

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 2: Sāṅkhya-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/CyHb81yzg04>

The Eternal Soul, Courage in Duty, and the Art of Staying Balanced in Life — A Heartfelt Journey for Young Minds

The name of **Chapter 2** of the Bhagavad Gītā is **Sāṅkhya Yoga - The Yoga of Analysis (or The Yoga of Knowledge)**

The session commenced with deep prajwalan, the customary lighting of the lamp, prayers to the Supreme, and salutations to all the Gurus.

**Vāsudeva-Sutaṁ Devaṁ, Kaṁsa-Cāṇūra-Mardanam |
Devakī-Paramānandaṁ, Kṛṣṇaṁ Vande Jagadgurum ||**

With the chanting of this sacred invocation, the discussion moved forward into the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā. By this point, the explanation up to Verse 20 had already been completed, and now the focus shifted toward Verse 21 onward.

It was recalled how Arjuna stood deeply confused on the battlefield, unable to decide what was right and what was wrong. In that state of helplessness, he surrendered before Bhagavān Śrī Krishna and prayed for guidance, requesting Him to reveal what would truly be auspicious and beneficial for him. From that moment onward, beginning especially from Verse 11 of this chapter, Bhagavān started imparting divine knowledge to Arjuna.

This chapter, known as *Sāṅkhya Yoga*, contains profound spiritual truths and subtle philosophical concepts. It was acknowledged that many of these topics may not be immediately easy to grasp. Yet, even hearing them repeatedly plants seeds of understanding within the heart. Gradually, through continuous study and contemplation, these teachings begin to reveal their depth more clearly.

The discussion then continued on the subject of the *ātmā* — the eternal soul.

The following verse was taken up:

2.21

vedāvināśinaṃ(n) nityaṃ(ṽ), ya enamajamavyayam, kathaṃ(m) sa puruṣaḥ(ph) pārtha, kaṃ(ñ) ghātayati hanti kam.2.21

Arjuna, the man who knows this soul to be imperishable, eternal and free from birth and decay-how and whom will he cause to be killed, how and whom will he kill ?

Here, Bhagavān explains that one who truly understands the śarīrī — the indwelling soul — as indestructible, eternal, unborn, and imperishable, can never think of killing anyone nor causing anyone to be killed.

Special attention was given to the distinction between śarīra and śarīrī. Śarīra refers to the physical body — everything externally visible, including all bodily limbs and features. But śarīrī refers to the one residing within the body, namely the ātmā.

Bhagavān describes the soul as:

- *Avināśī — that which can never be destroyed.*
- *Nitya — eternal, always existing.*
- *Aja — unborn.*
- *Avyaya — imperishable and unchanging.*

Unlike the body, which has a birth date and celebrates birthdays, the soul has no beginning. Human beings may celebrate the day their bodies were born, but the soul itself neither takes birth nor dies. It has always existed and will continue to exist eternally.

Therefore, Bhagavān asks: if the soul can neither be killed nor destroyed, then how can anyone truly kill another, and how can anyone actually be killed?

The explanation then moved to the famous Verse 22:

2.22

vāsāṃsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya, navāni gṛhṇāti naro'parāṇi, tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇā- nyanyāni saṃyāti navāni dehī. 2.22

As a man shedding worn-out garments, takes other new ones, likewise, the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others that are new.

This well-known śloka was described as one that many people may have encountered in school textbooks or heard frequently in spiritual discussions. Its beauty lies in its simplicity and relatability.

Bhagavān gives a very practical example here.

Just as a person discards old, worn-out clothes and puts on new garments, similarly, the *dehī* — the soul residing within the body — abandons an old body and accepts a new one.

Old clothes eventually become faded, torn, or unusable. Once they are no longer fit to wear, a person naturally replaces them with new garments. In the same way, when the body becomes old, damaged,

or no longer functional, the soul leaves it behind and accepts another body.

The distinction between *deha* and *dehī* was again emphasized:

- *Deha* means the body.
- *Dehī* means the one residing within the body — the *ātmā*.

Thus, the body changes, but the soul continues its journey unchanged.

The comparison was presented as extremely beautiful and easy to understand: just as changing clothes is natural and effortless, similarly the soul changes bodies.

The discussion then proceeded to Verse 23:

2.23

**nainaṃ(ñ) chindanti śāstrāṇi, nainaṃ(n) dahati pāvākaḥ,
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.

This too was described as a very famous verse, one that many people have heard repeatedly and often remember with ease. Through this verse, Bhagavān continues explaining the true nature of the *ātmā* — the eternal soul.

Bhagavān declares that no weapon can cut the soul.

The meaning of the word *śāstra* was explained carefully. A clear distinction was made between *śāstra* and *śāstra*.

Śāstra refers to weapons — swords, knives, spears, blades, and instruments used in battle.

Śāstra, on the other hand, refers to scriptures and sacred knowledge.

Weapons certainly have the power to harm the physical body. If a knife or blade touches the skin, the body is injured immediately. Pain is felt at once, blood begins to flow, and effort is required to stop the bleeding. Even during ordinary activities like peeling or cutting vegetables, if the blade accidentally touches the hand, the body suffers instantly.

But Bhagavān explains that all such harm belongs only to the *śarīra* — the physical body — never to the *ātmā*.

No weapon can pierce the soul. No blade can divide it. No physical force can damage it in any way.

Thus Bhagavān says:

“Nainaṃ chindanti śāstrāṇi.”

Weapons cannot cut the soul.

The explanation then moved further to fire.

Just as weapons affect the body, fire too can burn the body — but never the soul. A very relatable example was given from daily life. While lighting a *dīya* or incense stick with a matchstick, sometimes the flame reaches the very end of the stick. In an attempt to avoid wasting another matchstick, one may continue trying to light the wick quickly, and in that final moment, the burning edge may

accidentally touch the fingers. Instantly, heat is felt. If not withdrawn quickly, the skin may burn, and blisters may even form.

This shows how immediately fire affects the body.

Yet Bhagavān says:

“Nainam dahati pāvakaḥ.”

Pāvakaḥ means fire. Fire may burn the body, but it has absolutely no power over the soul. The *ātmā** remains forever untouched.

The verse further explains that water cannot moisten the soul.

Every day, while bathing, the body becomes wet. Clothes become soaked, hair becomes drenched, and water affects everything physical. But the soul never becomes wet.

Thus Bhagavān says:

“Na cainam kledayanty āpaḥ.”

Water cannot soak, dissolve, or alter the *ātmā* in any manner.

Similarly, wind cannot dry the soul.

After washing one’s hair or getting wet in the rain, standing before moving air dries the body quickly. Within minutes, the moisture disappears. Air can dry physical objects — but not the soul.

Bhagavān says:

“Na śoṣayati mārutaḥ.”

Mārutaḥ refers to wind or air. Just as water cannot wet the soul, wind cannot dry it.

In this way, Bhagavān gradually reveals all that cannot be done to the *ātmā*. The body constantly changes and is affected by external elements, but the soul forever remains beyond their reach — untouched, unchanged, and eternal.

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

Bhagavān now summarizes these truths once again.

The *ātmā* cannot be cut, burned, wetted, or dried. But the verse goes even further by explaining *why* this is so.

The reason is that the soul is *nitya* — eternal. It does not come into existence at a particular moment, nor does it perish after some period of time. It has no beginning and no end. There is no date of birth for the soul, and there is no death awaiting it.

It always exists.

Bhagavān further describes the soul as:

- *Sarva-gataḥ* — present everywhere.
- *Sthāṇuḥ* — steady and stable by nature.
- *Acalaḥ* — unmoving and unchanging.
- *Sanātanaḥ* — eternal and beginningless.

The word *sanātana* especially emphasizes that the soul has always existed. There was never a time when it did not exist.

The discussion then proceeded to the next verse:

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.

Here Bhagavān explains another subtle and profound aspect of the *dehī* — the indwelling soul. The terms *dehī*, *śarīrī*, and *ātmā* were once again clarified as referring to the same eternal reality within the body.

Bhagavān says:

“Avyakto 'yam” — the soul is *avyakta*, unmanifest and invisible.

The physical body can easily be seen. People recognize one another through external forms, faces, and appearances. Just as individuals sitting before one another can see each other's bodies clearly, the body remains visible to the material eyes. But the soul itself cannot be seen directly.

Bhagavān further describes the soul as:

“Acintyo 'yam” — beyond ordinary thought and imagination.

Human beings generally think about things they have experienced through their senses. One can remember the taste of tea, coffee, *jalebi*, or *rasgulla* because those things have been personally tasted and experienced. Similarly, objects that have been seen, heard, or touched can easily become subjects of contemplation and imagination.

But the *ātmā* is not an object of sensory experience.

Since the soul has never been perceived directly through material senses, its exact form cannot truly be imagined. People may have seen depictions in films where the soul appears as a tiny glowing light moving upward toward higher realms, but such portrayals are merely symbolic and meant only to

help visualize the idea. Whether the soul actually appears in such a form cannot be definitively known.

Because the *ātmā* has never been seen materially, one cannot accurately speculate about its appearance — whether it is small or vast, luminous or colorless. At most, one can reflect upon descriptions heard through scripture and teachings, but the true nature of the soul remains beyond material observation and mental construction.

Bhagavān therefore says:

“Avikāryo ‘yam ucyate” — the soul is unchangeable.
It does not undergo transformation like physical objects of the world.

The verse concludes with Bhagavān’s compassionate instruction:

“Tasmād evaṁ viditvainam nānuśocitum arhasi.”

Knowing the soul to be eternal, invisible, beyond thought, and unchanging, one should not grieve.

Bhagavān gently tells Arjuna not to become overwhelmed by sorrow over who will live and who will die. No soul is ever truly destroyed. What perishes is only the temporary physical body. The *ātmā* neither takes birth nor dies.

Thus Bhagavān reassures Arjuna that the soul always remains untouched and eternal, while only the body undergoes destruction and change.

2.26

**atha cainaṁ(n) nityajātaṁ(n), nityaṁ(ṽ) vā manyase mṛtam,
tathāpi tvaṁ(m) mahābāho, naivaṁ 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.

Here, Bhagavān presents another perspective to Arjuna.

Even if one assumes that the soul repeatedly takes birth and dies like the body, still, there is no reason to grieve excessively. Bhagavān explains that even if Arjuna chooses to think of the *ātmā* in the same way he thinks of the body — something that is born at one point and dies at another — even then sorrow is unnecessary.

The teaching here is subtle yet powerful. Bhagavān gently tells Arjuna that regardless of which understanding he holds, grief is still not the right response.

The explanation then continued into the next verse:

2.27

jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ(r), dhruvaṁ(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 now gives the reason why lamentation is futile.

Whoever has taken birth must certainly face death. Some may live for seventy years, others for eighty, ninety, or even a hundred years, but death remains inevitable for all who are born.

Similarly, whoever dies will take birth again.

Thus Bhagavān explains the eternal cycle of birth and death — the continuous movement through worldly existence.

***“Punarapi jananam punarapi maraṇam
Punarapi janani jāṭhare śayanam.”***

Again birth, again death, and again dwelling within the mother’s womb — this cycle continues endlessly.

It was explained that unless one becomes deeply connected to Bhagavān, this cycle of repeated birth and death continues without end. Beings repeatedly take birth, leave the world, and return once again. This process goes on continuously.

Therefore Bhagavān says that this cycle cannot simply be avoided by worry or sorrow. Since birth and death are part of the system of material existence itself, grieving over them serves no real purpose.

To make this easier to understand, an example from school life was given.

In a school, examinations and tests are fixed parts of the system. Whether students enjoy them or not, they must still participate. Some students may fear exams, dislike them, or feel unprepared, while others may enjoy the challenge. Yet personal preference does not change the structure of the system.

Similarly, homework given by teachers must also be completed. A student cannot simply refuse by saying, *“I do not feel like doing it,”* or *“My mind gets tired.”* Since studying is the student’s responsibility and *svadharma*, it must be performed sincerely.

In the same way, Bhagavān reminds Arjuna of his own *svadharma*.

Arjuna wished to withdraw from the battlefield because he saw revered elders and loved ones standing before him. Yet as a *kṣatriya*, his duty was to fight. Regardless of who stood on the opposite side, fulfilling his righteous duty remained necessary.

Just as a student’s responsibility is to study properly, a *kṣatriya*’s responsibility is to uphold righteousness through battle when required.

Bhagavān therefore teaches that certain realities operate according to an established order. Birth and death are part of that order, just as examinations are part of school life. Human beings do not possess the power to alter these universal laws merely through emotional resistance.

The discussion then expanded this teaching into daily life.

Often people become anxious about matters completely beyond their control — how others speak, how they behave, what they think, or whether their attitudes are agreeable. Yet none of these things truly lie within one's own hands.

Worrying constantly about situations that cannot be controlled brings no benefit.

Similarly, the cycle of birth and death is also beyond individual control. Since it is governed by the laws of the world itself, excessive anxiety over it becomes meaningless.

Bhagavān thus explains to Arjuna that lamenting over unavoidable truths only deepens suffering. What cannot be changed should be understood with wisdom rather than resisted with sorrow.

The explanation then moved to the next verse:

2.28

avyaktādīni bhūtāni, vyaktamadyāni 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 now explains the temporary visibility of all living beings.

He says that all beings are *avyakta* — unmanifest — before birth. Prior to taking birth, they are not visible to the world. No one can physically see a person before that person has actually appeared in this world.

Then, between birth and death, beings become *vyakta* — manifest and visible. During this limited span of life, they appear before the world in physical form. People can see them, interact with them, and recognize their bodily presence.

But after death, they once again become *avyakta* — unmanifest and unseen.

Thus Bhagavān explains that every embodied being remains unseen before birth, visible only for a temporary period in the middle, and unseen once again after death.

The explanation was made very simple and relatable. Before someone is born, no one can see them physically. Only after birth does the person become visible in this world. Similarly, after death, that visible bodily presence disappears once again.

Therefore Bhagavān asks:

“Tatra kā paridevanā?”

If this is the natural condition of material existence, then what reason is there for excessive lamentation?

No one has ever truly heard of a person who took birth and then continued living physically forever

without death. Such a thing is not the law of the world. The structure of worldly existence itself is based upon appearance and disappearance.

Bhagavān gently guides Arjuna to understand that birth and death belong only to the temporary body. The eternal ātmā remains untouched throughout all these changes.

Since this cycle is the very nature of worldly existence, Bhagavān explains that excessive grief serves no purpose. What appears must eventually disappear, and what disappears may appear once again. The body alone comes and goes; the soul remains eternal.

2.29

**āścaryavatpāśyati kaścidenam,
āścaryavadvadati tathaiva cānyaḥ,
āścaryavaccainamanyaḥ(ś) śṛṇoti,
śrutvā'pyenaṃ(ṅ) 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.

This verse reveals the mysterious and astonishing nature of the ātmā.

Bhagavān explains that some behold the soul with wonder, others describe it with wonder, and still others hear about it with amazement. Yet even after hearing about it repeatedly, very few truly understand it.

The word āścarya — wonder — was deeply emphasized here.

Whenever human beings encounter something completely beyond ordinary experience, they naturally feel astonishment. The soul evokes that very feeling because it cannot be perceived through normal senses.

All the teachings heard so far about the ātmā appear extraordinary:

- It has neither birth nor death.
- It cannot be cut.
- It cannot be burned.
- It cannot be wetted.
- It cannot be dried.

These truths naturally seem astonishing because they describe something beyond material understanding.

The reason this knowledge appears so wondrous is because the soul has never been directly seen. Throughout the discussion, the ātmā has only been heard about and contemplated intellectually. People attempt to understand it merely through listening, because it cannot be grasped through ordinary perception.

Thus, Bhagavān explains that the soul is extremely difficult to comprehend fully. It lies beyond the easy reach of the material intellect. This is not a superficial concept but a deeply subtle spiritual truth.

Because of its profound nature, understanding the *ātma-tattva* requires preparation of the intellect through sustained spiritual practice.

An everyday example was used to explain this preparation. Even for something as simple as waking up early in the morning, the mind must first be conditioned. A person repeatedly reminds themselves, “*Tomorrow I must wake up at five,*” or “*I must wake up at six,*” sets alarms, and gradually trains the mind accordingly.

Similarly, if one wishes to understand the truth of the soul, the intellect must be gradually purified and prepared.

And how is this preparation achieved?

Through *sādhana*.

Sādhana includes:

- Study of the *śāstras*,
- *Japa*,
- *Dhyāna*,
- Hearing spiritual discourses,
- Reading the Bhagavad Gītā,
- Engaging in Bhagavān’s bhakti,
- And other sattvic spiritual activities.

All these practices slowly refine the intellect and make it capable of grasping deeper spiritual truths.

The more sincerely one engages in such *sādhana*, the more prepared the mind becomes to understand subtle concepts like the eternal nature of the *ātmā*.

The discussion then proceeded to the next verse:

2.30

**dehī nityamavadhyo'yaṃ(n), dehe sarvasya bhārata,
tasmātsarvāṇi bhūtāni, na tvaṃ(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.

Here Bhagavān once again reminds Arjuna about the immortality of the soul.

The distinction between *deha* and *dehī* was revisited:

- *Deha* refers to the physical body.
- *Dehī* refers to the indwelling soul residing within the body.

Bhagavān says that the *dehī* is eternally *avadhya* — impossible to kill.

No one can truly destroy the soul.

Therefore, Bhagavān tells Arjuna that he should not grieve for any living being, whether human or otherwise. What appears to die is only the physical body. The *ātmā* merely leaves one body and

accepts another.

Since the soul itself is never slain, excessive lamentation becomes unnecessary.

Bhagavān thus reassures Arjuna that the soul can never truly be killed, and therefore sorrow rooted solely in bodily destruction arises from misunderstanding.

The explanation then moved toward Arjuna's *svadharma* through the next verse:

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.

Bhagavān now shifts the focus from the immortality of the soul to the importance of duty.

He tells Arjuna that even from the perspective of his own *kṣātra-dharma*, he should not become disturbed or shaken.

The word *kṣātra-dharma* refers to the duty of a *kṣatriya* — one whose responsibility is to protect righteousness and uphold justice, even through battle when necessary.

Just as a student's responsibility is to study sincerely, a *kṣatriya's* responsibility is to fight for righteousness when circumstances demand it.

A student cannot abandon studies merely because the mind feels unwilling. Proper effort and discipline are still necessary. In the same way, Arjuna cannot abandon his righteous duty merely because of emotional difficulty.

Bhagavān further explains that there is no greater welfare for a *kṣatriya* than participating in a righteous war.

This was clarified carefully: the war being discussed is not driven by selfish greed, personal ambition, or the desire to seize power unlawfully. If someone fights merely out of ego, selfishness, or the hunger for domination, that would indeed be wrong.

But this battle is *dharmamaya yuddha* — a war fought for righteousness and justice.

Therefore Bhagavān assures Arjuna that performing such a duty does not lead to sin. Rather, fulfilling righteous duty becomes spiritually beneficial.

Since Arjuna is a *kṣatriya*, there is no greater responsibility for him at that moment than participating in this battle according to dharma.

The teaching was again related back to ordinary life. For students, studying sincerely at the proper time becomes their foremost responsibility. This does not mean studying endlessly without balance, nor neglecting studies altogether. Rather, it means giving appropriate importance to one's rightful duties.

Similarly, Bhagavān teaches Arjuna that at this moment, fulfilling his duty through righteous action is the most beneficial path before him.

2.32

yadṛcchayā copapannaṃ(m), svargadvārāmapāvṛtam, sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ(ph) pārtha, labhante yuddhamīdṛśam. 2.32

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

Here Bhagavān explains that such an opportunity for righteous battle comes only to fortunate *kṣatriyas*. A war fought for dharma becomes like an open gateway to higher welfare.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna that for a *kṣatriya*, even dying in such a righteous battle becomes auspicious and beneficial. There is no real loss in it. Rather, it becomes spiritually elevating.

Thus Bhagavān reassures Arjuna that those *kṣatriyas* who fall in a *dharmamaya yuddha* attain welfare, not destruction.

The explanation then proceeded to the next verse:

2.33

atha cettvamimaṃ(n) dharmyaṃ(m), saṅgrāmaṃ(n) na kariṣyasi, tataḥ(s) svadharmāṃ(ñ) kīrtiṃ(ñ) ca, hitvā pāpamavāpsyasi. 2.33

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

Bhagavān now warns Arjuna about the consequences of abandoning his duty.

If Arjuna refuses to participate in this righteous war, he would be turning away from both his *svadharma* and his honor. In doing so, he would incur sin.

To explain this more clearly, the example of students neglecting their studies was given.

If students fail to study sincerely and ignore their responsibilities, the consequences naturally follow. Poor preparation may lead to failure in examinations, low marks, and criticism from others.

The word *kīrti* was explained as the honor, praise, and good reputation earned through righteous action and proper conduct.

When duties are neglected, not only is responsibility abandoned, but one's reputation also suffers. People begin speaking negatively, criticizing the lack of effort or discipline.

Similarly, Bhagavān tells Arjuna that abandoning his rightful duty on the battlefield would result in the loss of both dharma and honor.

The teaching was then broadened further into everyday life.

Whenever human beings fail to perform their rightful duties, they move away from dharma.

Respecting elders, listening to them, serving them sincerely — these too are part of one's responsibilities. Neglecting such duties also creates inner imbalance and becomes spiritually harmful.

The discussion then moved to the next verse:

2.34

**akīrtiṃ(ñ) cāpi bhūtāni, kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām,
saṃbhāvitasya cākīrtiḥ(r), maraṇādatiricyate. 2.34**

Nay, people will also pour undying infamy on you; and infamy brought on a man enjoying popular esteem is worse than death.

Bhagavān explains that if Arjuna withdraws from battle, people will forever speak of his dishonor.

The meaning of *akīrti* was clarified as infamy, criticism, and disgrace arising from wrongful action or failure to act rightly.

For an honorable person, dishonor becomes more painful than death itself.

This was connected to ordinary human experience. Praise and appreciation naturally bring happiness, while criticism and insult deeply disturb the heart. When people begin speaking negatively about someone, it becomes extremely painful, especially for a person who values dignity and righteousness.

Today, Arjuna is remembered with reverence because he fulfilled his duty with courage and wisdom. People praise him as a great warrior and an extraordinary *mahārathi*.

But had he abandoned the battlefield out of fear, history would have remembered him very differently. People would have spoken of him as someone who fled despite possessing great skill and training.

The importance of thoughtful decision-making was emphasized here.

Arjuna did not act impulsively. Before making his decision, he openly expressed his confusion before Bhagavān, listened carefully, reflected deeply, and only then accepted the path shown to him.

Similarly, human beings too should avoid taking hasty decisions driven merely by emotion. Decisions should be made after thoughtful understanding and proper reflection.

Bhagavān thus explains that dishonor and negative criticism become deeply painful for any noble-hearted person.

The next verse was then discussed:

2.35

**bhayādraṇāduparataṃ(m), maṃsyante tvāṃ(m) mahārathāḥ,
yeṣāṃ(ñ) ca tvaṃ 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.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna that the great warriors assembled on the battlefield would assume that he withdrew out of fear.

No one would understand the emotional turmoil within Arjuna's heart — his compassion for elders, his attachment to family, or the inner conflict he was experiencing. The world would only see the external action: that Arjuna abandoned the battlefield.

Thus, people would conclude that he fled in fear.

Bhagavān further explains that those who once respected Arjuna greatly would begin to think less of him. The same warriors who admired him as a mighty archer and *mahārathi* would now consider him weak and insignificant.

People would say that when the real challenge arrived, Arjuna lost courage and retreated.

The point being clarified was that the world often judges actions externally, without understanding the deeper emotions or intentions behind them.

Even today, people admire those who perform noble actions courageously, while negative opinions arise about those whose actions appear weak or dishonorable.

Bhagavān therefore helps Arjuna understand how his withdrawal would be perceived by society.

The discussion then moved to the next verse:

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?

Bhagavān now explains that Arjuna's enemies would openly insult him and speak many harsh and unworthy words against him.

His opponents would ridicule his strength, mock his abilities, and call him cowardly and fearful.

Bhagavān asks: what could be more painful for a great warrior than hearing such disgraceful accusations?

For someone as brave and capable as Arjuna, being labeled a coward would become an unbearable humiliation.

The next verse then offered both reassurance and encouragement:

2.37

hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṃ(ñ), jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm,

tasmāduttiṣṭha kaunteya, yuddhāya kṛtaniścayaḥ. 2.37

Die, and you will win heaven; conquer, and you enjoy sovereignty of the earth; therefore, stand up, Arjuna, determined to fight.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna that if he dies in battle, he will attain *svarga*. And if he emerges victorious, he will enjoy the kingdom upon the earth.

The background of the war was recalled here. The battle centered around the kingdom of Hastinapura, which Duryodhana had wrongfully refused to share with the Pāṇḍavas, despite their rightful claim. His jealousy toward Arjuna and refusal to grant even the smallest portion of land had made conflict unavoidable.

Thus Bhagavān tells Arjuna:

- If he dies while performing his righteous duty, he gains higher worlds.
- If he wins, he rightfully governs the kingdom.

In either case, there is no loss.

Therefore Bhagavān instructs him to rise with firm determination and engage in battle.

The discussion then arrived at one of the most important and beautiful verses:

2.38

sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā, lābhālābhau jayājayau, tato yuddhāya yujyasva, naivaṃ(m) pāpamavāpsyasi. 2.38

Treating alike victory and defeat, gain and loss, pleasure and pain, get ready for the battle; fighting thus you will not incur sin.

Bhagavān now teaches the principle of *samatva* — inner balance and equanimity.

He instructs Arjuna to remain equal in:

- happiness and sorrow,
- gain and loss,
- victory and defeat.

Only then should he engage in his duty.

The meanings were explained simply:

- *Jaya* means victory.
- *Ajaya* or *parājaya* means defeat.
- *Lābha* means gain or profit.
- *Hāni* means loss.

Examples from daily life made the teaching relatable.

Sometimes a person succeeds, comes first in a competition, wins recognition, or achieves desired results — and naturally feels extremely happy.

At other times, despite great effort, success does not come. Someone may come second instead of first, lose a competition, or fail to achieve what they deeply desired. Then sadness arises.

Similarly:

- Sometimes there is profit.
- Sometimes there is loss.
- Sometimes situations unfold according to personal desires.
- Sometimes they do not.

Bhagavān teaches that true balance means remaining steady in both conditions.

If success brings overwhelming excitement while failure brings deep sorrow, then the mind remains unstable. Bhagavān instead teaches steadiness amidst both opposites.

This principle was extended beyond Arjuna's battlefield into everyday life itself.

Life itself is a kind of *yuddha* — a field of action and responsibility. Every person encounters victories and failures, joyful moments and painful experiences.

Whether participating in sports, competitions, studies, speeches, drawing contests, or other activities, people often become excessively attached to outcomes. If they succeed, they become extremely happy; if they fail, they become deeply disturbed.

But Bhagavān teaches:

- If success comes, remain balanced.
- If success does not come, remain balanced then too.

This does not mean becoming careless or indifferent. Rather, it means maintaining inner steadiness regardless of external outcomes.

"Hua to bhi thīk, nahīm hua to bhi thīk" — if something happens as desired, remain balanced; if it does not happen, remain balanced still.

Bhagavān says that when one performs duty with such equanimity, one does not incur sin.

Thus, if life is lived with this spirit of balance, steadiness, and sincere performance of one's responsibilities, then both inner peace and spiritual growth naturally follow.

The discussion concluded by emphasizing the immense practical value of this teaching. If even a small effort is made to apply this principle of *samatva* in daily life, many sorrows begin to dissolve naturally.

The session then gently transitioned into a collective chanting of the nāma-kīrtan, filling the atmosphere with devotion and serenity.

Hari Śaraṇam Hari Śaraṇam Hari Śaraṇam...

Questions and Answers

Sejal Ji

Question: Why was the Mahābhārata given the name Mahābhārata?

Answer: The name Mahābhārata was given because it was an immensely great war. The word “Mahā” means “great” or “grand.” Since it was such a vast and significant battle, it came to be known as Mahābhārata.

The session concluded with a heartfelt prayer followed by the chanting of the Śrī Hanumān Cālīsā.



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Thank you-For reading the summary

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

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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