear the "chirping" and chatter of many people. Let that noise not affect us, instead, let the mind hear His praises in everything. When we realize that Bhagavān is *sarvatra vyāpt* (omnipresent) and that the whole world is in Him, our distinctions fade. A daughter and daughter-in-law, or a son and son-in-law, begin to appear the same. This clean emotion purifies our karma automatically.

Pratipal Nij Indriy Samuh Se Jo Kuchh Bhi Aachar Karun |
Keval Tujhe Rijhane, Ko Bas Tera Hi Vyavahar Karun ||

Let every sense organ - eyes, ears, and speech be dedicated to Him. Whether watching His murti, listening to His stories, or speaking His praises, every effort is an offering.

By developing this insight and starting the day with this emotion, we gradually settle into the state of a wise man, realizing we are not the *kartha* (doer), and everything is being done by the *Parampitā* (Supreme Father).

3.31

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

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

The Path of Constant Faith

In this verse, Bhagavān explains the beautiful outcome for those who adopt this lifestyle of surrender. He outlines the qualities of the seekers who find liberation even while performing their worldly duties. He says that those human beings (*mānavāḥ*) who follow this teaching of Mine (*me matam idam*) will be released from the bonds of action (*mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ*). Because they have offered everything to the Divine and kept nothing for themselves, karma ceases to be a binding chain.

Bhagavān emphasizes three very specific conditions for this liberation:

- **Nityam anutiṣṭhanti:** This must be done "regularly" or "constantly." It is not a part-time practice where we offer our karma on Saturdays and Sundays but take all the credit back on Monday morning. We cannot selectively offer our spiritual activities to God while claiming ownership of our

professional or personal successes. It must be a continuous, daily flow of surrender.

- **Śhraddhāvantaḥ**: They must do it with "full faith." This is not a mechanical ritual but a deep, heart-centered conviction in the path shown by Bhagavān.
- **Anasūyantaḥ**: This means "without malice" or "without carping." These seekers do not find fault with the teachings or the Teacher. They follow the instructions with a pure mind, free from cynicism or resentment.

When a person performs their karma with this internal state, the results, whether success or failure - do not make them oscillate between extreme happiness or deep sadness. They remain stable because they have renounced the fruits.

3.32

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

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

The Consequence of Disregard

On the contrary, what happens to those who choose a different path? What is the fate of those who do not follow these principles? Bhagavān uses strong words to describe the outcome for those who ignore this "Master Key." He begins this verse with the word **ye tvetad** to highlight the stark contrast between the faithful seeker and the one who rejects this wisdom.

He explains that those who are **abhyasūyantaḥ** - those who find fault with these teachings and look upon them with malice and who **nānutiṣṭhanti** (do not follow), are in an unstable state. They remain **achetasah**, meaning they lack the eligibility or the right consciousness to receive higher truth.

Because they lack this eligibility, they remain **vimūḍhān** - confused, deluded, and utterly lost. Bhagavān describes them as **sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhān**, which means they are bewildered in all knowledge. No matter how much information they gather, they will not gain true wisdom. They are **naṣṭān** (ruined), as they remain trapped in the cycle of binding **karma**, devoid of the light that leads to liberation.

Knowledge Through Duty: The Examples of the Wise

The session highlights that the ultimate goal, attaining supreme knowledge is reached not by abandoning one's path, but by perfecting it. We see this in the lives of great beings:

- **King Janaka** continued to rule his kingdom and perform his karma, and through that very process, he attained perfection.
- **Saint Tukaram Maharaj** did not leave his business or his worldly responsibilities. He continued his job, and while fulfilling his duties, he attained the highest spiritual knowledge.

These examples prove that karma is not an obstacle to knowledge, it is the vehicle for it. By doing our own karma with the right mindset, we move toward the same destination as the greatest yogis.

Arjuna's Impossible Escape

Returning to the immediate context of the battlefield, Bhagavān confronts Arjuna's desire to flee. Arjuna had contemplated leaving the fight to live a life of renunciation, perhaps even taking alms. Bhagavān tells him clearly: "This is not possible." By attempting to run away, Arjuna is forgetting a fundamental truth about human existence and his own internal makeup. He cannot simply switch off his nature and pretend to be someone he is not.

3.33

sadrśaṃ(ñ) ceṣṭate svasyāḥ(ph), prakṛterjñānavānapi, prakṛtiṃ(y) 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.

One might believe that by becoming highly intelligent or gathering vast amounts of information, they can simply override their natural tendencies.

However, Bhagavān clarifies: Even the *jñānavān* (the person of knowledge) acts in accordance with their own nature (*svasyāḥ prakṛteḥ*). All living beings follow their innate tendencies (*prakṛtiṃ yānti bhūtāni*). In such a scenario, what can mere restraint or repression (nigrahaḥ) accomplish?

This means that even if you are the most knowledgeable person, you are still bound by your *prakṛiti*. To illustrate this, we can look at the inner and outer states of two great Brahma Gyani (knowers of the Absolute):

- Bhagavān Himself: Internally, He is a Brahma Gyani, full of supreme knowledge. Externally, He is a favorite of everyone He meets, actively engaged in the world, and regal in His appearance.
- Shukhdev Maharaj: His internal state of knowledge is exactly the same as Bhagavān's - they are both equally established in the Truth. However, Shukhdev Maharaj is a *Sarva Sangha Parityāgi* (one who has renounced all associations). He is a complete renunciate who avoids attachments and people.

Despite their identical internal state of stable knowledge, their external behaviors and lifestyles are vastly different because their *prakṛiti* - the way they are "wired" in this human form, is different. Neither of them detaches from their specific nature in the way they dress or interact with the world.

The Futility of Forceful Restraint

Just as these great souls act according to their nature, we too are controlled by our own. No matter how much you try to force a change or put up a front of restraint, your nature will eventually take over. This is why Bhagavān asks, "*nigrahaḥ kiṃ kariṣyati*" - what can forced suppression do?

The bindings of *prakṛiti* and the influence of the three guṇas are so powerful that they inevitably manifest through us. They come out in the form of specific actions driven by our indriyas (sense organs). Our nature determines how our senses interact with the world, and trying to simply "block" this through willpower alone is often ineffective. Instead of futile suppression, the secret lies in understanding how these indriyas operate and how we can manage the deep-seated likes and dislikes that pull them in different directions.

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 now identifies the specific mechanism that causes us to deviate from our path. He says that every **indriya** (sense organ) is naturally attached to its corresponding subjects. For instance, the eyes are drawn to beautiful views, and the tongue is drawn to taste. In this interaction, two forces are firmly established: **rāga (attachment/liking)** and **dveṣa (aversion/hatred)**.

How Rāga and Dveṣa Become Obstacles

Bhagavān warns that we must not come under the sway (**na vaśham āgacchet**) of these two, because they are our **paripanthinau** - the highway robbers of the spiritual path.

To understand how these preferences ruin our karma, consider these practical examples:

- The Student's Dilemma: A child may have a **rāga** for languages but a **dveṣa** for mathematics. Because they detest math, they avoid their duty of studying it, creating an obstacle to their academic success.
- The Excessive Attachment: Imagine a student preparing for board exams while the Champions Trophy cricket matches are on. If the student has an excessive **rāga** for cricket, they will abandon their studies to watch the match. While watching cricket isn't "bad" in itself, the attachment to it becomes a hindrance to their immediate duty.
- Divided Devotion: We sometimes see people performing aarti while talking on the phone - singing "Jai Jagadish Hare" while simultaneously talking in phone "Hello, kya kar rahe ho?" Talking on the phone is a normal act, but at that moment, the **rāga** for conversation becomes a distraction that robs the worship of its sincerity.

The word **paripanthin** is very powerful. It refers to robbers who lie in wait on a path to steal from travelers. Similarly, as you travel on the path of **sādhana** or your daily karma, **rāga** and **dveṣa** are waiting to rob you of your focus, your merit, and your peace of mind.

If you only do what you "like" and avoid what you "dislike," you are not a master of your actions, you are a slave to your senses. Bhagavān tells Arjuna (and us) that we must develop the right insight to go beyond these two. It is not about killing the senses, but about ensuring we do not let our likes and dislikes dictate our duties.

3.35

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

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

The Supremacy of One's Own Duty

In this verse, Bhagavān addresses a common temptation: the desire to abandon one's own difficult path for someone else's seemingly easier or more glamorous one. It is far better to perform one's own duty (**Svadharmā**), even if it is flawed or performed imperfectly (**vigraha**), than to perform another's duty (**paradharmā**) perfectly. Even death in the performance of one's own duty is meritorious, following another's path is dangerous and filled with fear (**bhaya**).

Understanding *Svadharmā* vs. *Paradharmā*: In modern times, people often interpret Svadharmā as "religion." While dying for one's faith is a valid interpretation, in the original context of the Gita, these modern religious sects did not exist. Here, Svadharmā refers to our inherent duty based on your prakṛti (nature) and your role in society.

- **Profession as Worship:** Our culture teaches us to treat our work as a temple. A teacher may feel their job doesn't pay as much as a manager's, but if they were born with the qualities (guṇas) of a teacher, switching to management just for money is *paradharmā*. It is a pitiable and dangerous state because they are acting against their soul's alignment.
- **The National Interest:** A businessman's svadharmā is to accumulate wealth, not just for greed, but to increase the nation's prosperity. An ISRO scientist works so the nation's research grows. A doctor or nurse should see their patients as fragments (*anśh*) of the Divine. When you see your office or hospital as a temple and the people you serve as fragments of God, your work becomes a high form of worship.

The Illustrative Analogies

The power of Karma Yoga is best seen in the story of Pundalik. While thousands of devotees traveled for months to reach Pandharpur for a glimpse (darshan) of Vitthal Bhagavān, Pundalik stayed home to serve his aged parents. He chose his immediate duty (*Svadharmā*) over the religious ritual. Because of this, Vitthal Bhagavān Himself came to Pundalik's door. This is the "might" of following one's own karma.

To understand why *paradharmā* is dangerous, consider this analogy:

- Milk, Water, and Ghee: Milk and ghee are much more expensive and "precious" than water. However, if you fill an aquarium with milk or ghee just because they are superior, the fish will die. The fish thrives only in water.
- Similarly, a human being "dies" spiritually when they try to live someone else's life or perform someone else's duty. What is "precious" for one person may be "poison" for another's nature.

Work as Kamadhenu

When you perform your work with the right attitude, believing "this is the only thing meant for me and I will do it as an offering", your work transforms into *Kāmadhenu* (the wish-fulfilling cow). You will achieve everything you desire through your own karma, provided you love your job and accept it as yours.

However, a haunting question remains for us all: *If I want to do the right thing, why do I end up doing the wrong thing? What is that force that pushes me to act against my own will?*

arjuna uvāca :
atha kena prayukto'yaṃ(m), pāpaṃ(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?

The Internal Struggle: Arjuna's Agony

- Arjuna now gives voice to a frustration that plagues every human heart. He understands the theory he knows he should follow his Swadharma and avoid the "highway robbers" of attraction and aversion. But he looks at his own life and sees a gap between his intention and his action. He asks, "O Krishna, what is it that impels a person to commit sin, even against their own will, as if driven by some overwhelming force?"

Arjuna is essentially asking, "Why do I fail myself? Why do I know what is right, yet feel dragged toward what is wrong?"

The Duryodhana Within Us

This is not just Arjuna's dilemma, it is a universal human crisis. Even Duryodhana, once expressed this exact sentiment with haunting clarity.

jānāmi dharmam na ca me pravṛttir jānāmy adharmam na ca me nivṛtṭiḥ |
kenāpi devena hṛdi sthitena yathā niyukto'smi tathā karomi ||

He confessed: "I know what is Dharma, but I have no inclination to follow it. I know what is Adharma, but I cannot refrain from it. There is some 'deva' (force) sitting in my heart, and I act exactly as that force moves me."

Whether it was Duryodhana 5,000 years ago or the "Duryodhana" living inside us today, the problem is the same. Many of us say, "I really want to learn the Gita," or "I want to be a better person," but we find ourselves compelled to run away from our duties or indulge in habits we know are harmful. We feel like puppets being pulled by invisible strings.

3.37

Srībhagavānuvāca :
kāma eṣa krodha eṣa, rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ,
mahāśano mahāpāpmā, viddhyenamihā 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.

The Enemies Revealed: Kāma and Krodha

Bhagavān does not provide a superficial answer to Arjuna's deep inquiry. He goes straight to the root of the human condition, identifying a fundamental psychological warfare happening within us. He explains that as long as we are under the influence of Rajoguṇa (the mode of passion), we are vulnerable to two fierce warriors: *Kāma* (desire/lust) and *Krodha* (anger). Krishna commands Arjuna to "**Know these two as your enemies here in this world.**" If we are to conquer an enemy, we must understand their strengths, their habits, and their appetite.

The All-Devouring Appetite (Mahāśhanaḥ)

The first adjective Krishna uses is *Mahāśhanaḥ*, meaning "having an enormous appetite." These enemies are never satisfied.

The Fire Analogy: Just as a fire (Yajna) is never extinguished by adding more ghee, but instead grows fiercer, *Kāma* is never calmed by indulgence. King Yayati, after a thousand years of trying to satisfy his desires, realized:

***na jātu kāmahaḥ kāmānām upabhogena śāmyati
haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate***

"Desire is never satisfied by the enjoyment of objects, it grows more powerful, just as fire flares up when fed with clarified butter."

The Great Sinner (*Mahāpāpma*)

The second adjective is *Mahāpāpma*, meaning "greatly sinful." These forces do not just distract us, they compel us to commit deeds we know are wrong. Under the influence of anger or excessive desire, we lose our moral compass. Whether it is a student distracted by a smartphone instead of studying, or the small temptation to eat something delicious on a day of fasting (Ekadashi), it is *Kāma* creeping in.

The Inseparable Friends: Desire and Anger

Just as Duryodhana was always accompanied by Dushasana, *Kāma* never travels alone. He brings his best friend, *Krodha*.

When a desire is fulfilled, it leads to more desire (Greed).

When a desire is blocked, it immediately transforms into *Krodha* (Anger).

These two are the primary causes behind every bad deed or undesirable action we have ever committed. They cloud our vision and rob us of our peace.

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.

Bhagavān provides a brilliant analysis of how these internal enemies - *Kāma* (desire) and *Krodha* (anger) actually operate. He explains that knowledge already exists within us, as a fragment of the Divine (Paramātmā's ansh), every soul is inherently wise. However, this wisdom is currently hidden.

To help Arjuna visualize how our desires "envelop" our intelligence, Shri Krishna provides three distinct examples:

1. Smoke Covering Fire (*Dhūmenāvriyate vahnir*)

Just as smoke naturally rises from and covers a fire, desire covers our wisdom. This is the lightest form of covering. In a fire, you can still see the glow through the smoke, and a simple gust of wind (a little bit of effort or sadhana) can clear it.

2. Dust Covering a Mirror (*Yathādarśo malena ca*)

Imagine returning to a house after many years. You look in the mirror, but you cannot see your own face because of the thick layer of dust. The mirror (*ādarśa*) hasn't lost its ability to reflect, it is just obscured. To see yourself, you must wipe the mirror. Similarly, *Kāma* and *Krodha* are like dust on the soul. Until we "wipe" our mind clean through constant practice, we cannot get acquainted with the knowledge within.

3. The Womb Covering the Embryo (*Yatholbenāvṛto garbhaḥ*)

This is the deepest level of obscuration. A baby in the womb is completely encased and cannot move

freely or see the world until the time is right. This represents a state where ignorance is so thick that the knowledge is entirely hidden from view.

The Enveloping Force

Shri Krishna concludes by saying **tathā tenedam āvṛtam** "in the same way, this knowledge is covered by desire."

These three examples represent different degrees of spiritual "blindness." Sometimes our desire is like smoke - we know we are doing wrong, and it's easy to stop. Other times, it is like the womb - we are so deep in our habits and anger that we don't even realize we have lost our way.

In all three cases, the message is clear: the "Enemy" (Desire) doesn't destroy your knowledge, it simply hides it from you, preventing you from acting on what you know to be right.

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.

Bhagavān explains how our innate wisdom is systematically obscured. The culprit is **kāma-rūpeṇa** - the very form of desire. Because of this desire, everything becomes "covered." Our internal knowledge (*jñānam*) is hidden from us, and in its place, we are left with a state described as **duṣpūreṇa analena**.

The Unquenchable Fire: *Anala* means fire, but it specifically refers to a fire that is never satisfied. Just as adding wood only makes a blaze grow, feeding our desires only makes them hungrier.

The Internal Burn: These forces of *kāma* and *krodha* (desire and anger) "burn us without fire." They create an internal heat and agitation that prevents us from being at peace.

Understanding the Constant Enemy (Nitya-vairin)

Bhagavān uses a very specific and "beautiful" word to describe this force: *Nitya-vairiṇā*. He doesn't just call it an enemy (*vairiṇā*). He calls it a constant, perpetual enemy. It isn't a one-time opponent that you fight and finish. It is a continual presence that stands in front of us in the form of desire. It is "unappealing" in its ultimate result because, rather than bringing satisfaction, it only burns us down and keeps us exhausted.

The Tie to the Senses

This constant enemy uses *Rajoguṇa* (the mode of passion) to keep us "tied" to worldly subjects. It specifically targets our sense organs because that is where our interaction with the world begins. If the enemy can control the sense organs, it controls our actions. Every action we perform is filtered through these organs. When desire and anger capture the senses, every movement we make and every word we speak becomes an expression of that "covered" knowledge rather than our true, wise self. By capturing the senses, the *Nitya-vairin* ensures that our energy is constantly diverted toward external subjects, keeping us trapped in a cycle of craving and burning.

3.40

indriyāṇi mano buddhiḥ(r), asyādhiṣṭhānamucyate,

etairvimohayatyeṣa, jñānamāvṛtya dehinam. 3.40

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

Locating the Enemy: The Address of Desire

Having described the fierce characteristics of *Kāma* (desire) and *Krodha* (anger), calling them the all-devouring, sinful enemies (*mahāśhaṇo mahā-pāpmā*), Bhagavān now provides Arjuna with their "address." To defeat an enemy, you must know where they are seated.

The **adhishtan** (residence) of these enemies within us is three-fold:

- **Indriyas:** Our senses (eyes, ears, tongue, etc.).
- **Manas:** Our mind (emotions and thoughts).
- **Buddhi:** Our intellect (the power of decision-making).

The Subtle Takeover

Bhagavān explains that these enemies do not take over our "fortress" all at once. They enter in very small, almost unnoticeable proportions.

The Spike of Anger: Imagine you ask your child for a glass of water, and they don't bring it. Momentarily, you feel a spike of irritation. It is so small that you might neglect it, but that is *Krodha* entering its residence.

The Delusion (Vimohayati): Gradually, these small irritations and tiny desires erupt. Because we neglected them when they were small, they begin to cover our wisdom (**jñānam āvṛtya**). When the eruption happens, we lose the sense that "I shouldn't be getting angry over something this small." Our wisdom is shrouded, and we become deluded (**dehinam**).

The Refugee Analogy

To illustrate how these qualities become a major problem, think of how refugees might enter a country. Initially, they may come in small numbers, begging for a little shelter and living as dependents (*aashrit*) in the corner of society. Gradually, their numbers increase. They gain rights, start influencing the system, and eventually, if left unchecked, can become a massive problem for the entire society.

Similarly, *Kāma* and *Krodha* start as tiny "guests" in our mind. We give them a little room, but soon they occupy the entire "house," taking over our senses, mind, and intellect until they become the masters of our behavior.

When Kāma Enters, Rāma Departs

There is a spiritual truth here: as *Kāma* (selfish desire) enters the heart, *Rāma* (the Divine, the Goodness) within us starts to leave. Our wisdom follows it out the door. We are left only with the agitation of desire and the heat of anger.

So, how do we stop this infiltration? How do we keep these enemies from taking over our internal residence? Bhagavān provides the tactical solution in the next verse.

3.41

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

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

manifest Divinity).

Having identified the hiding places of the enemy, Bhagavān now delivers a decisive tactical order. He begins this verse with the word **Tasmāt (Therefore)**. Whenever Bhagavān uses Tasmāt, it signifies that He is about to impart an important direct command that requires our utmost attention. It is an order for us to wake up and take action. He says, first control your senses (**indriyāṇy ādau niyama**), and kill this sinful destroyer of knowledge (*Jñāna*) and realization (*Vijñāna*).

Rectifying the Senses

The battle must begin at the gates. **We must rectify the habits of our sense organs by removing rāga and dveṣha (likes and dislikes)**. We often do things simply because "I like it" or avoid them because "I don't like it." Bhagavān insists we move beyond these whims and gain mastery over both:

Jñānendriya: The five senses through which we acquire knowledge (eyes, ears, etc.).

Karmendriya: The five organs with which we perform tasks (hands, feet, speech, etc.).

The Destroyer of Jñāna and Vijñāna

Why is this "sinful enemy" (**pāpmānaṁ**) so dangerous? Because it destroys two things:

Jñāna (Knowledge): The theoretical understanding. Everyone knows the Gita is a beautiful scripture, that is jñāna.

Vijñāna (Realization/Experience): The practical experience of that knowledge. People like Swami ji, Veer Savarkar, or Tilak ji didn't just know the Gītā, they lived it. That is vijñāna.

Desire (Kāma) is the primary culprit. It doesn't just make you forget what you learned, it prevents you from ever experiencing the truth of that knowledge. It burns through your wisdom and leaves you hollow.

Understanding the Strength of the Enemy

Bhagavān warns us that these are not simple, weak opponents. They are incredibly tough and deeply entrenched. You cannot defeat a powerful enemy if you underestimate them. To conquer them, you must understand the hierarchy of power within your own body.

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.

The Pyramid of Power

Bhagavān reveals the internal hierarchy of the human system. He explains that we aren't just a single unit, we are made of layers, each more powerful than the one before it.

1. The Senses - At the base level, the sense organs are strong and superior (**indriyāṇi parāṇyāhuḥ**). They are the active drivers of our physical experience.

2. The Mind - The mind is stronger and more superior than the senses (**indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ**). While the eyes might be looking at a Vivechan session, if the mind is wandering to a cricket match score, the eyes effectively "see" nothing of the lesson. The mind is the one that actually enjoys or processes what the senses bring in.

3. The Intellect - The intellect is stronger than the mind (**manasastu parā buddhiḥ**). The mind might want to stay with the cricket match, but the intellect can step in and say, "No, this session is important for my life, focus here." The intellect has the power to pull the wandering mind back to the task at hand.

The Ultimate Superior: "Saḥ"

Now comes the crucial part: "**yo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ**" - "that which is even beyond the intellect is Saḥ (Him/It)."

There are two major interpretations of who this "Saḥ" refers to:

1. *Kāma*: Some say it refers to *Kāma* (Desire). This means desire is so powerful that it can even bypass your logic and intellect, "covering" your wisdom as we discussed earlier.

2. *Paramātmā*: Others say it refers to the Soul/God.

According to our Swamiji, both are true in their own context. In the previous verses, Sri Krishna was highlighting how powerful the enemy (*Kāma*) is, it is even beyond the intellect's normal control. However, to defeat such a powerful enemy, you need an ally who is even stronger.

The Strategy: Making a Powerful Friend

If you want to conquer a nation that is stronger than you, you must make friends with a superpower.

The Enemy: *Kāma* is more powerful than your intellect. Once it grips you, it "shuts down" your logic.

The Ally: God (*Paramātmā*) is even more powerful than *Kāma*.

Therefore, the only way to defeat a desire that is stronger than your own willpower is to anchor yourself in something even higher. We must make friends with God to gain the strength to overcome the "burning" fire of desire.

3.43

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

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

In this concluding verse of this chapter, Bhagavān provides the ultimate strategy for victory. He acknowledges that while the senses, mind, and intellect are powerful, they are often overwhelmed by *Kāma* (desire), which resides in a domain beyond the intellect's natural control.

Making a Superpower Your Ally

We often find ourselves as "slaves to our desires." We have made deep friendships with our cravings, but we have yet to establish a complete friendship with God (*Paramātmā*).

Both *Kāma* and God are **para-buddhva** (beyond the intellect). Because desire is stronger than our logic, we cannot fight it alone. However, God is the strongest of all. If we make friends with the Divine - by "establishing ourselves by ourselves" through self-control, God takes over the battle. He conquers the desire for us, turning the inner turmoil of our mind into a peaceful Ram Rajya.

The Story of Pradyumna

A beautiful tradition illustrates this: Pradyumna, the son of Bhagavān, is the incarnation of Kāmadeva (the God of Desire). In a previous age, Kāmadeva was burned to ashes by Shiva's third eye. He was reborn as Krishna's son in the Dwapara Yuga. The lesson here is simple yet deep, if you want to control *Kāma* (the son), you must become a friend of his father (Bhagavān). When you anchor yourself in the Divine, the "desire" within you becomes a disciplined force rather than a destructive fire.

Conclusion: The Path of Karma Yoga

On this powerful note, Shri Krishna concludes his teaching on Karma Yoga. He leaves us with a roadmap:

Identify the Enemy: Know that desire and anger are the true obstacles.

Locate the Fortress: Watch your senses, mind, and intellect.

Establish the Higher Self: Move beyond "likes and dislikes" and dedicate every action to the Divine.

By following the path of Satkarma (righteous action) and dedicating our work to Bhagavān, we free ourselves from the fever of anxiety and the grip of selfish desire.

Om Tat Sat. Thus ends the third chapter, titled Karma Yoga, in the dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna.

Questions & Answers

Harihara Panigrahi ji

Q: In verses 27 and 28 (*Prakriteh kriyamanani gunaih...*). If nature (*Prakriti*) does everything, why do people blame or accuse God? Also, regarding the phrase *guna guneshu vartanta*, does it mean we are not responsible for bad things?

A: When we perform actions, they are indeed happening under the influence of the three qualities (*Gunas*) of nature, but the problem lies in our selective perception. When a result is good, we immediately say, 'I have done this,' but when the fruit is undesirable, we look for someone else to blame. To be truly ego-free, your detachment must be complete, not selective. As for verse 28, a *Tatvavit* (knower of the truth) understands that the *Gunas* are simply engaging with the objects of the senses (*guneshu*). For example, the 'taste' is just the subject of the tongue. Great saints like Tukaram Maharaj or Eknath Maharaj lived this, they remained attached to the Supreme Soul (God) while remaining detached from the world. They accepted both fame and sorrow as belonging to the Divine.

The common people (*Prakriti-guna-sammudhah*), however, remain deluded and attached to the results of their actions. An enlightened soul does not stop working in society, but they do so without the pride of the body (*Ahankar*). By developing this kind of devotion and establishing a zero-ego state, one becomes free from the cycle of *Punya* (merit) and *Paapa* (sin).

Narayana ji

Q: It is not easy to overcome all these desires when there are so many of them around us. How do we manage this?

A: We don't have to overcome *all* desires, we just need to understand which ones to keep. There are progressive, **Sāttvik** desires that are essential for growth - like a saint's desire for God-realization or a freedom fighter's desire for a nation's liberty. These are '**Sarvabhuta hite ratah**' (desires for the benefit of all beings).

Shri Krishna explains that he *is* desire (**Kāma**), but only that which is '**Dharma-aviruddha**' - desire that is not in conflict with righteousness. While excessive, selfish desires that lead you astray must be suppressed, desires founded on **Sattva-guṇa** (goodness) and the larger benefit of society are actually a divine manifestation (*Vibhuti*). The key is balance: eliminate desires that oppose Dharma, but embrace those that drive you toward good work and spiritual progress.

Shridhar ji

Q: What is the logical sequence of the Bhagavad Gita, from Arjuna's grief in Chapter One to the final realization? Is there a specific order in which Shri Krishna explains Karma, Jnana, Renunciation, and the worldview of the Gunas?

A: While there is a natural flow to the conversation, the beauty of the Bhagavad Gita is that it transcends a rigid sequence. It is **Bhagavad Vani** (the voice of God), where every single verse is an independent **Mantramala** (a garland of mantras). Think of the Gita like a pharmacy: you don't need to test every medicine from A to Z; you take the one that addresses your specific 'disease' or situation in life. For some, *Bhakti Yoga* is the cure; for others, it is *Karma Yoga* or *Jnana Yoga*.

Unlike other scriptures that require strict rituals (*Karmakanda*) or physical purity, the Gita is **Gita-Ai** (Mother Gita). Just as you don't need makeup, a bath, or a specific 'sequence' to visit your own mother when you are in distress, you can open the Gita at any page and find solace. Whether you are on a bus or in the middle of a crisis, reading even three verses independently provides full spiritual benefit because it is the motherly guidance of the Divine.

Deepa DS ji

Q: Is desiring something for oneself considered wrong according to the Bhagavad Gītā?

A: Not at all. Desiring for oneself is not inherently wrong, provided it is **Dharma-aviruddha** - desire that does not conflict with righteousness. The distinction lies in the quality and method of the desire:

- **The Intent:** Aspiring for knowledge (like learning the Gita) or wanting to become a doctor to serve society is a **Sāttvik** desire and is considered good.
- **The Method:** If you seek that same knowledge or professional status through cheating or malpractice, the desire becomes 'opposed to Dharma' and is therefore wrong.
- **The Definition:** As simplified by Gurudev, anything that leads you toward **Satvikta** (purity/goodness) is Dharma.

Even the desire for wealth is acceptable if earned through honest means to support your family or do charity. However, acquiring that wealth through 'black money' or unethical practices makes the desire harmful. In short, your desires should be backed by the principles of our scriptures, if they lead you toward goodness and follow a righteous path, they are perfectly valid.

**Om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṁ(ṁ) yogaśāstre śrīkrṣṇārjunasaṁvāde
karmayogo nāma tṛtīyo'dhyāyaḥ**



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You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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