

|| Sri:mathe Ra:ma:nuja:ya Namaha ||

GI:THA:MRUTHAM
Sweet Nectar of Sri:mad Bhagavad Gi:tha

Chapter 2 - Sa:nkhya yo:gaha

Translation of HH Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji's Telugu Commentary

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Notation

Introduction

Transcending Grief Through Divine Knowledge

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The primary goal of the seven hundred verses of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is to guide us on how to transcend and go beyond our grief. We experience sorrow because of our ignorance about who we are and that becomes an obstacle to permanent bliss. This permanent bliss that

we crave is not achieved through wealth or luxuries or by gaining the acceptance of people around us, but by eliminating the grief. We desire not wealth, nor family, nor palatial residences as much as we yearn to set ourselves free from our miseries and sorrows. This grief that is born out of ignorance cannot be pacified with logic or merely soothing words. Milder troubles or disturbances can be addressed by talking it out with someone, however deep-seated anguish can only be uprooted through guidance, from a qualified *Guru*, about the message of the *sa:sthras*.

Sri: Krushna realized that *Arjuna*'s mental turbulence at the battlefield of *Kurukshetra* was not something he could address through mere advice. Thus began the divine message called *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

Verse 1

At the outset of the second chapter, *Sanjaya* says,

tham thattha: krupaya:vishtam asru pu:na:kule:kshanam |
vishi:dantham idam va:kyam uva:cha madhusu:danaha || 2.1

Dhruthara:shtra had hoped that the *Pa:ndavas* would abandon the battle, for he believed in the power of *Kurukshetra* as *dharmakshetra* to amplify the qualities present within a person. Since the *Pa:ndavas* were naturally endowed with *saththva guna* - purity, righteousness, and compassion), he expected that their compassion would intensify on this sacred ground. Seeing their own relatives, teachers, and loved ones standing before them, he hoped they would conclude that fighting such a war was wrong and choose to withdraw, even at the cost of their own suffering.

That is why *Dhruthara:shtra* asked at the very beginning: *kim akurvatha Sanjaya!* - What did they do, *Sanjaya*? The entire *Bhagavad Gi:tha* unfolds as the answer to this question.

Since *Sri*: Krushna stood with the *Pa:ndavas*, He had to teach that one's actions cannot be guided merely by temporary emotions or the influence of *gunas*. Only through understanding one's true *sva:ru:pa*, can one discern what should be done, what should be avoided, and how to overcome the forces that overwhelm the mind. This knowledge is the foundation of Krushna's *teaching to Arjuna* in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*

Dhruthara:shtra had been perturbed at hearing about *Duryo:dhana's* sorrow but was non-reactive to *Arjuna's* mental anguish. He hoped that *Arjuna's* sorrow would drive him to forgo the war and the kingdom.

Arjuna was called *guda:ke:sa*, one who has conquered sleep and fatigue, and *jite:ndriya agre:sara*, the best amongst those who have conquered their senses. When such a great individual lost his mental balance out of unfounded sympathy, one can only imagine how susceptible the vast majority of ordinary people are to the vagaries of fleeting emotions.

Bhagavad Gi:tha gives us the knowledge to make the *a:thma*, soul, within all beings shine forth, ridding them of ignorance. When something is lost, that very thing must be used to gain it back. The loss of knowledge cannot be compensated by another substance than knowledge itself. This scripture provides such an awareness, such a return of awareness of one's *a:thma*, inner self.

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There is a Sanskrit saying - "*mandana mundana nya:yam*" - just as a person's head is shaved only after the hair is carefully prepared, decorated, and made prominent, the greatness of one person is best understood when the greatness of another is first highlighted. For example, if we simply say "One king defeated another king," the greatness of the victorious king is not fully understood. To reveal the greatness of the victorious king, we first describe the greatness, power, and glory of the defeated king. We explain how mighty he was, how vast his kingdom was, how no one could oppose him, how even powerful beings sought his help, and how respected he was. Then, when we say that such a powerful king was defeated, the greatness of the one who defeated him becomes evident.

Similarly, *Sanjaya* used poetic exaggeration to illustrate the depth of *Arjuna's* sorrow, just to underline the efficacy of *Bhagavad Gi:tha* as a scripture that is able to rid one of the most intense anguish. "*tham thattha: krupaya:vishtam*", *Sanjaya* mentioned that *Arjuna* was overcome by *krupa*, sympathy. He had made a similar observation in the first chapter when *Arjuna* became distressed by thoughts of the consequences of war: the destruction of the family, and the fear that no one would remain to perform the *pinda udaka* offerings for the ancestors. Overcome by this grief, *Arjuna* dropped his bow and arrows and collapsed in the middle of the chariot.

Sanjaya, further describes *Arjuna's condition*, "*asru pu:rna:kule:kshanam*"- his eyes brimming with tears and "*vishi:dantham*", with trembling lips, he was visibly overwrought with emotion, having forgotten his true nature, and what he ought to do as a valorous warrior.

Sanjaya refers to **Sri: Krushna** as *madhusu:dana*, the one capable of destroying enemies. The name indicates that He is capable of removing even powerful negative influences; it is this **Krushna** who now begins to speak in order to dispel *Arjuna's* intense sorrow.

The Gi:tha's Nectar and Arjuna's Confusion

Page 4 Our elders have taught us to carry out good deeds with *thrikarana suddhi*, the alignment of intent, speech, and action. However, *Arjuna* even expressed his misplaced grief with the very same alignment of intent, speech, and action.

“*sarvo:panishado ga:vo dogdha gopa:lanandanaha partho:vathsaha sudhi:rbhoktha: dugdham gi:tha:mrutham mahath*”, the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is compared to a cow, **Sri: Krushna** to the cowherd, *Arjuna* to the calf, and we, the readers to those who enjoy the milk. *sudhi:bho:ktha*, one who wants to act within the bounds of one's duties, drinks the milk of the *Gi:tha* and absorbs the message.

Actually, *Arjuna* did not benefit from the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* too much beyond agreeing to the war. He might have acceded to this out of a feeling of compulsion, or out of fear, after having witnessed **Sri: Krushna's vira:t ru:pam**, Universal Form. Aside from this, there was no growth in spiritual knowledge in *Arjuna* despite having received the message firsthand.

There is a Sanskrit phrase, “*bhu:tha:vesha nya:yam*”, to describe someone who has been ‘possessed’ by a ghost. Just like such a person is totally under the control of the ghost or spirit, *Arjuna* had come under the grip of his own emotions.



Nectar of wisdom meets tearful confusion

When someone who possesses a strong intellect and spiritual strength feels sympathy, it results in the wisdom of discrimination. Otherwise, misplaced, overwhelming sympathy, which may be an outcome of some other emotion, can lead one astray. *Arjuna* had reached such a state and even took on the role of imparting 'wisdom' to **Sri:** Krushna Himself. In the *Maha:bha:ratha*, at the end of the *Kurukshetra* war, *Arjuna* commanded **Sri:** Krushna to perform his duty as a charioteer and open the door for *Arjuna*! At another instance, *Arjuna* requested **Sri:** Krushna to repeat the entire *Bhagavad Gi:tha* as he had forgotten it all!

It must be emphasized that *Arjuna* was a warrior of great valor and character. He always knew the importance of waging a righteous war. Therefore, during *aranyava:sam*, the period of exile, he worked towards winning the weapon of *pa:supathi*. *Arjuna* also encountered a situation in the past, where *Uththara Kuma:ra* hesitated to face the enemy..

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Back then, the very same *Arjuna*, convinced *Uththara Kuma:ra*, as his charioteer, to fight against *Bhi:shma* and *Dro:na*. So it's not the lack of knowledge that led to *Arjuna*'s loss of perspective but that he was unexpectedly seized by misplaced sympathy. The sudden surge of emotion in *Arjuna* was orchestrated by **Sri:** Krushna, for that would lead up to the dialogue of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha. dharmara:ja*, for instance, was firm in his knowledge of *dharma*, ordained duty, and there was no way to instill doubt in him. *Arjuna* was susceptible to doubts hence was one of the most eligible characters to be the recipient of the message of the *Gi:tha* firsthand.

Sri: Krushna wanted to show *Arjuna* the path to true happiness. To experience true joy, one must abandon the delusional and imaginary joys. There is a saying, "*sukha:ni dukha:ni anubhu:ya*", one can comprehend what true happiness is only after experiencing sorrow and misery. By **Sri:** Krushna's design, *Arjuna* experienced overwhelming sorrow and misplaced sympathy upon seeing his relatives, so that the events would unfold for him to realise what true happiness is.

Arjuna's current state of sorrow was due to sheer ignorance. His sorrow was evident in his speech, body language and state of mind, as described by *Sanjaya* to *Dhruthara:shtra*. "*Krupaya:vishtam*", filled with sympathy, is the sorrow that flooded his mind. "*asru pu:rna:kule:kshanam*", tears were welling up in poor *Arjuna*'s eyes, and he was not able to stand still. Thus, sorrow manifested itself in his body. "*vishi:dantham idam va:kyam*", he was talking while also weeping at the same time, expressing his sorrow in his speech. Thus, *Arjuna* expressed his sorrow with *thrikarana suddhi* - alignment of body, mind, and speech.

Arjuna's *jna:nendriyas* - sense organs, had stopped obeying him, thus stopped serving their purpose. They stopped facilitating *Arjuna* with the necessary knowledge for his functioning.

Dharma and the Duty to Punish Wrongdoers

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After delivering the entire message of the *Gi:tha*, **Sri**: Krushna had double checked with *Arjuna*, “*kachchide:tachchrutham p:artha tvayaika:gre:na che:thasa*”, did you grasp and comprehend everything that I’ve told you? **Sri**: Krushna had noticed *Arjuna*’s mind and senses fail him at the outset, in the second chapter.

As part of one’s duty, it’s not cruel to punish a wrongdoer as per the dictates of *dharma sa:sthra*. In modern times, even the murderer of a nation’s ruler could very well be exempt from an appropriately harsh punishment, due to the stance of pro human rights groups. When one authorised to do so, doesn’t punish wrongdoers, he is as much a party to the crime, as the one committing it.

The antagonists here are the *Kauravas*. They humiliated *Draupadi* in the court, attempted to burn the *Pa:ndavas* alive, and tried to poison them. To punish them appropriately through a righteous war, would have been the execution of justice. By eliminating the *Kauravas*, society would have been purged of evil thus serving the purpose of greater good.

Arjuna failed to see this clearly, engulfed by sorrow and unbridled sympathy. We need to understand how intense sorrow can veil our discrimination.

Ra:vana:sura suffered deeply for the ten whole months that *Si:tha* was in *Lanka*. Rejected by *Si:tha*, he experienced many sleepless nights and deep frustration.

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Ra:vana was one who took life mercilessly. He could have killed *Si:tha* but insisted that he would not, out of love and compassion for her. *Ra:vana*’s sympathy was borne out of his lust even though he thought it was noble of him not to have finished her off.

We love the people around us because it benefits us in some way, however much we fool ourselves into thinking that’s not the case. This is an impure kind of love, the kind that serves a selfish motive.

Arjuna observed the warriors arrayed out in front of him and felt a surge of sympathy. While he thought it was out of respect and love, it was his ignorance and ego that drove him to feel this way and “*da:mbha*” - arrogance, because he thought he knew best.

Hanuma:n says in the **Sri: Ra:ma:ya:na**, “**so:ko: na:sayathe: dhairyam, so:ko: na:sayathe: srutham**”, sorrow makes one forget all the knowledge one has gained from *Guru*, and destroys one’s courage. “**so:ko: na:sayathe: sarvam na:sthi so:ka samah ripuha**”, there is no greater enemy in the entire world, than one’s own sorrow.

Arjuna was filled on that day with such incapacitating sorrow, in a way that his knowledge, bravery, and intellect failed him.

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When one’s mind is seized by emotions his senses fail him. We see vivid descriptions of such a human condition in our poetic texts. For example, in **Sa:kunthalam**, by **Ka:lida:sa**, a forlorn and love-sick **Sakunthala** who was steeped in obsessive thought about *Dushyantha* was paid a visit by the sage **Durva:sa**. Her ears, eyes, and other senses were functioning but didn’t serve their purpose of alerting her of the sage’s arrival. He tried engaging with her but she seemed far removed from that place, mentally. Feeling rebuffed by her distant behavior, the short-tempered sage cursed **Sakunthala** that she would be forgotten and abandoned by whoever was occupying her thoughts.

Arjuna’s senses were similarly under siege out of sheer sorrow and sympathy and **Sri: Krushna** sought to rescue him through the message of the **Bhagavad Gi:tha**.

All of us in modern times have the same predicament. All we feel is discontent and sorrow due to a constant lack of or hankering after comforts, relatives, wealth, and various other objects.

Although we have more daily conveniences than any other era in history, we are miserable. In the past, people worked as servants in homes or as factory-workers. They executed their duty without feeling a sense of ownership. Both the employers and the employees were content.

Ignorance as the Root of All Sorrow

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This is in contrast to workers these days who feel entitled to the possessions of the owner, and might forcefully seize or steal their property. People’s hearts have heightened discontent, sorrow, and negativity resulting in destruction of peace of mind. The root cause of this is

ignorance, and causes us to want to extract false happiness out of every object around us.



Arjuna was misguided by the same ignorance. **Sri:** Krushna sought to impart knowledge through His teachings to rid *Arjuna* (and us) of sorrow and clearly point to the path of duty to be executed. “*vishi:dantham idam va:kyam uva:cha madhusu:danaha*”, *madhusu:dana*, the one who has the ability to drive our sorrow away starts His teachings thus.

To really understand a phenomenon, one must isolate and examine it. Similarly, **Sri:** Krushna helps separate out *Arjuna*’s sorrow and study it to gain a better understanding of this emotion in the second chapter of *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

We seek to share our doubts, sorrows, and joys with others. Not only humans but so do animals look for such support. We need consolation during times of sorrow. But should we turn to people who possess knowledge or to those who further mist our visions with false views during such times. Sage *Vya:sa* clarifies this at the beginning of the second chapter.

After *Sanjaya* describes the depth of *Arjuna*’s sorrow to *Dhruthara:shtra*, he introduces Krushna’s words for the first time as: “**sri:** *Bhagava:n uva:cha* - the Lord said”. Whenever *Sanjaya* speaks, it is identified as *Sanjaya uva:cha*. When *Dhruthara:shtra* speaks, it is *dhruthara:shtra uva:cha*. When *Arjuna* speaks, it is *Arjuna uva:cha*. However, when **Sri:** Krushna spoke, *ve:da Vya:sa* quotes it as, “**sri:** *Bhagava:n uva:cha*” to reveal the significance of the speaker.

Bhagava:n is one who has solid and clear knowledge without the slightest trace of ignorance. We see a proliferation of *Bhagava:n*'s these days, with the title being conferred as a respectful form of address. However, *Para:sara Maha:rshi* explains that the word "*Bhagava:n*" is not merely a title given to someone; it has a specific meaning. *Bhagava:n* consists of three letters *bha*, *ga*, and *va*, followed by *an*. All of these letters mean "two". These are represented by *jna:na* - knowledge, *sakhti* - power, *bala* - strength, *aishwarya* - wealth, *vi:rya* - bravery, *the:jas* - effulgence.

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All of the noble qualities can be classified under the six categories. *jna:na* and *sakhti* signified by "*bha*", *bala* and *aishwarya* signified by "*ga*", *vi:rya* and *te:jas* signified by "*va*". The final letters are "*an*". Depending on the context, letters need to be reversed. In this case, once reversed, it would become "*na*", signifying negation. The meaning to be interpreted here is that any other qualities other than the six are not present in the word *Bhagava:n*. If it were intended to convey that the qualities in the list are not present, then it would have sufficed to say "nothing is there". It is important to interpret words accurately both in our worldly transactions and in philosophical contexts.

Ghataka Shruti texts mentions these qualities also being present in *Bhagava:n* - *apahathapa:pma*, *vijaraha*, *vimruthyuhu*, *viso:kaha*, *vijighathsaha*, *apipa:saha*, *sathya ka:maha*, *sathya sankalpaha*, *sarvajnaha*, *sarvasakthihi*. *Ghataka Sruthi* texts also give a list of qualities that are not present in *Bhagava:n*. These are the qualities that we possess as mortal beings bound by *karma*. *Parama:thma* possesses innate qualities that we can never strive to acquire.

apahathapa:pma - one who does not get tainted by sins, just like how darkness can never be in the proximity of a lamp.

vijaraha - one who is untouched by old age and bodily decline and is forever youthful. This is in contrast to our bodily experience of disease and decline.

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vimruthyuhu - one who is without death, a quality that even the most accomplished of individuals cannot acquire, *mruthyur dha:vathi panchama ithi*, *Bhagava:n* controls and runs the course of death.

viso:kaha - *Bhagava:n* is beyond the miseries and sorrow that plague the human condition.

vijighathsaha, apipa:saha - *Bhagava:n* is not susceptible to the incessant hunger and thirst that drives living beings to consumption of countless sacks of food and liters of liquid.

Thus, the *upanishads* have created a list to negate certain qualities in *Bhagava:n*. On the other hand, *Bhagava:n* does possess these qualities-

sathya ka:maha - One whose every resolve is actualised.

sathya sankalpaha - one who accomplishes something merely by willing it.

Thus, in summation of the qualities that *Bhagava:n* does and does not possess, He is *pu:nam* - complete.

As per the definition for the word “*Bhagava:n*” from Sage *Para:sara* and the *upanishads*, it is not befitting to ascribe this title to all and sundry. Only the One who possesses *an:ra:yana thaththvam*, the cause of all Creation, is to be referred to as “*Bhagava:n*”.

Sri: Krushna Alone is Supreme Bhagava:n

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We may also call greatly gifted or accomplished individuals who possess some aspects of the six auspicious qualities as *Bhagava:n*. Hence, we refer to *Va:Imi:ki*, *Para:sara* and *ve:da Vya:sa* as “*Bhagava:n Va:Imi:ki*”, “*Bhagava:n Para:sara*” and “*Bhagava:n ve:da Vya:sa*”. However, in those cases, their names are always to be appended. It is appropriate to only call **Sri: Krushna** plainly “*Sri: Bhagava:n*”.

Sri: Krushna is the Supreme Lord Himself who sought to erase the misery and sorrow of *Arjuna* and all of the human race by pointing towards the path of rightful duty. Misplaced and inappropriate sorrow has its bad consequences. Elucidating on this, **Sri: Krushna** began his message, as relayed by *Sanjaya*. Let’s follow along.

Verse 2

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sri: Bhagava:n uva:cha
kuthas thva: kasmalam idam vishame: samupastthitham |
ana:rya jushtam asvargyam aki:rthikaram arjuna! || 2

Sri: Krushna questioned *Arjuna* thus, *kuthas thva: kasmalam idam*, whence this deep distress? *Bhagava:n* further critiqued the sorrow, *vishame: samupastthitham*, as misplaced.

Sri: Krushna pointed out that *Arjuna*'s distress was -

1. *ana:rya jushtam*, unbecfitting of a warrior class
2. *asvargyam*, not likely to earn *Arjuna* a place in heaven
3. *aki:rthikaram*, would likely cause *Arjuna* infamy
4. *kasmalam*, sorrow, is a type of impurity, arising in one's heart and mind, that hides and distorts the truth.

Such impure emotions of misplaced sadness and hopelessness cause one to not recognize things exactly as they are, and renders a new color to everything. In fact, even a perspective of pure joy has the same effect, in that things are viewed in a different light. The difference is that pure joy leads to the right path of action while impure emotions spur one to wrongful deeds. The individuals around us cause either of these emotions to arise. Great philosophical teachings reduce the impurities in our mind and increase joy.

Let's take for example someone who is so disheartened that he gives up the way *Arjuna* did, dropping his bow and arrows, and collapsing in his chariot.

Say this person, be it young or old, man or woman collapsed under a tree and saw a snake slither down the trunk, or if a tiger or bear were charging towards him, he would instantly jump up from his seat, wouldn't he ? The person who claimed to have zero energy to move even a



millimeter would feel a sudden surge of energy.

Thus, humans react to circumstances and feel and act in ways that are not in accordance with their innate nature. We read stories about rigged sports events where athletes are injected with steroids which make them feel strong enough to scale the walls and touch the skies. The influence could be in the form of God's blessings, philosophical teachings, encouragement, or praise. Influences either cause joy, enthusiasm or could lead to impurities and defects in one's character to surface.

In the context of praise, it's worth recounting a funny story about a successful businessman. Balding and scanty haired as he was, he was nicknamed "*bo:di*" in the town, which he never took kindly to. There was a poor man who begged for alms in the same town. He was gifted with the silver tongue. One day, in the field, the poor man saw the businessman load sacks of grains on the cart. He went over to the businessman and said, "Why don't you employ someone for this menial labour? Isn't it difficult for you to carry these sacks with those locks of hair covering your eyes?"

Absolutely flattered and floored by the comment, the businessman who had previously not committed a single act of charity, gave away two sacks of grains to the poor man.

A Parable on Words and Intentions

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While the poor man was happily walking away with his newly earned sacks of grains, his friend came over and asked him how he earned such a generous bounty. The poor man said, “*bo:di* gave them to me!”. Curious and also feeling a sense of justice on behalf of the bald businessman, the friend went over to the latter and inquired, “Why do you give so generously to someone who callously refers to you as *bo:di*?”. The businessman upon hearing this was enraged and charged behind the poor man with a stick. The poor man saw the businessman running towards him and stopped him saying, “Oh! Why do you run with those thick locks of hair covering your eyes and inconveniencing you?”. Overcome by the flattery once again, the businessman said, “I should have given you four sacks of grain but only gave you two. Here you are .”

Thus, human nature is to react to external impulses with a temporary display of qualities that are not innate to their true nature. We see it in the story of the miserly businessman who was driven to charitable acts just because of words of empty praise.

Similarly, *Arjuna* who was truly a brave and moral warrior, surrounded as he was by his kith and kin on the battlefield of *Kurukshetra*, felt emotions that were alien to him, and which surfaced as sorrow, sympathy, listlessness, and other impurities in him. **Sri:** *Krishna*’s teachings were to replace these feelings with pure and right knowledge.

In our daily lives as well, we encounter situations that cause such temporary feelings. Failure is ensured if we try to get rid of those feelings through self-effort or by seeking refuge in others. Only the teachings of *Bhagavan Sri:* *Krishna* can save us, wipe clean the mirror of our minds, making it crystal clear to us who we are, who others are, and our relationship with them.

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Sri: *Krishna* chided *Arjuna*, *kuthas thva: kasmalam idam, vishame: samupasthitham*, from where does this untimely sorrow possess you? *Bhagavan* chided *Arjuna* out of an interest to see *Arjuna* reach great heights, just like a teacher would a lazy student to get him to pass exams with flying colors.

Bhagava:n is also questioning us on why we have forgotten our goal in life, and why we are not utilizing our births and bodies towards the execution of our duties.

It is perfectly acceptable to feel sorrow when the situation calls for it, like when a relative dies. When someone is getting married, or when a child is born, these are occasions to rejoice and sorrow during these times is highly inappropriate. A surgeon must not sympathetically hesitate to carry out a required procedure on a patient nor must an executioner on the sentenced criminal.

When a painstakingly tended *sampangi* flower plant is infested with insects, we must not mercifully hesitate to use insecticide. The basic principle here is that there is a right time and place for everything. Do we go to the movie theater to take a nap?

Sri: Krushna let *Arjuna* know that his emotion of sympathy was similarly misplaced. *Arjuna* wanted to know, “What if it is?”

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If *Arjuna* withdrew from the war, this act would be *ana:ryajushtam*, which means not befitting of an *a:rya*. Who are *a:ryas*? Our modern studies have tainted the meanings of several words and *a:rya* is one such example. The erroneous *a:ryan* invasion theory has stated that *a:ryans*, who invaded *Bha:rath*, were foreigners from the north of River *Sindhu*. We learnt the classification of *a:ryans* and *dra:vidians*.

However, our texts state, *a:ra:thya:thi a:ryaha*, *a:rya* is one who is worshipable. *a:ra:thya:thi buddhihi yah a:ryaha*, *a:rya* is the one whose mind drives him, *a:ra:th*, far away, from what is unrighteous and *ya:thi*, close to righteousness. Thus, an *a:rya* is one who knows the moral code of conduct, and behaves in a way that is beneficial for the future while also bearing in mind the effects and consequences of their actions in the present. Thus, *a:ryas* are to be respected, worshipped, and followed as an example.

In the *Sri: Ra:ma:yana*, even though he was a monkey, *Si:tha* addresses *Hanuma:n* as *a:rya*, venerable one. After the slaying of *Ra:vana*, *Hanuma:n* wanted to finish off the *ra:kshasa* women who tortured *Si:tha*. She stopped him from doing so and asked him to show mercy towards her *ra:kshasa* prisoners for they were merely carrying out the assignment that their king had entrusted them with. The more they tortured her, the more likely that they would receive promotions and increments in their jobs, so they were not to blame. *Hanuma:n* was well versed in the *ve:das*, the nine branches of *vya:karana*, Sanskrit grammar, and possessed superior intellect.

Ra:ma declared the following about the eligibility of *Hanuma:n*:

na:nrugve:davini:thasya na:yajurve:da dha:rinaha |
na:sa:mave:da vidushah sakyame:vam vibha:shithum ||
nu:nam vya:karanam kruthsamane:na bahudha: srutham |
bahu vya:haratha:ne:na na kinchidapasabditham ||

The True Meaning of Being an A:rya

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Si:tha questions *Hanuma:n*, “They were to be felicitated for excelling in their assignment, not punished for it. Aren’t you an *a:rya*? Don’t you know *dharma*?” Thus, *a:rya* is a term used to describe a person of a certain quality, level of knowledge, and behavior rather than of a race or a geographical origin.

Sri: *Krushna* denounces *Arjuna*’s withdrawal from the war as *ana:ryajushtam*, not in accordance with the aforementioned qualities of *a:rya*. A true *a:rya* would have found *Arjuna*’s actions repugnant.

Sri: *Krushna* teaches us that we need to tread the path set by elders, and not deter from it.

The *upanishads* state,

yattha: the thathra varthe:ran thattha: thathra varthettha:ha, yattha: the: the:shu varthe:ran thattha: the:shu varthettha:ha e:sha a:desaha e:sha upade:saha.

yattha: the thathra varthe:ran - how Elders behaved and acted, *thattha: thathra varthettha:ha* - you must follow suit. Don’t analyze their actions using rationality and logic. Follow their example wholly, including all of the steps.

For example, observe how our elders partook of their meals. They would eat only after making an offering of the meals to the Lord. Before the offering was a practice of worship, before they must have bathed after having attended to their bodily functions. The process of eating a meal thus had the prerequisites of a clean mind and body, and sanctifying the food through the act of offering it to the Lord. One must not consume anything before having gone through these steps. This is one example of how the *upanishads* instruct us to follow the example of our ancestors as told by our texts.

In the *Thiruppa:vai*, *Go:da De:vi* stated, “O Krushna! I follow the example of my ancestors.”

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Our primary *prama:na*, means of knowledge, ought to be our elders, those with greater knowledge. We follow their footsteps, and replicate their actions, even those which we perceive to be against the *sa:sthras*. We must not question, “But the *sa:sthras* did not say so. The practices and actions of our elders may seem to override even the *sa:sthras*. Here, **Sri:** Krushna asked *Arjuna* not to act in a way that would



cause disgrace and dishonor to his elders.

The second ill-effect of foregoing the battle was *asvargyam*, not being worthy of a place in higher worlds. **Sri:** Krushna intended to urge the human race to be steadfast in performance of their duties, and to use the God-given tool, the human body, to achieve this end. *Arjuna* was merely instrumental in receiving the message, like a cassette or CD in the process of recording. Ultimately, we, as the listeners or readers, must benefit from the message and have faith in the recommended practices.

Everybody has a different purpose, as spelt out in the *dharmā sa:sthra*. Not living in conformation with these guidelines warrants punishment. In the first chapter, *Arjuna* had wondered if his fighting the war would hurl him into lower worlds, '*pathanthi pitharo: hye:sha:m lupthapindo:daka kriya:ha*'

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Sri: *Krushna* emphasized that it was to the contrary. Even if hell and heaven were not matters of relevance, and if *Arjuna*'s sole concern was his happiness in this world, he would only be miserable since his actions would have earned him *aki:rthikaram*, infamy. His actions, borne of misplaced sympathy, would be denounced by everyone. Thus, *Arjuna*'s intentions were like hitting the defects of *thrisanku*, three nails, on his mind. They were *ana:ryajushtam*, *asvargyam*, and *aki:rthikaram*. The brittle mirror of the mind is incapable of handling nails and will shatter.

Thrisankhu, a disciple of Sage *Vasishtta*, once expressed his desire to his *Guru* to visit *svargam*, heaven, with this human body. Just like an astronaut requires a special suit for space travel, or a scuba diver for underwater expeditions, we need to earn a different body altogether to go to heaven. The physical body is unfit for this. *aho: batha mahathpa:pam karthum*.

The Story of Tri:sanku's Forbidden Desire

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Vasishtta laughed at *Thrisanku*'s wish and told him that he'd be better off enjoying his body and life in this world. *Thrisanku* turned to *Vasishtta*'s sons, who not only refused to help him but berated him for being disloyal to the sage, his *Guru*. No one was ready to help *Thrisanku*. After all, if the great Sage *Vasishtta* didn't accept *Thrisanku*'s desire, then who would?

Finally, *Thrisanku* went to Sage *Viswa:mithra*. The sage took this as an opportunity to prove his superiority over *Vasishtta* and agreed to launch *Thrisanku* into higher worlds. However, *Thrisanku* was not granted permission to enter heaven by the *de:vathas*. They hurled him right back down. The nether worlds did not accept him either. *Thrisanku*, dangling upside down, with no place to go, cried out to Sage *Viswa:mithra* in a desperate plea.

Viswa:mithra was enraged that the *de:vathas* had rebuffed someone sent by him. With the power of his *thapas*, he halted *Thrisanku* midair. He created a world just like heaven around him and made him the Lord of that world. *Thrisanku* is known to be still dangling upside down in a world that's somewhere between this one and heaven.

Those who subscribe to actions that spoil their reputation, or are against the **sa:sthras** and the instructions of sages and elders, would find themselves in a compromising position and shunned by everyone, similar to *Thrisanku*.

Sri: Krushna likened the war to a *yajna*, ritual sacrifice. We are not supposed to view the ghee being poured into the fire as wasted. The materials used in a *yajna* are not wasted, similarly, no action that we perform goes to nought.

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Shirking one's duty leads to sorrow and disrepute and it's the lack of an accurate knowledge of the Self that causes one to go down such a path of misery. The *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, beginning with the second chapter delivers an accurate knowledge of the Self.

klaibyam ma:smagamah pa:rttha! naithath thvayy upapadyathe: |
kshudram hrudaya daurbalyam thyakthvo:ththishta paranthapa! || 2.3

Sri: Krushna reminded *Arjuna* of his own prowess and bravery as a warrior and that of his dynasty as well. Whose son was he after all? *Arjuna*'s mother was *Kunthi*, whose life was fraught with problems, both before and after the death of her husband. She wasn't one to shy away from problems the way *Arjuna* was doing that day, but was ready to confront them head on.

In fact, the day when *Pari:kshith* was born, after the *Kurukshe:thra* war, when **Sri:** Krushna was ready to leave the victorious *Pa:ndava:s*, since the job of safeguarding and protecting them was done, *Kunthi* ran up to him and begged *Bhagava:n* -

vipadaha santhu tha:h sasvaththathra thathra jagadguro: |
bhavatho: darsanam yathsya:dapunarbhavadarsanam ||

"Whether we have sorrow or happiness is besides the point, we want Your constant company. For You to be by our side, if problems are what we need, then so be it, please let those miseries abound in our lives." Thus she sought miseries with all her heart.

klaibyam ma:smagamah pa:rttha, *Arjuna*'s demeanor was unbecoming, said **Sri**: *Krushna* and advised him not to yield to such unmanliness.

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The show of unmanliness would benefit neither *Arjuna* nor his family or society. **Sri**: *Krushna* cried, "What a shame! What a misfortune!" It was almost like **Sri**: *Krushna* was hinting that the days when *Arjuna* lived in exile, disguised as a eunuch belonged to his past. Such behaviour was discordant to the situation on the battlefield.

When *Arjuna* had visited heaven, the *apsara*, divine damsel, *U:rvasi* deeply desired him. Since *Indra* was *Arjuna*'s father, *Arjuna* refused to succumb to *U:rvasi*'s advances. He saw a mother in her and it would have been antithetical to the tenets of *dharma*. *U:rvasi* tried convincing him that the laws of *dharma* did not hold in their heavenly worlds and no such rules needed to be followed. *Arjuna* stood steadfast in his stance and did not yield to her. A frustrated *U:rvasi* cursed *Arjuna* that he would be a eunuch for he lacked the virility to satisfy her. It was however not a lack of virility, but a strong sense of morality that had stopped *Arjuna* from engaging with *U:rvasi*. Being *Arjuna*'s father, *Indra* shortened the curse from a lifelong one to the span of a single year that *Arjuna* could summon when he pleased. *Arjuna* used the altered terms of the curse to his advantage, when he played the eunuch *Bruhannala*, during the incognito phase of the *Pa:ndavas*' exile.

Sri: *Krushna* seems to hint in this verse that although the time period of the curse was complete, those tendencies seem to be surfacing in *Arjuna* that day on the battlefield of *Kurukshe:thra*, "*klaibyam ma:smagamah pa:rttha! naithath thvayi upapadyathe: naithath thvayi upapadyathe:*", this attitude is least befitting of you! "*kshudram hrudaya daurbalyam*", faintheartedness is repugnant. Had *Arjuna* been weak and fainthearted, he would have given into *U:rvasi*'s seduction.

Arjuna's Strength Versus Present Weakness

Page 25 *Ra:vana:sura* had abducted many women to become part of his harem. Except for *Si:tha*, all the others, after an initial revolt against his advances, had succumbed eventually. They compromised, having nowhere else to go, or no other support, or at least they convinced themselves of these reasons.

Sri: *Krushna* says *Arjuna* is made of sterner stuff and stood strong against *U:rvasi*'s seduction. On that day, he exhibited *hrudyadhrudam*, strength of mind, in stark contrast to the *hrudayadaurbalyam*, weakness he was showing on the battlefield of *Kurukshe:thra*. **Sri**: *Krushna*

deemed this as *asvabha:vikam*, out of character, for *Arjuna*. *Arjuna* tried justifying his mental weakness with far fetched theories like his going to hell for killing his relatives etc.

We often hear the stories of bandits and robbers who claim to steal others' wealth to care for their families, and claim that they adhere to principles as well. They could very well believe in God and find many logical loopholes to carry out an unjust deed.

In the *Sundara ka:nda*, after a long and futile search for *Si:tha* in *Lanka*, a sorrowful *Hanuma:n* wonders aloud, "How can I return from *Lanka* without *Si:tha*? That would be the end of the *va:naras* including *Sugri:va*. *Ra:ma*'s heart would stop, and this would prompt *Lakshmana* and *Vibhi:shana* to die. *Bharatha* would also die of sorrow and so would the queens. The ministers and the people of *Ayo:dhya* would give up their lives. My return without *Si:tha* would prompt immense destruction in *Kishkindha* and *Ayo:dhya*. I'd rather fast to death right here in *Lanka*."

Hanuma:n, being wise and clever, realized that his thoughts were spiraling towards dismal negativity and shook it off immediately. He realized that his potent sorrow dragged him down the slipperiest of slopes. He meditated on the form of *Si:tha*. This instilled in him a sense of purpose and confidence once again. Very soon, he found *Si:tha* in *Asoka Vana*.

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On the other hand, *Arjuna*'s negative state of mind spiraled him to self-destructive levels, and he needed someone to pull him out of it. Like *Hanuma:n*, he offered various reasons to demur from the war. **Sri:** *Krushna* referred to *Arjuna* as *paranthapa*, the destroyer of enemies. Calling him thus was to serve as a reminder of *Arjuna*'s capability and to point out how repugnant his negativity was on the battlefield. This is what a good friend must do. When someone slinks into negativity and insists on wallowing in a state of self-pity, true friends do not encourage this but try their best to pull him out of it. A friend or *Guru* reminds him of his strengths and capabilities. Such inspiration pushes one to great heights. Similarly, **Sri:** *Krushna* was a true friend and *Guru* here.

Sri: *Krushna*'s message in this verse is reminiscent of the famous saying from *Katha upanishad*, *uththishttatha ja:gratha pra:pya varan nibodhatha* - arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached. The *upanishad* asks us to arise from the slumber of ignorance and to follow our duties, seek refuge in *Gurus* and seers, and gain true knowledge from them. What type of knowledge must be sought from such *Gurus*? *kshurasya dha:ra: nisitha: duratyaya durgam patthah thath kavayo vadanthi*, treading upon the path of our life is as difficult and precarious

as walking on a knife-edge. Utmost alertness is required lest we hurt ourselves or fall. We hear of people rope walking across mountains. The slightest misstep, and the rope walker would go hurtling down into the depths of the valley below him. Imagine the focus and alertness the ropewalker must have to reach his goal and get his name into the Guinness Book of World Records. Similarly, life is a tight rope walk from birth to death. We must understand from our *Gurus* and elders how to walk the rope of life with skill so that we attain *amrutha thaththvam*, the nectar of immortality, upon death.

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However, how are we supposed to seek guidance if we are not aware of our own misguided notions that cause us immense sorrow and misery. There is a saying about the dog that chewed a bone which poked the inside of its mouth. The dog enjoyed the blood from his own mouth mistaking it to be from the bone. We accrue a lot in life for our happiness but don't realize that it gives us sadness in the bargain. When a pig is in the gutter it feels very comfortable and happy as though it's in the swimming pool of a five-star hotel. It feels on top of the world as it rises from the gutter swinging its tail around and when passers by look upon it in disgust, it misunderstands disgust for admiration.

Similar is our state where we think our behavior is extremely praise-worthy. Knowledgeable *Gurus* feel immense pity when they witness our ignorance. In our ignorance, we question why we should approach elders. Even if we do approach them, even if we do offer them something, we do so in an egoistic manner, as if we were giving alms.

In the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, *Sri*: Krushna chided *Arjuna* for his demeanor. *thadviddhi pranipa:the:na pariprasne:na se:vaya:*, inquire with reverence and with an attitude of service. Implying, not like *Arjuna*, seated on a chariot with this crown, and with *Sri*: Krushna at his feet. One must bow his head, body, and intellect while receiving instruction from a *Guru*. These pearls of wisdom must be contemplated upon and implemented. Doubts, as they arise, must be cleared with humility.

The Proper Way to Approach a Guru

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There is a protocol to be followed while questioning the *Guru*. To directly question is *prasna*, but *pariprasna* is to clear doubts in a way that causes no hurt or anger to the *Guru*, and which will make him love imparting the instruction. For the questioning to be thoughtful, one has to listen with intent, which requires one to sit near their *Guru*, bending one's will, mind, and body in respect. This process stokes interest in the disciple and makes him long for the knowledge. Indeed, even elixir when served to the satiated person is poison. Knowledge is to be imparted only to those who yearn for it, and at the opportune time. While waiting for the *Guru* to find the right time to impart knowledge, the disciple must be of service to the *Guru* and the premises. Service done with no sense of doership or ego is *se:va*.

Sri: Krushna pointed out that *Arjuna* did not follow this protocol of how to conduct oneself with his *Guru*. However, when one does not know that they are miserable they would find no need to seek refuge with *Gurus* or attempt to learn higher truths.

Verse 3

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Sri: Krushna *Parama:thma* has taken on the responsibility to awaken us, thus He is *sadacha:rya*. Like a sculptor can chisel the plainest looking stone to a beautiful form worthy of awe, the *sada:cha:rya* transforms the disciple. A teacher does not have much of a role to play in the success of a highly intelligent student who is already a rank holder, but his skill lies in pushing an ordinary candidate to great heights.

Arjuna was brave, intelligent, powerful, and knowledgeable, but he was miserable due to his own delusion on the battlefield of *Kurukshetra*. **Sri:** Krushna displayed appropriate empathy in contrast to the misplaced sympathy of *Arjuna*.

The *gi:thopade:sa* given to *Arjuna* is therefore not merely a personal instruction but a universal teaching meant to uplift all humanity. As the compassionate teacher, **Sri:** Krushna guides seekers safely through the difficult path of *samsa:ra*.

Bhagavad Gi:tha is not an ordinary text, and **Sri:** Krushna is no ordinary teacher. *bhagavad gi:tha:su upanishathsu* - the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is verily the essence of the *upanishads* given to us by *Parama:thma*, **Sri:** Krushna Himself.

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Sri: Krushna delivered the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* with the purpose of revealing the ultimate truths. *Parama:thma* descended as **Sri:** Krushna to guide us. Just as He once descended as both *nara* and *na:ra: yana*, as both the disciple and the *Guru*, for the benefit of the entire world, the message of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, though delivered to *Arjuna*, is meant for all mankind down the ages. The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is an eternal guide on how to confront life's challenges with bravery and intelligence so as to be free of any mental weaknesses .



Sri: Krushna instructed at the beginning of the second chapter, *kshudram hrudaya daurbalyam thyakthvo:ththishtta*. *hrudaya daurbalyam*, mental weakness, is a very dangerous thing. It makes one see things half-clearly and creates a nagging sense of discontent. *Arjuna* understood that his not engaging in war at *Kurukshe:thra* was wrong, dishonorable, and not befitting of a place in heaven. He agreed with the principles set forth by **Sri:** Krushna. Yet, he could not convince himself to follow through and put it in action.

Atheists argue that there is no higher power or God. This is refuted by our scholars and sages through *sa:sthras* which expound on the nature and qualities of *Bhagava:n* very beautifully. They raised important questions and effectively cleared various philosophical doubts. The ancient *sa:sthras* dealt with intellectual and philosophical questions much better than the logic we use in modern times. Following those texts help us to be free of our mental weaknesses.

When we are steeped in ignorance, we are convinced that our presently held beliefs are irrefutable truths. While we might also agree with the *sa:sthras*, due to the style and elan with which a lot of the material is delivered by the sages, we are not convinced enough to put any of those teachings in action. We are left in a perplexed state where we are unable to abandon our presently held beliefs to follow the path laid out in the *sa:sthras*, yet we agree with those principles. *Arjuna's* state was one of vacillation between half-truths. *Sri:* Krushna defines that state as *kshudram* - inferior, and instructs us, *thyakthva:* - to cast such a state aside.

The Illiterate Disciple's Perfect Faith

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Para:sara Bhattar was a great scholar and the disciple of *bhagavad* Ra:ma:nuja. He mastered the *sa:sthras* in his short life span of thirty two years. He expounded on the *sa:sthras*, attracting large crowds of scholars and commoners. There was an illiterate man who frequented *Bhattar's* discourses. He had firm belief in the words of *Bhattar* and followed his *Guru's* instructions perfectly in practice. The illiterate man won the affection of *Para:sara Bhattar*, to the extent that *Bhattar* would personally welcome him to the discourses and wouldn't begin teaching until he arrived. The learned scholars who frequented *Bhattar's* discourses resented this greatly. They didn't feel slighted at not being welcomed but took offence to an illiterate man getting special treatment .

Once, a scholar who mastered the six *sa:sthras* came to the town where *Bhattar* resided. *Bhattar's* disciples brought the visiting scholar to introduce him to *Bhattar* when he was delivering a discourse. *Bhattar* did not stop his discourse to welcome him, nor did he acknowledge the scholar. This offended the visiting scholar. The disciples expressed their regret at *Bhattar's* behavior to their *Guru*. *Para:sara Bhattar* requested the disciples to bring the visiting scholar back to him once again the next day.

This time, the disciples welcomed the scholar with a *pu:rna kumbha* and brought him over to *Para:sara Bhattar*. *Bhattar* addressed the scholar, "I am very impressed to hear that you have mastered six *sa:sthras*. I have some philosophical questions. What is *para thatthva*, the ultimate principle? What is fit to be worshipped by one and all? What is it that rescues us all? What is the cause for this universe? Please enlighten me on the answers to these questions through your knowledge of the *sa:sthras*."

Every *sa:sthra* expounds differently on these matters and preaches a different path. The scholar became deeply thoughtful as he mulled over the questions in the context of the six fields of *sa:sthra*.

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The visiting scholar replied, “These are great questions. In *pu:rva mi:ma:ma sa:sthra*, certain principles and paths are prescribed. There is yet another *nya:ya sa:sthra*, also known as *karma sa:sthra*, the nature of liberation and prescribed way of life are expounded upon. There are also *vaise:shika*, *yo:ga sa:sthra*, and *sa:nkhya sa:sthra* which speak differently about the ultimate truth and prescribe entirely different paths to attain it.” Bhattar replied, “Your vast knowledge of the branches of *sa:sthra* is indeed impressive. However, which path must I follow, as a seeker of liberation. Which path do you personally prefer and why?” The scholar replied, “That is a very deep question which is difficult to answer. There is much more to analyze in each of the *sa:sthra* branches before we can arrive at a conclusion on which path is the best one.”

We must ask ourselves, how much time do we have left for such analysis, and do we have the strength and patience. Even at a ripe age of sixty we are merely scraping the surface of what could be held as the truth, and how much further can we go on studying and analyzing texts? Especially, when we don’t know when we will die and when there is no guarantee that we will wake up the next morning when we go to sleep. Studying multiple branches of philosophy without a purpose is like beginning on a journey without a destination - it is madness.

Bhattar duly paid respects to the visiting scholar and saw him off. He went to the illiterate man and posed the very same questions to him. The illiterate prostrated to *Bhattar* and began to cry profusely. A concerned *Bhattar* inquired, “Hey! Why do you cry? If you don’t know the answers to my questions you may just say so! No need to cry!”

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The illiterate man replied, “Oh great *Bhattar*, you have been preaching that *Srimanna:raya:na sriya:pathi* is the ultimate truth, and worthy of worship by all. You have taught us that serving Him is the means to attain liberation. I have been believing and practicing it so far. However, if you have questioned me on this today, it’s possible that there has been a defect in my belief and practice. Please forgive me if so.” He prostrated once again to the *Bhattar*.

Liberation is certain for the illiterate man since he had a decisive goal, surrendered to his *Guru* and to the prescribed path, and followed it single-mindedly. On the other hand, the scholar who mastered the six branches of *sa:sthra* had a vacillating mind and could easily slink back into another birth - *punarapi jananam punarapi maranam punarapi janani: jatare: sayanam*. And that birth could be one of a dog, fish, pig, or tree - *sva yo:ni va: su:kara yo:ni va:*. This is the unfortunate consequence of misusing the highly coveted human birth.

Thus, *Bhattar* taught a lesson to the onlooking scholars about what a dangerous thing human doubt can be.

Similarly, *Arjuna*'s mind was plagued with doubt. **Sri:** Krushna's teachings to abandon mental frailty and fight the war made sense to *Arjuna* yet he could not bring himself to follow them in action. **Sri:** Krushna noted *Arjuna*'s wallowing and emphasized, *utthishtta paranthapa!* **Sri:** Krushna wanted to motivate *Arjuna*, and all of us to, *utthishtta*, awaken, and become *paranthapa*, destroyer of enemies. So, what are these enemies?

Para:sara Bhattar expounds that *Prahla:da* declared, *durlabho ma:nusho deho dehina:m kshana-bhangurah*. The purpose of human birth, acquired after great difficulty, is to eliminate enemies around us and to continually progress towards a better state. We know that animals also hunt prey.

Conquering Internal Enemies Through Discernment

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Similarly, humans distance themselves from external factors that act towards their detriment. Apart from this, they must conquer internal enemies like anger, desire, and greed which arise from *rajas*, passion and lead to an exaggerated sense of "me" and "mine". Unlike animals, humans can recognize the inner state and can work toward the betterment of their minds. It's our duty to seek the highest and the ultimate, and what is beyond the transience that we witness. We must use the God-given instruments of our body and mind appropriately for such an attainment. An instrument never serves its own needs but serves the needs of its owner.

The recognition of and continuous analysis of the ultimate is *thapas* or *paras thapas*, and the one who performs this is *paranthapa*.

Sri: Krushna emphasized, *hrudaya daurbalyam thyakthva: utthishtta paranthapa*. By using the word *paranthapa*, the meanings conveyed are "hey *Arjuna*, meditate on the ultimate through *paras thapas*" or "hey *Arjuna*, you are *paranthapa*, the enervator of enemies. Your valor has driven away enemies in many instances. You helped *Indra*. During *uththara go: grahana*, you single-handedly conquered all the *Kauravas*. Besides, you spurned *Urvashi*'s advances thus demonstrating control over your sense organs."

Verse 4

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Sri: Krushna thus motivated *Arjuna*, reminding him that he's made of sterner stuff, and urged him to walk the path of truth and execute his duty of eliminating enemies and protecting the king. Every individual, be it child, householder, saint, or an aged person needs to engage in activities. This world is a place of work and no one can escape their duty.



After listening to **Sri:** Krushna list out the three defects of *Arjuna*'s inappropriate and untimely sorrow, the latter poses a question:

Arjuna uva:cha

katham bhi:shmam aham sankhye: dro:nam cha madhusu:dana! |

ishubhih prathiyo:thsya:mi pu:ja:rha:varisu:dana! || 2.4

When in deep sorrow, one loses all appropriateness of speech. We challenge or rebut the wisdom that others offer to us when we are in despair. We scold younger ones, fight with friends, and become sarcastic with our superiors like parents, mentors, and *Gurus*. *Arjuna*, being a man of culture and good upbringing did not openly challenge **Sri:** Krushna but did so indirectly, through a *sambodhana*, vocative usage. Let's understand how.

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Arjuna used two vocative terms *madhusu:dana* and *arisu:dana* that are touched with irony in this verse. *Parama:thma* had destroyed the demon *Madhu* who stole the *ve:das* and returned them to *brahma*. Thus, **Sri**: Krushna earned the name *madhusu:dana*. In this verse, *Arjuna* sarcastically pointed out that **Sri**: Krushna destroyed demons and enemies but was advising *Arjuna* to become *bandhusu:dana* and kill his very own - his grandfather *Bhi:shma*, his *Guru* *Dro:na*. How was this justified on **Sri**: Krushna's part? How could there be a different moral code for **Sri**: Krushna and *Arjuna*?

ari means enemy. So Lord **Sri**: Krushna is referred to as *arisu:dana*, destroyer of enemies.

We generally associate Lord *Vishnu* with the name '*Hari*'. The *omka:ra* is considered to be equivalent to Lord *Vishnu* as per *ve:dic* scriptures. Hence, the phrase *harihi o:m*. This basically means *Hari* = *O:m*. In North India, they greet one another with *Hari O:m* which is a shortened version of *harihi o:m*. If the enunciation of the shortened version is incorrect it sounds like *ari o:m*! This sounds like equating *o:m* with the enemy! This goes to show that we must use our words with care and pronounce them correctly.

Sorrow's Power to Cloud Judgment

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Arjuna did not dare ask **Sri**: Krushna these questions directly. **Sri**: Krushna was of great strength and angering Him could be devastating for *Arjuna* who was a mere mortal in comparison. Thus he put his point across sarcastically.

Bhagavad Gi:tha gives us deep insight into human nature and behavior. This verse shows us how sorrow can make one lose all propriety in speech along with a sense of right and wrong. Like a flooding river destroys the surroundings, intense sorrow can make one's faculties ineffective. The second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* demonstrates the effect of intense sorrow vividly.

Arjuna was a brave warrior for whom such emotions were not customary. Yet, **Sri:** Krushna orchestrated a situation whereby *Arjuna* felt the urge to question the Lord so that the wisdom of the answers Lord **Sri:** Krushna blessed him with, would benefit generations to come. Sorrow is natural in some circumstances of our lives. The *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is a manual that helps us overcome sorrow and cross the ocean of life.

Arjuna omitted mentioning everyone except his grandfather and *Guru. Bhi:shma* had been of great support and strength to their dynasty for three generations.

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His mother was *Ganga:de:vi* and step mother *Sathyavathi* both of whom were wives of *Santhana Maha:ra:ja*. To *Sathyavathi* were born *Chihtra:ngada* and *Vichithravi:rya*. To them were born *Dhruthara:shtra*, *Vidura* and *Pa:ndu*. *Kauravas* were born to *Dhruthara:shtra* and *Pa:ndavas* to *Pa:ndu*. *Bhi:shma* had taken a vow of celibacy and had no sons of his own. Yet, he raised his cousin's children like his very own and served them with dedication and selflessness. *Arjuna* had fond memories of being carried and endearingly addressed by his grandfather *Bhi:shma*.

How could **Sri:** Krushna expect *Arjuna* to war with his beloved grandfather? This wasn't just sport, this was a battlefield where *Arjuna* would have to wield piercing arrows against his *Bhi:shma*. *Bhi:shma*, a valiant warrior who defeated *Parasura:ma* in battle was conferred the title 'ekaika dhanurdha:r'. He often playfully battled with *Arjuna* using fake arrows just to train his grandson in the skill of warfare. They belonged to the class of warriors, so handling arrows was an everyday thing. But it was never done with seriousness or with any other intention than to train in the art of warfare.

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Dro:nacha:rya loved and cherished *Arjuna* as a student and taught him secret utterances and use of such weapons that he didn't to his very own son, *Aswattha:ma*. He half-heartedly taught his son the use of *na:ra:ya:na asthra* but never trained him on how to stop and revoke the weapon once launched. He only taught *Arjuna* this art. *E:kalavya*, a student who deeply adored *Dro:na:cha:rya* and who was also a skilled

warrior, gave up his thumb upon his *Guru*'s demand. Dro:*nacha:rya* did this for *Arjuna*'s benefit, so that he would be hailed as the greatest warrior, *dhanurdha:ri*. *Katham*, how can you ask me to finish them off, asked *Arjuna*.

Verse 5

Arjuna's Refusal to Kill His Teachers

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The heightening intensity of *Arjuna*'s sorrow is evident in the next verse.



guru:n ahathva: hi maha:nubha:va:n sre:yo: bho:kthum bhaiksham api:ha lo:ke: |

hathva:rttha ka:mamsthu guru:n ihaiva bhunji:ya bho:ga:n rudhira pradigdha:n || 2.5

Arjuna says, *guru:n ahathva:*, I will not kill *Gurus*, and *maha:nubha:va:n*, those like *Bhi:shma* and *Dro:na* who tailored their intentions and actions for my well being and sought the very best for my future. *sre:yo: bho:kthum bhaiksham api:ha lo:ke:* - how can we enjoy this world having killed them? *hathva:rttha ka:mamsthu guru:n ihaiva*, *Arjuna* revolted at the idea of killing *Bhi:shma* and *Dro:na* who were also desirous and passionate for the kingdom. *bhunji:ya bho:ga:n rudhira pradigdha:n*, how can we enjoy and experience the blood soaked spoils of the war?

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The pleasures of the kingdom would be 'blood-soaked' because if *Arjuna* were to win the kingdom in the war, he would remember his kith and kin wincing and rolling in pain in the battlefield, limbs severed - the very same kith and kin that roamed the kingdom. *Arjuna* couldn't possibly enjoy a kingdom tainted with such memories. '*guru:n ahathva: hi*', here the usage of 'hi' indicates emphasis and a tone of decisiveness. *Arjuna* had seemingly concluded that his word was final and he intended not to go any further in this bloody war. He much preferred becoming a mendicant roaming the forest or begging for alms.

This is a natural behavior of those suffering intense sorrow. They frequently do not pay heed to nor give any time to the wise words of their well-wishers. Well-wishers may also give up and stop any further efforts to convince.

Sri: *Krushna* is the ultimate *a:cha:rya* and *jagath Guru*. He was determined to change *Arjuna*'s ways and wouldn't give up on him.

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Arjuna conceived of two options. One was to fight his *Guru* and grandfather and win the kingdom, the praise of society, and other worldly pleasures. On the other hand, if he did not fight, and gave up his worldly life, begging for alms seemed to be the better option.

hathva:rttha ka:mamsthu guru:n ihaiva, *Arjuna* described *Dro:na* and *Bhi:shma* as materialistic, passionately hankering after wealth and worldly pleasures. We may be taken aback at this description.

Dro:na and *Bhi:shma* were not morally corrupt themselves however, they played accomplices to the unwholesome practices and ideologies of *Duryo:dhana*. They were like his employees, thus were party to the enjoyment of the wealth and worldly pleasures that *Duryo:dhana*'s kingdom offered. Therefore, *Arjuna*'s description of them was accurate.

Everyone is indeed a servant of wealth. The *dharma sa:sthra* says, '*arthasya purusho: da:so da:sastvartho: na kasyachith*', wealth yields to none while everyone has to yield to wealth. When someone gives money with zero expectations of any return or reward, he is deemed to be as pure as the spotless moon.

Dro:na and *Bhi:shma* had the moral obligation to rebut *Duryo:dhana* however they continued to support him in his evil ways. *Arjuna* did not want to go to war and defeat such materialistic individuals. Thus, *Arjuna* displayed the intensity of his sorrow to **Sri:** Krushna.

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One is indebted with a sense of gratitude and obligation towards a person who shares knowledge with him, especially of the spiritual kind. We find ourselves at a juncture in the text where *Arjuna* displayed the same gratitude by questioning **Sri:** Krushna on his directive to kill his *Guru* Dro:na and grandfather *Bhi:shma*, towards both of whom *Arjuna* felt a deep obligation. *Gurus* elsewhere are honored, glorified, and given up lives for, but not killed as **Sri:** Krushna was asking *Arjuna* to do!

There was once a boy named *Upamanyu* who sought to learn Brahma *vidhya* from his *Guru*. Back then, students would beg for alms, and turn it over to their *Guru* for his sustenance as well as for the maintenance of the *Gurukul*. The *Guru* would in turn feed the student with a portion of the alms and also teach him. This *Guru* wanted to test *Upamanyu*'s resolve in wanting to learn Brahma *vidhya* and stopped feeding him. *Upamanyu* who used to raze and raise the cows started drinking their milk to satiate his hunger. The *Guru* questioned him about this as well.

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He stopped him from drinking the milk that was meant for the calves. So, *Upamanyu* began drinking only the milk leftover after the calves were fed. The *Guru* pointed out again that the cows would feed their calves better if *Upamanyu* weren't drinking the leftovers. *Upamanyu* then began to drink the froth from the calves' mouths. The *Guru* pointed out yet again that the calves were frothing for the sake of *Upamanyu* and that they wouldn't do so and waste milk if he stopped. *Upamanyu* then resorted to eating leaves when he took the cows to graze but the *Guru* objected to *Upamanyu* consuming the cows' fodder. *Upamanyu* searched for leaves and fruit that the cows refused to eat, and ate some leaves from a plant. He accidentally allowed the latex from the leaves to enter his eyes. This blinded him. While the cows reached the *Guru*'s home safely that night, *Upamanyu* fell in a ditch. *Asvini de:vathas* took pity on the crying child and appeared before him to grant him eyesight. Much to the *Asvini de:vathas*' amazement, *Upamanyu* refused their boon saying that he is under the shade of his *Guru* and refused to do anything without his *Guru*'s consent.

In the meantime, the *Guru*'s wife noticed the missing child and felt deeply worried and sympathetic. She chided her husband for his actions and forced him to go on a search for *Upamanyu*. The *Guru* went on the search and found the child in a ditch. The *Guru* retrieved *Upamanyu* from the ditch, and with the power of his Brahma *vidhya*, granted *Upamanyu* his eyesight back. He also transferred all of his knowledge to the student.

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In a culture where a *Guru* is so deeply revered, *Arjuna* wondered how **Sri: Krushna** could order him to kill his own *Guru*?



"*uthpa:tha vidyo: Guru dakshina:rthi: kauthsah prape:de: varthanthu sishyaha*". This is a verse from *Ka:lida:sa's Raghuvamsa*. There was a boy named *Kauthsa* under the tutelage of a scholar named *Varathanthu*. He was taught the fourteen *vidyas*. At the end of the course , the boy wanted to offer *Gurudakshina*.

Varathanthu refused saying he considered *Kauthsa's* sincere study to be sufficient. However, *Kauthsa* felt he could not depart without offering *Gurudakshina* and repeatedly requested his teacher to name a gift. Finally, pressed by *Kautsa's* insistence, the *Guru*, perhaps hoping the request would end the matter, asked for fourteen lakh gold coins, one lakh for each of the fourteen *vidyas* he had taught.

The *Guru* was confident that the boy, clad in tatters, could never summon up that kind of wealth. The boy set out on a mission to find his *Guru* the gold and approached King *Raghu* who had just completed the *visvajith ya:gam* where he had just given away all his wealth as a donation. *Kauthsa* was confident that the great king would surely help him fulfill his obligation to his *Guru*.

Upon arriving, *Kauthsa* found that *Raghu* had nothing left beyond simple earthen vessels, having donated all his wealth. Realizing the king's condition, he resolved not to ask for anything and intended to depart after accepting the king's hospitality. However, *Raghu* repeatedly urged him to reveal the purpose of his visit, and only then did *Kauthsa* explain his *Guru's* request.

Admiring *Kauthsa's* devotion to his *Guru*, *Raghu* resolved to fulfill the request. He prepared to seek the wealth from Lord *Kube:ra*. Lord *Kube:ra*, having heard that King *Raghu* was on his way, and knowing what a great king he was, filled his palace with gold and wealth. When King *Raghu* heard this, he wondered how his recently emptied home had become full of wealth again!

Disciples' Complete Dedication to Teachers

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King *Raghu* realized that it was *Kube:ra's* doing and gave all of his wealth away to the boy. *Kauthsa* however refused, saying that he was only interested in those fourteen lakhs of gold coins. Upon the king's insistence though, he took all of the wealth as *Kube:ra's* gift to the *Guru*. The *Guru* did not want more than what he asked for; the boy wasn't interested in the gold either.

Recalling such examples of disciples who completely dedicated everything to their *Guru* and fulfilled their *Guru's* wishes, *Arjuna* asks: "*guru:n ahathva: bhunji:ya bho:ga:n* - Krushna, should I kill such revered teachers and then enjoy a kingdom and its pleasures? Would it not be better to live by begging than to slay my *Gurus*?"

This reflects a common human tendency. When overcome by grief, people often project their own understanding onto even their teachers. *Arjuna* does the same. Until now, he had merely believed his own reasoning to be correct. Now he almost assumes that Krushna must think the same way.

People often assert, "It is my right" or "It is my life," yet rarely pause to ask: "Who has given me this life? Who sustains it? To whom does this body truly belong?" Without this deeper understanding, they remain preoccupied with asserting their rights while overlooking their responsibilities.

Arjuna on the other hand remained oblivious to his rights to the kingdom. He seemed like he'd rather be a mendicant.

Verse 6

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*na chaithad vidmah katharanno: gari:yo:
yadva: jaye:ma yadi va: no: jaye:yuhu |
ya:n e:va hathva: na jiji:visha:maha
the:vastthitha:ha pramukhe: dha:rthara:shtra:ha || 2.6*

Arjuna began to express his uncertainty, "*na chaithad vidmah katharanno: gari:yo: yadva: jaye:ma yadi va: no: jaye:yuhu* - we don't know what's good or appropriate, how can we be sure of the outcome and if we will win?" Thus, he equalled his status to that of **Sri**: **Krushna** referring to them both as "we". *Arjuna*, being a valorous warrior, couldn't bring himself to say "what if we lose?", but instead said, "we don't know if victory is certain".

In the *Uththara Ra:ma: yana*, as part of the *asvame:dha ya:ga*, the horse is sent out to all the kingdoms with the challenge that anyone who wishes to oppose the king's sovereignty may capture it. *Lakshmana's son* followed the horse with an army to protect it. The horse had reached the *Va:Imi:ki a:sram* with an insignia on its head stating that if anyone dared to capture the horse he would have to face Lord *Ra:ma's* army in a battle.

Lord *Ra:ma's* sons *Kusa* and *Lava* who arrived at *Va:Imi:ki a:sram* rose to the challenge and tied the horse. *Lakshmana's son* hastened to protect the horse and began to recount the greatness of *Ra:ma*, *Lakshmana*, and royal lineage of *Ayo:dhya*. *Kusa* asked him to stop talking

about irrelevant things. He acknowledged that the elders were indeed noble and worthy of respect, but the matter at hand was the captured horse. Since *Lakshmana*'s son had come as the protector of the horse, the issue had to be resolved through a combat between them both.

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Kusa questioned the need to praise *Ra:ma*'s greatness, sarcastically remarking that if one were to recount his heroic deeds, one should also remember that his first act of valor was the killing of *Tha:taka*, an elderly woman. He further referred to the battle with *Khara* and *Du:shana*, where *Ra:ma* had momentarily stepped back before resuming the fight, and suggested that even such a step would be unbefitting for a *kshathriya*. For a true warrior, he said, the very notion of turning away from a challenge had no place in his conduct or vocabulary.

In contrast, *Arjuna*'s state of mind was very different. While the thought of defeat or retreat does not arise in such a warrior, *Arjuna* says "yadva: jaye:ma yadi va: no: jaye:yuhu - "whether we conquer them or they conquer us. ya:n e:va hathva: na jiji:visha:maha - Those people - if we killed them, we wouldn't even want to keep living."

According to *Sri*: *Krushna*, this statement of *Arjuna* is deeply problematic. The elders and wise ones would be pained to hear such words from him. The *Kauravas* had committed countless wrongs and inflicted immense suffering. If they were left unchecked, they would continue to create greater destruction. Therefore, saying "I cannot live if I kill them" reflects *Arjuna*'s misplaced compassion and confusion about his duty.

Righteousness of Punishing Wrongdoers

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Is it also a sin to punish or destroy someone who has committed wrongdoing? If that were true, *Ra:ma* would not have killed *Ra:vana*. He would have left *Khara*, *Du:shana*, and the thousands of demons associated with them untouched. Such action is directed not at the person's true nature, but at the wrongdoing present in that person.

Punishment serves two purposes: it prevents the wrongdoer from causing further harm and committing more injustices, and it deters others from following the same path. The careful consideration of whether punishment is justified reflects the wisdom and discernment of both the individual and society.

Despite **Sri**: Krushna's repeated demonstrations of His divine nature and power, *Arjuna*'s faith in His ability to uphold *dharma* appears to waver. The *vira:tru:pa*, universal form, of **Sri**: Krushna was revealed a few times, including in the court of *Kaurava*:s. This was expounded on by *Bhi:shma* during the *ra:jasu:ya ya:ga*. Yet, **Sri**: Krushna willingly submitted Himself to being the role of a *Pa:ndavadhu:tha*, messenger negotiator and *Pa:rthasa:rathy*, charioteer. **Sri**: Krushna was a pillar of support to the *Pa:ndavas*, being their rock during turbulent times and empowering them during the crisis that led to the war at *Kurukshe:thra*. Yet, *Arjuna* openly expressed his doubts on whether they would win. It was like doubting a capable physician who had promised to cure a disease or questioning those who had pledged their full support in a righteous cause. Such doubt revealed *Arjuna*'s loss of clarity about Krushna's power and his own duty.

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From his perspective, fighting meant the sin of killing his teachers and relatives, while retreating meant abandoning his duty and facing disgrace. Whichever path he chose appeared to bring fault. Yet **Sri**: Krushna was guiding him away from this dilemma, showing him that there was a way to act without incurring such consequences.



A wise person does not merely defend his own position or try to prove himself right; he examines his own shortcomings and corrects them. But people often have the tendency to silence others and insist that their own view is correct.

This tendency is illustrated through a simple incident. During his mother's funeral rites, a man forgot to wear his *yajno:pavi:tha*, the sacred thread. When the priest pointed it out, instead of accepting his mistake, he immediately tried to justify himself by questioning the ritual itself.

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The priest reminded him that it was his mother's ritual. The man nonchalantly argued that since his mother, being a woman, had never worn the sacred thread, there was no reason for him to wear one while performing her rites. He went further and insisted that the priest and everyone else participating in the ritual should also remove their sacred threads.

Being a man of high status, he swayed everyone into obeying him. People thus try to convince others of the logic of their actions merely as an attempt to cover up their mistakes.

Arjuna was doing the same thing here, finding loopholes and arguments to refute **Sri: Krushna's** command to fight the war.

katharanno gari:yaha - "We do not know which is better. Whether we win or they win, both outcomes appear sinful. If we win, we kill our revered elders; if they win, we suffer disgrace. Giving up the war seems safer and more reasonable. Therefore, Krushna, I do not wish to fight."

na chaithadvidmaha - "We do not know anything beyond this." Overwhelmed by grief, *Arjuna* mistakes his sorrow for reality itself. The more he dwells on it, the deeper his grief becomes.

hathva: na jijji:vishamaha - "Krushna, I have no desire to live after killing them."

This reveals the depth of *Arjuna's* sorrow. By understanding how his grief intensifies, we can better appreciate the remedy that **Sri: Krushna** is about to teach.

Sri: Krushna declared in the fifth chapter Chapter - "*suhrudam sarva-bhu:tha:na:m jna:thva: ma:m sa:nthim richchhathi*". Knowing that **Sri: Krushna** is the Ultimate Protector and the true well-wisher of all beings alleviates sorrow.

Sri: Krushna as the True Well-Wisher

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There is a difference between a *mithra* and a *suhru*. A *mithra* is typically a friend of similar age who wishes us well. A *suhru*, however, seeks our welfare out of genuine concern, regardless of age or status.

Sri: Krushna is the *suhru* of all beings. Though infinitely greater than us, He always desires the welfare of everyone. Knowing the hearts of all, He harmonizes their thoughts and works to establish peace in the world. This is the purpose of His teachings.

Even great elders and statesmen such as *Bhi:shma* and *Dro:na* recognized **Sri:** Krushna's true nature and accepted His wisdom. Yet *Arjuna*, standing before such a Master, begins advising Him. This is the condition of one overwhelmed by grief. Instead of trusting those who seek his welfare, he assumes that he alone understands the situation.

A person seeks treatment only after recognizing that he is ill. One who believes he has no illness rejects both the medicine and the physician, insisting that everyone else is mistaken. Likewise, instead of recognizing his own confusion, a deluded person tries to prove that others are wrong.

Arjuna illustrates this universal human tendency. Yet *Arjuna* possesses one redeeming quality. He admits, "We do not know." Most people, despite knowing even less, confidently believe that they alone are right. *Arjuna's words also reveal an unspoken criticism of Sri:* Krushna: "You ask me to kill my teachers and relatives. Is that truly righteous? Would You Yourself do such a thing?" Though he does not express it directly, this attitude is evident in his thinking.

Sri: Krushna, however, never hesitates when it comes to protecting *dharma*. Whenever righteousness is threatened, it is His duty to remove whatever stands in its way. He not only teaches this principle but demonstrates it through His own actions.

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When *Ra:ma* killed *Tha:taka*, He did so in accordance with *dharma* and His *Guru's* command.

When He was asked by sage *Viswa:mithra* to kill *Tha:taka*, He initially hesitated, considering that she was a woman. However, trusting His *Guru's* instruction and understanding His duty, He carried out the task without hesitation. *Ra:ma* never judged based on personal relationships or distinctions such as "man" or "woman." When *dharma* was at stake, He punished those who acted against righteousness,

whether it was *Tha:taka*, *Va:li*, or *Subha:hu*. Similarly, Krushna did not hesitate to punish *Pu:thana* or *Kamsa*, even though *Kamsa* was His own uncle.

Sri: Krushna expected the same righteousness from *Arjuna*. *Arjuna's* vision, however, has become clouded by grief. He is focused on losing his relatives and loved ones, wondering how he could enjoy a kingdom gained by their destruction. **Sri:** Krushna reminds *Arjuna* that his responsibility is to uphold *dharma*, not to measure actions by personal gain, loss, or attachment.

While *Arjuna* is viewing the situation through attachment and personal sorrow, **Sri:** Krushna is directing him toward the perspective of duty. He was trying to show *Arjuna* that his duty as a *kshathriya* was to punish the wrongdoer who flouts *dharma* and disregards the welfare of society.

Yet, unable to move beyond his grief, *Arjuna* continues to express his confusion, stating that he cannot determine whether victory or defeat would be preferable.

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Arjuna, who was already in a state of grief and confusion, speaks to **Sri:** Krushna as though He were an ordinary person who does not understand the situation. In this state, he says, "*ya:ne:va hathva: na jiji:vishamaha* - having killed them, we would not wish to live." These words deeply hurt **Sri:** Krushna's heart, and they also pain all the elders who hear them.

What *Arjuna* should have said was: "*ya:ne:va ahathva: na jiji:vishamaha* - without defeating them, we cannot live." **Sri:** Krushna's view is that restraining such wrongdoing is not a sin but a responsibility. Yet, after reaching this point, *Arjuna* declares that he does not wish to fight, causing **Sri:** Krushna great sorrow. Like a physician examining a patient before treatment, He carefully observes the depth of *Arjuna's* grief.

Draupadi, **Sri:** Krushna's devotee and the wife of the *P:andavas*, was being humiliated in the royal assembly while the *P:andavas*, watched. Some argue that since *dharmara:ja* had already lost himself in the game of dice, he no longer had authority to intervene. However, the deeper point is that this was not merely about *Draupadi* being his wife; she was a woman being dishonored. Anyone with the ability to stop such injustice had the responsibility to act. This subtle aspect of *dharma* was what *dharmara:ja* failed to recognize.

Sri: Krushna could not tolerate *Draupadi's* humiliation and destroyed the *Kauravas* for that offense. Yet He spared the *Pa:ndavas* because the same *Draupadi*, whose suffering led to their destruction, would have been devastated by losing her own husbands. Thus, He protected the five *Pa:ndavas* for her sake.

Ordinary Versus Higher Righteousness

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But *vis:esha dharma*, higher righteousness, requires that when a devotee is dishonored, one cannot remain a silent witness. One must either leave or stop the injustice. This subtle understanding of *dharma* did not arise in *dharmara:ja*'s mind; he saw only the ordinary aspect of



righteousness.

That is why it is said: “*abhiva:dana si:lasya nithyam vruddhoa se:vinaha chathva:ri thasya vardhanthi a:yur ki:rthir dhanam prajaha*”. One who bows to elders, serves them, and learns from them gains longevity, reputation, prosperity, and wisdom. Even *dharmara:ja*, who was renowned for his knowledge of *dharma*, had to learn these deeper nuances. Therefore, he was sent to the forest for twelve years to serve sages, learn from them, and understand the deeper principles of righteousness. Through that service, he gained the clarity to distinguish between ordinary and higher *dharma*.

That is why *dharmara:ja* did not have *Arjuna*'s doubts. Though older than *Arjuna* and facing the same war, he stood firm because he understood *dharma*. Thus, he became *Yudhishtira* - one who remains steady. *Arjuna*, however, despite spending those years in the forest,

did not gain the same clarity because he lacked that depth of service and learning. Therefore, he now struggles with doubts: "Should I fight or withdraw? Will we win or lose?" Such understanding cannot arise without humility and service to elders.

Even **Sri: Ra:machandra** demonstrated this. Sage **Va:Imi:ki** says that even during breaks in His training with weapons and missiles, **Ra:ma** would serve elders and listen to their teachings on the subtleties of *dharmā*. That is why, during His exile, elders themselves approached **Ra:ma** to learn *dharmā* from Him.

Arjuna lacked that understanding. Therefore, he says: *hathva: na jijī:vishamaha* - having killed them, we would not wish to live. But *dharmara:ja* understood the opposite: *ahathva: na jijī:vishamaha* - without defeating them, we cannot live." That understanding gave *dharmara:ja* the firmness to stand resolutely on the battlefield.

Verse 7

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When one is steeped in sorrow, seeking refuge in the wise is the right course of action. Ingraining and following their teachings leads one out of misery. **Arjuna** had so far thought of **Sri: Krushna** as a mere friend but his view had begun to change. He surrendered to **Sri: Krushna** as a *Guru*. A *Guru* has the authority to order disciples to do something. **Arjuna** had by now reached a state of pleading with **Sri: Krushna** to tell him what to do in unambiguous terms.

A half-drunk person usually has less control over themselves than a fully drunk one. As intoxication levels peak, one calms down, and speech reaches a new level of lucidity. Similarly, with **Arjuna's** sorrow having intensified, he had now come to realize his state.

ka:rpanya do:sho:pahatha svabha:vaha
pruchcha:mi thva:m dharmā sammudha che:tha:ha |
yachchre:yaśya: n nischitham bru:hi thanme:
śishyas the:ham sa:dhi mā:m thva:m prapannam || 2.7

ka:rpanya do:sho:pahatha svabha:vaha - **Arjuna** was aware that everything that he had expressed thus far was not in conformance with his true nature. He knew that something different had come over him.

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Arjuna was always the one to sympathize with others but was never the recipient of pity. Since *Arjuna* was of a *saththvic* nature, he knew that something was amiss in his thoughts.

Ka:lida:sa said, “*satha:m hi sande:hapade:shu vasthushu prama:nam anthaha karana pravrutthayaha* - a wise person always has an inner voice warning him when he treads the wrong path”.

Arjuna thus realized that his state was that of *ka:rpanya*, weakness of spirit. *pruchcha:mi thva:m dharma sammu:dha che:tha:ha*, so far *Arjuna* had only been talking, finally he began to ask *Sri: Krushna*, confused as he was about what to do, about which was the path of *dharma*. *yachchre:yas sya:nnischitham bru:hi thanme:* - what the wise and the *sa:sthras* prescribe, and what gives the best outcome for society.

Arjuna was probably secretly hoping that *Sri: Krushna* might not ask him to do any differently than what he himself had already stated. He should not fight the war since defeat would be a dishonor and victory would be stained by the blood of his *Guru*.

Arjuna's Surrender as a Disciple

Page 58 “*sishyas the::ham sa:dhi ma:m thva:m prapannam* - I am your disciple and have surrendered to you, order me what to do”, pleads *Arjuna*. Pride had kept him from surrendering to *Sri: Krushna* in the past, but *Arjuna's* sorrow metamorphosed into a *yo:ga* paving his way to the ultimate surrender, like a man astray serendipitously stumbles upon a place, or like a drowning man reaches the shore by happy accident.

A person is often unable to recognize the mistakes in their own actions. Someone else must point them out and show where they have gone wrong. This is why even authors cannot effectively proofread their own writings. *Yama* said to *Nachike:thas* in *Katto:panishad*, “*naisha: tharke:na mathira:pane:ya: pro:kthya::nye:naiva sujna:na:ya preshta*” - This understanding cannot be attained through one's own reasoning alone; it must be received from one who truly knows and can guide us toward the right knowledge.”

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Only a qualified and wise person can give us feedback or guidance on when we go astray or when we have made an error. Isn't this why children go to schools? Teachers bring out the nuance and depth of the topics conveyed in books. It takes another person to tell us where we need to improve, just like it takes a mirror to see our own faces. We know the story of the ten students of *Parama:nandayya*. They had crossed a river and when one of them counted the members of the group, he found only nine. Panic-stricken, he concluded that one of them had drowned. To recheck, each one of them counted the students and found only nine. It took a person outside the group to tell them that there were indeed ten of them. We are in a similar state.

Arjuna realized this and surrendered to **Sri:** Krushna. However, he still seemed to want to assert his opinion despite having verbally surrendered to **Sri:** Krushna. Let's understand the symptoms of this tendency especially in relation to how it applies to us.

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Life begins, continues and ends with conflict. The way forward in life is to manage inner conflict. *Arjuna* sought **Sri:** Krushna's advice in managing his inner conflict. His conflict was whether to fight the war but he also thought it would be inappropriate to flee the battlefield. Both *Arjuna* and *Duryo:dhana* were aware of morality and goodness. *Arjuna* treads the path of *adharma* in seeking to shirk his duty of waging war while *Duryo:dhana* treads that very same path in seeking to seize someone else's right. *Arjuna* asked **Sri:** Krushna to tell him in unambiguous terms what was *sre:yas*, the highest good. **Sri:** Krushna went on to explain that when actions are carried out with *a:thma*

jna:nam, self-knowledge, they lead to both well-being and success.



Teaching Only When Sought by the Seeker

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We need to understand how to use an object based on the situation. Similarly, we use our human body in different ways during childhood, adulthood, and old age. And at work, home, and at the playground. We also use our minds in different ways. **Sri:** Krushna taught us how to use our bodies and minds in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. He was waiting for an opportunity to give these lessons. *na aprushtaha kasyachith bru:ya:th* - don't tell unless asked.

Arjuna used two phrases - *ka:rpanya doshaha* and *sreyobru:hi*, thus seeking a clear course of action from **Sri:** Krushna. In using *ka:rpanya*, he meant untimely sympathy. However, **Sri:** Krushna took it to mean what the *upanishads* refer to as *ka:rpanya* and was deeply impressed at *Arjuna's* question.

In the *Bruhada:ranyaka upanishad*, *Ga:rgi* and *Ya:jnavalkya* have a conversation where she poses the question, “what is *aksharathaththvam*?” *Ya:jnavalkya* replies that which supports the seen and higher unseen worlds is *akshara*. *aksharathaththvam* is *parama chaithanya*, supremely intelligent and *sarva sakthi*, all powerful.

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Ga:rgi also inquired on the meaning of the word *krupanaha* with *Ya:jnavalkya*. His response was, *yo: va: e:thad aksharam ga:rgi avidithva:sma:l loka:th praithi sa krupanaha* - one who doesn't recognize and remember the primal cause behind everything in the world is a pitiable person. The primary goal of human birth is to recognize and contemplate upon the ultimate cause of everything that there is. It's not to eat, sleep, procreate, fight, and transact in ways that animals, insects, and plants also do. Not remembering the ultimate cause would defeat the purpose of human birth. He also said, *yo: va: ethad aksharam ga:rgi vidithva::sma:l loka:th pri:thi sadBra:hmanah*, one who is aware of the ultimate primal cause of everything is *Bra:hmana*, the knower of *brahma*. '*Bra:hmana*' is also used in the context of a caste classification, but that is not the topic of discussion here. We know of many *a:lwa:r* saints who sang the praise of the Lord that did not belong to the *Bra:hmana* community.

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Many of the *a:lwa:rs* belonged to what we refer to now as the *dalith* caste. They are revered by *Vaishnava agre:sara:s* with the similar devotion that's shown to *Bhagava:n*. They are known to show the path to reach Lord *Srimanna:ra:yana*. Hence, those who have knowledge of *Brahma* are accepted as *Bra:hmana* irrespective of other parameters. One who lacks this knowledge is *krupana*, pitiable.

Sri: Krushna having interpreted this meaning to *Arjuna*'s usage of the word '*krupana*' began to expound on the three realities - *prakruthi*, *ji:va* and *brahma*. He delved into questions like where did we obtain this body from, how did it come to be, how are we supposed to use it? Where did the *ji:va*, the embodied soul, come from and what are the characteristics of the *ji:va*? How about the *Parama:thma* that drives both the *ji:va* and *prakruthi*?

Arjuna used another word, '*s:sre:yas*'. We use this word casually but the *upanishads* have spelt out a different meaning for this word. We must understand the meaning that the *upanishads* have given the word '*s:sre:yas*' to understand why the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* stands as a response to *Arjuna*'s question. We use many words without quite knowing what they actually mean. For example, '*rasam*' is known to mean the tamarind flavored liquid or a medicinal liquid.

Sre:yas Versus Pre:yas: Two Life Paths

Page 64 To a poet, 'rasa' can mean *srunga:ra*, romantic; *ha:sya*, laughter; *karuna*, sympathy; *raudra*, anger; *vi:ra*, courage; *bhayanaka*, fear; *bibhathsa*, disgust; *adbhutha*, amazement; and *sa:ntha*, peace. Thus, a word's meaning changes with context and depending on who is using it.

What is 'sre:yas' to a sad person is different from what it could mean to someone else. The *upanishads* spell out 'sre:yas' as what is for the well-being of all beings. *Yama* tells *Nachike:thas* in *Katto:panishad* that upon death, the soul could tread the *sreyo:ma:rga*, the path of goodness, or the *pre:yoma:rga*, the path of pleasure. *thayoh sreya a:dada:nasya sa:dhurbhavati hi:yathe:rtha:dya u pre:yo: vruni:the:* - the path of goodness leads to progress to higher states while the path of pleasure causes the soul to get inextricably stuck in the cycle of births and deaths. Thus, the *upanishads* spelt out 'sre:yas' as the goal of human life.

Sri: *Krushna*, upon hearing *Arjuna's* usage of the words *krupana* and *ssre:yas*, decided to lay a foundation of *sa:dhana*, practices, to reach the ultimate *lakshya*, the goal.

Sri: Krushna presented the means of *sa:dhana* and goals for spiritual seekers for every stage of development in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. Being the *Parama:thma*, he instigated *Arjuna* to ask a question about '*ssre:yas*'.



However, *Arjuna* apprehended that **Sri:** Krushna would point him towards a path of action that he had no inclination to follow hence inserted his own conception of what '*sre:yas*' was.

We commonly seek advice from *Gurus*, friends, and well-wishers and follow their advice only as long as it aligns with our ideas. Some so-called '*Gurus*' these days have stopped giving direction truthfully to followers since they fear not receiving the donations. They passively agree with everything their followers do or say who cares as long as they are taken care of financially?

When we visit a doctor, we must not suggest medication to be prescribed but only explain our symptoms and leave the diagnosis and treatment to the doctor.

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If the patient forces the doctor to prescribe a sweet and tasty medicine instead of a bitter pill, and if the doctor complies to make the patient happy, both of them are behaving in an unrighteous manner. The doctor must make the patient understand and take the prescribed medicine.

There are two modes of speech - *priyam*, agreeable and *hitham*, beneficial. What's beneficial may not always appear to be agreeable. Wise sages have tried to tell us what's beneficial to us in a format that's as agreeable as possible.

Therefore, the duty of a *Guru* is not to comply with the whims and fancies of devotees but to put them on the right path, in accordance with *sa:sthra prama:na*, scriptural authority. A *Guru* who is unable to do this does not know his own true nature. How is such a *Guru* qualified to eliminate ignorance in someone else?

Verse 8

Self-Knowledge Rarer Than Scriptural Mastery

Page 67 *Ni:thi: sa:sthra* tells us, '*ni:thijna: niyathijna: ve:dajna: api bhavanthi sa:sthrajna:ha brahmajna: api labhya:ha sva:jna:na: jna:nino virala:ha*' - it is harder to find a person who is aware of his own ignorance than it is to find one who is knowledgeable in *dharma*, palmistry, *ve:das*, *sa:sthras*, and even knowledgeable of *brahma*. A *Guru* who complies with a devotee's whims, even though they are not beneficial, is someone who lacks self knowledge.

We see an indication of *Arjuna* trying to convince **Sri: Krushna** to prescribe the path that is pleasurable to him through this verse -

*nahi prapasya:mi mama:panudya:th
yachcho:kam uchho:shanam indriya:na:m |
ava:pya bhu:ma:vasapathnamruddham
ra:jyam sura:na:m api cha a:dhpathyam || 2.8*

Arjuna cried, 'Hey **Sri: Krushna**, I don't know what will reduce the intensity of my sorrow! Even if I conquered all worlds and reached higher worlds, I am not confident that my senses would not be overwhelmed by this sorrow. Why fight these relatives?'

Thus, he was still going on about not killing his relatives and was not fully ready to receive **Sri: Krushna's** orders. **Sri: Krushna** was observing *Arjuna's* heightened sorrow. Let's also try to understand the symptoms of his sorrow and see how they apply to our lives.

When a sorrowful person goes to someone for consolation and advice, the person being sought out may have no idea what it's like to see things through the eyes of the one in pain. Without sharing the perspective, they give suggestions on how to deal with the sorrow and pain.

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Arjuna was in a similar situation, asking **Sri:** *Krushna* to look at things from his angle. Always being the one who gave advice to others, like he did to *Uththara Kuma:ra*, his hapless state led him to seek counsel that day at the battlefield. He felt that **Sri:** *Krushna* emphasized on the importance of conquering enemies and winning the kingdom, and that he felt no empathy towards *Arjuna*'s grief over slaying his enemies. *Arjuna* was neither interested in the kingdom (if he won) nor a place in heaven (if he lost) but felt that the third option of not taking part in the war at all was the only way. That is what he meant by "*na hi prapasya:mi*" - here, *na hi*, is a subtle yet powerful usage. *Arjuna* did not take the detached view of restoring *dharma* and fighting *adharma*.

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He seemed to have decided what his course of action must be and asked **Sri:** *Krushna* for instruction purely as lip service. **Sri:** *Krushna* was keenly observing *Arjuna* much like how a doctor would a patient's plight. Oftentimes, the most difficult part of the diagnosis is naming the feelings and symptoms accurately, and the doctor helps the patient in doing so, through the skills of observation. **Sri:** *Krushna* was mapping out the perfect medicine to *Arjuna*'s problem while listening attentively to his intensely sorrowful monologue. At least, *Arjuna* had turned to him for instruction. Thus, **Sri:** *Krushna* brought out the *uththama sro:tha*, the perfect listener, in *Arjuna*. Many of the ancient *rushis* had such students who devotedly listened to verbal instructions which have kept our *parampara*, lineage, alive.

Sanjaya was taken aback by the intensity of *Arjuna*'s sorrow and commented as follows.

Verse 9

Arjuna's Silence Before the Lord

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evam ukthva: hrushi:ke:sam



guda:ke:sah paranthapaha |
na yo:thsya ithi go:vindam
ukthva: thu:shni:m babhu:va ha! || 2.9

How surprising that *Arjuna*, refusing to execute his *dharma* as a *kshathriya*, stood before **Sri: Krushna**, who had appeared on earth for the purpose of establishing *dharma* in the world. *Arjuna*, even though *guda:ke:sah* and *paranthapa*, faltered that day on the battlefield. Everytime *Arjuna* exhibited qualities that were contrary to his usual self, *ve:da Vya:sa* juxtaposed it with the usage *hrushi:ke:sa* in describing **Sri: Krushna**. We discussed the significance of this word at length in the first chapter. Indeed, **Sri: Krushna** made *Arjuna* react this way, leading him to become the Lord's *sishya* and *prapannah*. Thus **Sri: Krushna** delivered the eighteen chaptered *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, the quintessence of all the *upanishads*.

thu:shni:m babhu:vaha was used here to describe a suddenly quiet *Arjuna*, displaying quietness uncharacteristic of him as a mischievous boy, usually running around the home. Wouldn't that worry the boy's parents? In this situation, what else could **Sri: Krushna** do to counter *Arjuna*'s logic and reasoning? Did he have any chance of getting *Arjuna* to comply with his orders?

Dhruthara:shtra, on the other hand, was elated at *Arjuna*'s display. Didn't this mean that his sons would get the kingdom with no fight?

Verse 10

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tham uva:cha hrushi:ke:saha prahasanniva bha:ratha! |
se:nayo:r ubhayo:r madhye: vishi:dantham idam vachaha || 2.10

Sanjaya says, "*Dhruthara:shtra*, what do you think? Is *Krushna* the kind of person who would simply sit by and watch while everything is being destroyed? Certainly not. He is *hrushi:ke:sa*."

A farmer who has painstakingly cultivated a crop would never stand by while someone destroys it at harvest. Likewise, a person does not ignore a disease that threatens the body but treats it immediately. In the same way, when the *Kauravas* threaten to destroy *dharma*, *Sri*: *Krushna* cannot remain a passive observer.

It is said:

Krushna e:va hi loka:na:m uthpatthirapi cha:pyayaha
Krushnasya hi kruthe: viswamidam bhu:tham chara:charam

Sri: *Krushna* is the Creator, Sustainer, and Protector of the universe. When people arise to destroy the order of the world, how could He simply remain a spectator? He prepares *Arjuna* to become His instrument in restoring *dharma* and protecting the world.

Dhruthara:shtra did not fully understand this until the very end. Only then does *Sanjaya* declare with certainty:

yathra yo:ge:svarah Krushno: yathra pa:rtho: dhanur dharaha |
mama || *thathra sri:r vijayo: bhu:thihi dhruva: ni:thir mathir*

Where *Sri*: *Krushna* is present, prosperity, victory, righteousness, and steadfast justice are certain.

Sanjaya deliberately addresses Him as *hrushi:ke:sa*, the Lord of the senses. “*prahasanniva bha:ratha*” indicates that **Sri**: Krushna speaks with a gentle smile, like a friend, without anger or harshness.

se:nayo:r ubhayo:r madhye: vishi:dantham idham vachaha - Standing between the two armies, He now begins to transform the grief-stricken *Arjuna* through His teaching.

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It is easy to awaken someone who's sleeping, as easy as it is to teach someone who's already awake. But it's difficult to teach someone who's pretending to be asleep. *Arjuna* is called *guda:ke:sa*, one who has conquered sleep. However, he was in a deep sleep of ignorance that day. Ignorance that made him not recognize that **Sri**: Krushna was *hrushi:ke:sa*, the controller of senses, which is why he declared that he wouldn't fight. He didn't realize that he was a mere puppet in the hands of the puppeteer, **Sri**: Krushna. We must realize that the Lord is controlling the strings, guiding our every move and action.

The *upanishads* pondered upon the question of what is the cause of everything in the universe. *Ke:no:panishad* gave the perfect answer -

ke:ne:shitham pathathi pre:shitham manah ke:na pra:nah prathamah praithi yuktaha |
ke:ne:shitha:m va:chamima:m vadanthi chakshuhu sro:tham ka u de:vo: yunakthi ||

kaha is another name for *Bhagava:n* that has appeared in this verse of *Ke:no:panishad*. In the *Vishnu Sahasrana:mam* where the Lord is extolled with several names, there is a verse, *e:ko: naikas sa vah kah kim yath thath padam anuththamam*. *Para:sara Bhattar* has commented that *kaha* means that which illuminates something. This also means that the Lord remains in even unilluminated objects, retaining His own light. *Bhagava:n* is in everything - dirt, stone, rock, sand, yet remains untouched by them.

The Inner Conflict of Right and Wrong

Page 73 We get affected by the rain, sunlight, wind, and dirt but not *Parama:thma* who retains His original nature despite what He inhabits. Therefore, *Bhi:shma* refers to the Lord as *kah* in **Sri**: *Vishnu Sahasranamam*.

The world, our senses, and our mind are run by the Lord. Having the Lord verily in front of him, how could *Arjuna* declare that he wouldn't fight? This was the effect of his inner conflict - between right and wrong, between sympathy and justice. We encounter such situations in our

lives as well. We hear lengthy debates on whether to pass death sentences on the most hardened of criminals who commit multiple murders.

Sri: Krushna noted *Arjuna*'s state of mind. *Arjuna* was in no state of mind to receive deep *ve:danthic* truths. The message needed to be delivered in a simple and easy to digest format. Just like a weak fire can only be gradually stoked with twigs and not with logs of wood.

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Sanjaya tells *Dhruthara:shtra* how gracefully **Sri:** Krushna explains these profound truths. The word *prahasanniva:* means as if smiling, not laughing aloud but showing a gentle, radiant expression. Though *Arjuna* is in despair, **Sri:** Krushna's smile is not mockery; it reflects compassion and quiet joy, perhaps mild reproach for *Arjuna*'s confusion, or happiness that His long-awaited moment to share His message has finally come. By this time, both **Sri:** Krushna and Arjun were around ninety years old. **Sri:** Krushna, nearing the end of His earthly life, may have worried that His *avatha:r* would end without fulfilling its purpose or that His message would remain unspoken.

When *Arjuna*, in utter humility, asks for guidance, **Sri:** Krushna feels a deep sense of fulfillment. The purpose of His *avatha:r*, to bring clarity to human confusion and to guide souls toward truth, can now be accomplished. With that inner satisfaction, He begins to teach, His face bright with a tender "as if smiling" expression.

Standing between the two armies, **Sri:** Krushna explains the same truth in many ways, so it becomes clear. Just as a jeweler turns a gem under many lights to reveal its brilliance, **Sri:** Krushna presents the knowledge from different angles until *Arjuna* can truly see its radiance and value.

Verse 11

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Just as a jeweler turns a precious gem from different angles to reveal its brilliance and awaken appreciation for its beauty, **Sri: Krushna** gradually presents spiritual knowledge from many perspectives, helping *Arjuna* recognize its greatness.



Until this point, the preface or introduction, *pu:rva pi:tika*, of *Bhagavad Gi:tha* has been completed. The actual philosophical teaching begins with the eleventh verse of the second chapter and continues until the teaching concludes in the eighteenth chapter, after which comes the conclusion, *utthara pi:tika*.

sri: *Bhagava:n uva:cha*

aso:chya:n anvaso:chasthvam prajna:va:da:mscha bha:shase: |

gatha:su:n agatha:su:nscha na:nuso:chanthi panditha:ha ||2.11

With this verse, **Sri: Krushna** begins His teaching: "You grieve for those who are not to be grieved for, yet you speak as though you are wise. The wise do not grieve."

Who are those "not to be grieved for"? Some interpret them as the dead, others as the living. Both meanings fit the context.

Arjuna's real confusion, however, is his inability to distinguish between the body and the indwelling Self. The bodies before him belong to *Bhi:shma* and the others, and the Self within them also belongs to them. Unable to distinguish between the two, *Arjuna* does not know what truly perishes and what endures.

Sri: Krushna therefore begins by clarifying this distinction, teaching that the wise grieve neither for the body nor for the Self. Thus He begins His instruction to *Arjuna*: "You consider yourself wise, *Arjuna*, yet grief is not the mark of true wisdom."

Na:rada's Quest: Self-Knowledge Conquers Sorrow

Page 76A great sage named *Sanath Kuma:ra* once established a university. Many students turned up in response to an advertisement about the university and the sage *Na:rada* was one of them. *Sanath Kuma:ra* asked *Na:rada* what he wished to learn. Sage *Na:rada* replied that although he knew the four *ve:das* and the *Pa:nchara:thra* texts, he wished to learn about Brahma and *a:thma*. *Sanath Kuma:ra* enquired why *Na:rada* was interested in this topic. *Na:rada* replied, *tharathi so:kam a:thmavith*, one who knows *a:thma* or Brahma can cross the wide deep ocean of existential misery.

The same is true for every human being. Only by understanding who we are, what this world is, our relationship with it, our duty, and our ultimate goal can we overcome sorrow. Otherwise, every action performed in ignorance only deepens it. One who gains this understanding is freed from grief and attains lasting peace.

Overwhelmed by grief, *Arjuna* has lost sight of his duty. **Sri:** Krushna therefore begins teaching him the truth of the Self - the nature of the body, the indwelling *ji:va*, and the purpose of human life. This teaching makes one principle clear: duty must never be abandoned, misused, or neglected. Whether it appears difficult, unpleasant, or rewarding, one's responsibility must be fulfilled. This is the central message of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

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The body should not be abandoned simply because it experiences hardship; it is an instrument given to perform its purpose.

Just as a cooking pot must endure heat to cook food, or a tool used in fire becomes hot while accomplishing its task, the body also undergoes temporary discomfort in fulfilling its role. Skilled workers in steel factories likewise endure intense heat with protective gear because they understand that hardship is part of their work and livelihood.

Similarly, the body has been given to the *jīva* to experience the results of *karma* and ultimately attain eternal bliss. As long as the *jīva* remains in the body, it must continue performing its prescribed duty, enduring temporary difficulties until its work is complete.

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Any difficulties or sorrows that we feel in the process are not from objects but only from our perceptions. Our perceptions also change with time and circumstance. We crave air conditioning during summertime and heating during winter time. We look for a fireplace in the *Himalayas* and a cool shade in a hot place. If a man is hit by someone he loves he happily accepts it and asks for more. He finds the mere touch or glance of someone he dislikes totally revolting.

There was a story about two warring factions who attacked one another wearing masks. One of them began attacking one of his own group members not realizing that he wasn't the enemy. The one being attacked removed his mask and asked him why he was doing this. The attacker said that he hadn't recognized him to be his own group member so was beating him passionately. The other man put his mask on and said that he welcomed the passionate beating if that was the reason behind it.

Perception Shapes Our Experience of Suffering

Page 79 Thus, something is perceived as happiness or sadness based on inner intent and inner experience. When we eat something after deciding that it's something we dislike, it causes bad effects on our health and body. Our knowledge and perceptions of objects give rise to our feelings of sorrow or happiness when we experience it. Through our perception we increase our misery and reduce our happiness. Therefore, it is essential to establish firm knowledge about something permanent and lasting like the *a:tma thatthvam*, the objective of sage *Na:rada's* study.

Arjuna's grief arose not from the battlefield itself but from incomplete understanding. To remove this ignorance, *Krushna* begins teaching him the knowledge of the Self, starting with the words, "*aso:chya:n anvaso:chaha* - You grieve for those who are not worthy of grief." Let us also try to understand what it is that *Arjuna* is grieving for, and why.

When we learn a little about any subject, at first it feels as though we know everything about it. When children first go to school and learn the alphabet, they proudly say, "I have learned everything." As they advance through higher grades, they continue thinking, "Now I know much more." However, only when they pursue higher and deeper education do they realize how little they actually know.

At the mid or intermediate level, the knowledge gained is surface level. *Arjuna* had such a surface level idea about his relatives as it was based on how things seemed at a manifest level. Such knowledge is known as *a:pa:thaprathi:thi*. This is a beautiful word. We often hear a similar phrase, *a:pa:thamadhuram* - sweet only on the surface. Likewise, *a:pa:thaprathi:thi* refers to an understanding that appears complete at first glance but lacks true depth. Only when true knowledge arises does one recognize the limitations of such superficial understanding.

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People often misunderstand the expression *a:pa:thamadhuram*. Today it is commonly used to mean "completely sweet," like a gulab jamun that is sweet throughout. However, its true meaning is "sweet only on the surface." It describes something that appears pleasant outwardly



but lacks real substance within.

Similarly, *a:pa:thaprathi:thi* means apparent or superficial understanding. It is knowledge that is only outward and incomplete.

For example, when someone speaks through a microphone, a distant listener may think, "The microphone is speaking," or "The speakers are talking." In reality, they are only instruments; the person behind them is the true speaker. Likewise, we often say, "The camera is taking pictures," but the camera itself does nothing independently, it functions only because of the electrical power behind it. The electricity is sourced from a box which is connected to a switchboard.

Thus, *a:pa:thaprathi:thi* is mistaking the visible instrument for the true cause. One sees only the immediate, external reality without recognizing the underlying source. Krishna later uses this idea to show that *Arjuna's* understanding of the people before him was similarly superficial. He saw only their physical identities and relationships, not their true nature as the eternal Self.

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A superficial understanding, *a:pa:thaprathi:thi*, mistakes the immediate instrument for the true cause. For example, we may think electricity comes from the switchboard, then the meter, then the power plant. But each is only an intermediate cause. Tracing the chain further, from generators, turbines, flowing water, rain, and ultimately the sun, leads to a more complete understanding. Stopping at any intermediate point results in only apparent knowledge, not true knowledge.

The same applies to the human body. We may say, "The mouth speaks," but the mouth is only an instrument. After death, the mouth, eyes, ears, and other organs remain, yet they no longer function. This shows that the body itself is not the real doer; it operates only because of the conscious principle that enlivens it.

True Knowledge Beyond Surface Appearances

Page 82 To wrongly ascribe the power of speech, sight, and touch merely to sense organs without recognizing the underlying power that is different from, superior to, and more valuable than the material body is called *apa:thaprathi:thi*. When the underlying power that renders the organs ability to carry out their functions is recognized, that is when *yatha:rtha jna:nam*, true knowledge or *va:sthavika jna:nam*, real knowledge, dawns.

Focusing only on the body and its functions is like admiring the flower while ignoring the plant that sustains it. The beauty of the flower does not arise independently; it depends on the life of the entire plant, from its deeper source. Similarly, the body and its organs are only instruments. They function because of the inner conscious principle that empowers them. Therefore, the body should not be regarded as the ultimate reality; one must seek to know and honor the Supreme Power within, which gives life and enables the body to act.

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Arjuna had *a:pa:thaprathi:thi* about *Bhi:shma*, *Dro:na*, and the armies before him. Yet, he thought that he had *va:sthavika jna:nam* about them. With a wavering mind, confused about what to do and what not to do, he was consumed by sorrow. **Sri:** *Krushna*'s medicine was to try to rid him of the sorrow by bringing to light the right knowledge. True knowledge is understanding the *a:thma*, the indwelling unchanging power that facilitates the sense organs and runs the show. The *a:thma* is described as *anthah pravishtaha sa:stha jana:na:m* - the one who enters within and governs.

All species possess knowledge. For instance, ants seem to be able to find their way to sweets to relish them no matter how hard we try to seal them. A bird flies away when you wave it away. We may also be able to direct the growth of a stalk by constraining a plant. This is *sa:ma:nya jna:na*, ordinary knowledge. Human beings possess higher knowledge and study the external world, its structures, properties, and functions.

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Research about external realities is *also sa:ma:nya jna:nam*. Knowledge about the body and external tangible realities solve issues or concerns in relation to those aspects. To remove ordinary problems, ordinary knowledge may be sufficient. But when a person faces a deeper and more profound sorrow, only a higher form of knowledge can remove it. A special kind of sorrow requires a special kind of teaching and understanding.

If a person's concern is limited only to the body and its maintenance, then knowledge about physical matters may be enough. But *Arjuna*'s sorrow was not merely about external things. It was much deeper.

In the first chapter, *Arjuna speaks of a:cha:ra* - traditional duties, *pithara* - the ancestors, *puthra* - sons and explains how the destruction of the family order would lead to the loss of *kula dharma* - ancestral duties and traditions.

He says:

uthsa:dyanthe: ja:thidharma:ha kuladharmas:cha sa:swatha:ha - The long-established duties and traditions of the community and family lineage will be destroyed, and their proper practice will become corrupted.

pathanthi pitharo: hye:sha:m luptha pindo:daka kriya:ha - the ancestors who may have gone to heaven will fall when the offerings due to them cease.

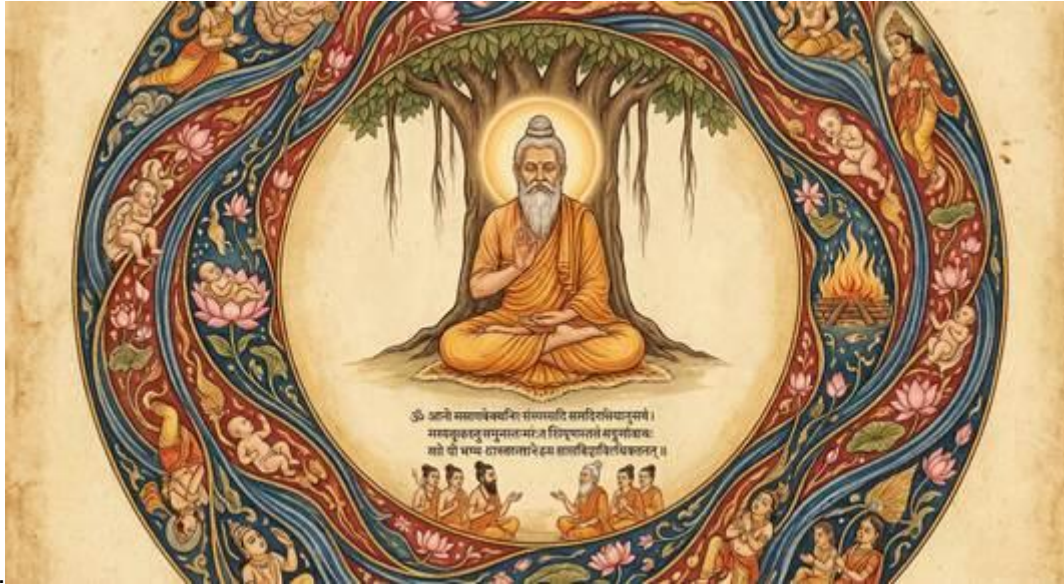
Here, he seemed to display some knowledge and understanding of something beyond the body. For if his relatives were cremated in this world, wouldn't they have disintegrated with the earth here? *Arjuna* did seem to believe that something within the body ascended to the higher world. However, his understanding was incomplete. Although he knew that the Self is different from the body, he still grieved as if the destruction of the body meant the destruction of the person.

The Wise Grieve Not for Body or Soul

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Therefore, Krushna begins His teaching with: “*aso:chya:n anvaso:chasthvam prajna:va:da:mscha bha:shase:* - You grieve for those who are not worthy of grief, yet you speak words that appear to be words of wisdom.” Krushna points out that *Arjuna* is speaking like one who possesses knowledge, but he does not yet have the true understanding. This is like a child repeating the words of elders without realizing

their deeper meaning. Speaking profound truths without actual realization is called *prajna:va:da:*, the appearance of wisdom without true



wisdom.

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gatha:su:n agatha:su:nscha na:nuso:chanthi panditha:ha

"The wise - *panditha*, do not grieve - *anuso:chanthi*, for those whose life-force has departed - *gatha:su:n* or for those whose life-force remains - *agatha:su:n*"

Krushna carefully uses the terms *gatha:su:n* and *agatha:su:n*. *gatha:su:n* refers to that in which the *asu* - life force, has departed; referring to the body after death. *agatha:su:n* refers to that in which the life-force has not departed; referring to the living body. Through these words, Krushna points out the distinction between the temporary body and the eternal *a:thma*. The body is always connected with change and death, while the *a:thma* is never separated from its own existence.

Great teachers use words with great care and depth. They do not speak many unnecessary words; they use a single word that contains profound meaning. Those who have the depth and maturity to receive that meaning can understand it. For example, the simple words *bho:janam*, *annam*, *prasa:dam* - all mean food or eating. However, our elders have given the word *anuya:gam* as the most befitting word to convey a deeper significance.

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In the third chapter, **Sri:** Krushna preached that eating must be transformed into *yajna*, offering. He says: *bhunjithe: the: thvagham pa:pa:ha ye: pachanthy a:thmaka:rana:th* - Those who cook and eat only for their own sake consume sin.

This does not mean that one should stop cooking, eating, or caring for the body. Krushna says eating is necessary, but one should not live with the attitude: "I cook for myself, I eat for myself, and I exist only for my own satisfaction."

The body is given by the Lord, and therefore it should be used for the purpose of its true owner. When an action is performed for Him, it becomes *ya:gam*. Using the body and its activities for His sake becomes *bhagavath a:ra:dhana:*, worship of the Lord.

On the other hand, the knots of *karma* bind one harder when he mistakenly performs activities solely for himself, *yajna:rdha:th karmano::nyathra lo:ko:: yam karma bandhanaha*.

The Lord is present within all beings as *antharya:mi*, the inner controller. The hunger we experience is also a manifestation of Him and referred to as *vaisva:nara. aham vaisva:naro bhu:thva:* - having become *vaisva:nara*, I dwell in all beings. When food is offered to *Bhagava:n*, He assimilates the food from within us.

Krushna does not ask one to abandon eating or daily actions; rather, He teaches one to act with the awareness that "The Lord within me is the true enjoyer; this food is an offering to Him." Thus, even ordinary actions become *aradhana* - worship of *Bhagava:n*.

Understanding Pra:na: The Life Force Explained

Page 88 Food should first be offered to the Lord within as an act of worship. This attitude of offering is *yajna*, not eating merely for oneself, but preparing and receiving food as an offering to the Lord. One purifies oneself, prepares the food, offers it before the Lord with devotion, and receives it as *prasa:dam*, knowing that the indwelling Lord is the true recipient. The act of offering and the associated worshipful preparation is *anuya:gam* - the follow-up act of offering/service connected with *yajna*. The food becomes sanctified when offered to the Lord, rather than being consumed merely for bodily satisfaction. This word communicates the intention beautifully.

Speech is very potent and the words we use can convey the emotion of the speaker as well as the emotion that is intended to be elicited in the listener. Let's understand the words *gatha:su:n* and *agatha:su:n* that **Sri:** Krushna uses. Understanding the Lord's intentions behind using these words is pivotal to comprehending the depths of *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

In the first chapter and the beginning of the second chapter, *Arjuna* was sorrowful about having to kill his kith and kin. He says: “*na hi prapasya:mi* - I do not know what I should do. I am confused about what is right for me, Krushna. I can see only two possibilities, but I do not know what the third possibility is.”

If he fights the war, he may gain the kingdom and enjoy pleasures, but he feels that those pleasures will not bring him happiness because they come after killing his own relatives. Even sovereignty over the earth, or even the lordship of the three worlds, does not appear desirable to him if it requires such destruction. On the other hand, he thinks that if he abandons the battle and withdraws, perhaps he can live peacefully and avoid this sorrow.

But Krushna tells him, “You say that you do not know what the third option is. Listen, I will explain it.” That third option is the true knowledge of the *a:thma*, as that would be central to alleviating his needless sorrow.

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gatha:su:n refers to bodies in which *asu*, the life energy has left, while *gatha:su:n* refers to the living bodies in which the life-force is present.

At first, it may seem contradictory to describe a body as “without life,” because we commonly say, “this person is alive” or “life has left the body.” This appears unusual because we generally identify the body itself as a living being. Every living entity is said to possess *pra:na*, and when this life force departs from the body, we consider that body dead.

Generally, when we say *pra:na*, we think of the particular air that we inhale and exhale—the breath that enters and leaves through us. Based on this understanding, we call these visible beings *pra:nis*.

However, this *pra:na* is associated with *va:yu*, air, which is one of the *panchabhu:thas*, the five elements that constitute the manifest world - earth, water, fire, air, and ether. All forms in creation arise through different combinations of these five elements, with only their proportions varying. For example, what we perceive as water is predominantly composed of the water element, with smaller proportions of the other elements. Similarly, each object has a dominant element while containing aspects of the others. This interpenetration of the five elements is called or ‘*panchi:karanam*’.

In the *Chha:ndo:gya upanishad*, *Sve:thake:thu*’s father explains to him about ‘*thrivruthkaranam*’, which is a combination of three, rather than five elements. Fire, water, and earth are the elements that can be physically seen so are believed to constitute the physical world. Air can be felt and ether is the backdrop.

Ether has no form and is recognized only by its property to hold. Similarly air is recognized only by its property to move. But earth, water, and fire have a form with perceivable attributes. Every physical form is a systematically and precisely proportioned combination of these three elements, as per the science of '*thrivruthkaranam*' taught in the *Chha:ndo:gya upanishad* by *Sve:thake:thu*'s father to his son. The *pura:na*s and *ithiha:sa*s, talk about air and ether being added to the mix and the process is called '*panchi:karanam*'.



Life Force Distinguished from Physical Elements

Page 91 When the two elements of time are added, it is called '*sapthi:karanam*'. There is a primary principle that renders forms from the combination of elements, with earth giving it structure, water softness, and fire radiance. Every form also has air and ether in them. When someone dies, *pra:na*, which is a form of *va:yu*, leaves their body, but we can still see their form, meaning that the five physical elements are still intact in them.

'*prapancha*', a word we use for the visible world, has the *panchabhū:tha*, five elements of nature. '*pancha*' also means to spread out and '*pra*' is used for emphasis. Behind the visible world, not part of *prapancha* are *mahathaththvam*, the Ultimate Principle, *avyaktham*, the unmanifest and *aksharam*, immutable.

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A tree may appear to be the same externally, but if the life principle within it has departed, we no longer consider it a living tree. Along with the five elements that constitute it, the tree also contains the *ji:va* and *pra:na*. As long as these remain, we say, "the tree is alive"; when they leave, we say, "the tree has died."

The physical elements may still remain, and even air may be present within it, but the life force that sustains it is gone. This distinction is what Krushna conveys through the terms *gatha:su:n* and *agatha:su:n*, clarifying what *pra:na* depends upon and what it does not permanently remain with. If we understand the meaning of these words clearly, the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* becomes clear.

In the sixth *prapa:taka* of *Chha:ndogya upanishad*, *Sve:thake:thu*'s father teaches his son that there is a power within the physical elements that runs the visible form and gives it life energy. Beyond even this power, is the *Parama:thma*, the Supreme Soul.

He explains this through the example of a tree. A branch remains fresh as long as it is connected to the tree's life force; once that connection is lost, it dries up and withers. Similarly, even though the physical form of the tree remains, without *pra:na* is no longer living. Thus, what we call a "tree" is not merely the external form of branches, leaves, and elements, but the physical body enlivened by the inner life principle. When that principle fully departs, the entire structure dries up.

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Once when a tree or a person 'dies', they become 'dead bodies'. Dead bodies still have the five elements of nature but lack *pra:na*. *pra:na* inhabits living beings along with *ji:va*. *pra:na* is never independent and is alongside the *ji:va*. *ji:va* and *pra:na* are concomitant with one another and enter and leave the body together. This is analyzed deeply in *sa:sthra*. It is *ji:va* that carries *pra:na*.

Non-sentient objects do not have *pra:na* or *ji:va*. A stone has the five elements including *va:yu*, air. It is only the presence of *pra:na* along with *va:yu*, that renders the form to breathe. All forms are *pancha bhu:tha sangha:tham* - the conglomeration of five elements.

All these combinations of the five elements are also *gatha:su*. They do not require *pra:na* in order to exist as objects. The inherent nature of the five elements is that they continue to undergo change.

Death as the Ji:va's Departure from Body

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Dead bodies can be preserved through freezing and the application of chemicals but once those methods are not applied, they change their form, color, smell, and texture. Similarly, sand can be transformed to mud, which can be sculpted into a pot, which can be shattered, and then powdered again. The basic ingredient of earth remained consistent in different forms. The five elements of nature which transform are also referred to as *gatha:su*.

When a dead body is burnt the five elements that constitute it disintegrate and assimilate with the respective elements. Yet, when a pot shatters we don't necessarily cry but we cry over the transformation of the body.

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Sri: Krushna used the word *gatha:su* here to sharply differentiate bodies which are the conglomeration of five elements and the living beings, *ji:vas with pra:na*, that reside within the bodies. *ji:vas* exist eternally with *pra:na*. However, the *panchabhu:thas that make up the body*, exist

eternally in different forms, even independent of *pra:na*. Yet, we call these physical life forms living beings and claim that they are born, die,



and so on.

Death is simply the departure of the *ji:va* with *pra:na* from a body composed of the five elements. Once the *jīva* departs, the body undergoes transformation, just as water flows, wind moves, or earth changes from clay into a pot and eventually returns to its original state. We do not grieve over these natural transformations. Yet, we lament when the same process of transformation occurs in the body, which we call “death.” We accept changes throughout nature without sorrow, but become distressed when that change occurs in the forms we identify with.

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The inner living being, *ji:va* is always with *pra:na*. It never changes form, but comes and goes from within different physical forms, so is called *agatha:su*. Bodies, even with *ji:va* within them, keep changing. So these are *gatha:su*. *ji:va* is not a part of nature and we have no way of seeing it, how it moves, where it goes, and which body it enters. While even science has not been able to explain what happens to *ji:va*, *ve:da:ntha* elucidates it well. The final *karma* of the *ji:va* is *charama karma* after which the *ji:va* has a dip in the *vira:ja river* before going to *paramapadam*, at which point the *pra:na* leaves the *ji:va*.

Sri: Krushna emphasized that ‘death’ is not to be lamented over since the body is bound to change whether or not the *ji:va* inhabits it, *gatha:su:*, and the *pra:na* never leaves the unchanging *ji:va*, *agatha:su*.

Sri: Krushna gives the different properties of *gatha:su* and *agatha:su* in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* which is a concise essence of the *ve:da:s*. The *ve:das* have the *pu:rvabha:gam* also known as *karmabha:gam* since it outlines the *kriyas*, the practices of worship. The latter part, *uththarabha:gam*, also known as *jna:nabha:gam* outlines the knowledge behind these practices. The *upanishads* expand on the *Parabrahma*, the primal cause of everything. So, it is called *brahmabha:ga*.

Symbolic Terms for Body and Soul

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Since *uththarabha:gam* speaks about *Parabrahma*, it is also called *brahmaka:ndam*. *Parabrahma* is the one who accepts *a:ra:dhana*, worship, the methods of which are detailed in *pu:rvabha:gam*. *upanishads* give different names for *Parabrahma*, like *sath*, *e:kam*, *a:thma*, etc. This is to define something that is *paro:ksham*, the unseen. When something is visible right in front of us, it is *prathyaksham*. **Sri:** Krushna appeared in a *prathyaksham* form and said, , ‘Behold! I am That’, That *paroksham* form of *Parabrahma* that the *upanishads* speak of.

Sri: Krushna has used many technical key phrases while concisely summarizing the *upanishads* in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. The symbolism of these phrases and words is critical, as central to *ve:da:ntha* as knowing the elements of the periodic table is to learning Chemistry. The symbols of the elements are indicative of their physical and chemical properties. Similarly, it is important for us to learn the words and phrases that symbolize concepts of great depth in *ve:da:ntha*, despite them being hard to remember or pronounce. In fact, only seeking to understand the underlying meaning without attempting to learn the phrases leads to a distorted understanding and interpretation of the texts.

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Hydrochloric acid is represented as HCl, and we need to learn the name of the symbol as a student of chemistry. Similarly, **Sri:** Krushna used *gatha:su* for the physical world comprising the five elements of nature and *agatha:su* for the *a:thma* that comes with *pra:na*. Instead of speaking of the world at large, **Sri:** Krushna used the human body as an example. Moreover, *Arjuna* was lamenting over the potential loss of human life on the battlefield. **Sri:** Krushna tried showing him, through using these key phrases, that human bodies are bound to change anyway, inherently lack *pra:na* anyway, and that the *a:thma*, soul within the body would never lose *pra:na*, the life force.

One cannot stop water or air from flowing or fire from burning. Doing so would change their nature, change their form. This is also applicable to the transformation of the human body.

The elemental nature of a material can be changed by tweaking the number of electrons. If electrons are removed or added to a molecule of iron, it gets transformed into a very different element altogether.

Verse 12

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Thus everything is constantly changing and is in flux, so why cry over it?

Sri: Krushna sought to explain *a:thma vijna:nam*, knowledge of the soul by expanding on its *svaru:pa*, form and *svabha:va*, nature.

There are two types of *a:thma* - the One Supreme *Parama:thma*, in His singularity and the multitude of *ji:va:thmas* in their plurality. The nature of *Parama:thma* is all-knowing and His form is all-pervading. The nature of *ji:va:thma* is all-knowing but not all pervading; his form is extremely subtle. The *sa:sthras* call the smallest, subtlest constituent of the universe as '*anu*' and the *ji:va* is smaller than that.

Advances in science have continued to find ways to split sub-atomic particles and those developments are ongoing. The smallest particle that they have discovered is still the conglomeration of several *anu* that is being referred to in the *sa:sthras*.

Sri: Krushna began expounding on the essence of *sa:sthras* and on *a:thma vijna:nam* from the twelfth verse in the second chapter.

na thwe: va:ham ja:thu na:sam na thwam ne:me: jana:dhipa:ha |
na chaiva na bhavishya:maha sarve: vayamathah param || 2.12

ji:va:thma, Parama:thma, and Eternal Existence

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The *a:thma* is unseen so it is difficult to explain. Therefore, **Sri:** Krushna begins the exposition on the soul by beginning to talk about what's tangible, and seen. He says to *Arjuna* in the twelfth verse of the second chapter, '*na thve: va:ham ja:thu na:sam* - never was there a time when I did not exist nor you, nor all these kings'. The Lord is trying to convey the permanence of the *a:thma* here.



One who has *a:thma thatthva jna:nam* has true knowledge, *panda*, and is known as '*panditha:*'. A pandith is not one who pontificates and preaches but rather one that is sorrowless. The intention of the Lord is to make all of us free of sorrow and elevate us to His level by giving us knowledge that is not just theoretical but can be applied in practice.

Every *ji:va:thma* runs and subsists a body.

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The *ji:va:thma* is the controller of the body, while the *Parama:thma* is the Universal Soul that runs the entire universe as well as the *ji:va:thmas*. '*parama*' means supreme - there is nothing that can control or affect *Parama:thma*. All *a:thmas* always existed and will continue

to exist. *a:thma* cannot be created nor destroyed. One may ask, the population is steadily increasing, aren't the number of *a:thmas* increasing? This is not the case, when *a:thmas* increase in human form, they reduce in other forms.

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As humans destroy nature and all other species, the population of animals, trees, and fish have reduced and that of humans has increased. The *ji:va*, therefore, naturally enter increased human bodies, for they have to experience their *karma*. Other species have controlled growth in population and live by the dictates of Nature. Humans, on the other hand, have uncontrolled growth in population, matching their unchecked desire, temper, and other emotions.

Arjuna may have thought that by fighting the war, he was going to destroy some living beings. **Sri:** Krushna sought to correct this misconception - *ji:vas* cannot be created nor destroyed. He spoke of Himself as an example for further elucidation.

Arjuna already knew that **Sri:** Krushna was *Parama:thma*, the Supreme Lord and eternal.

The Lord's Divine Births and Eternal Nature

Page 103 In the fourth chapter, **Sri:** Krushna says

imam vivasvathe: yo:gam pro:kthava:n aham avyayam |
vivasva:n manave: pra:ha manur ikshvakave:: bravi:th || 4.1

The Lord declared that He had shared the very same knowledge of the soul to *Su:rya*, the Sun God, who had passed it down to his son *Vaivasvatha*, and this gradually passed down the lineage to *Ikshva:ku* and further. However, people seemed to have forgotten the philosophy. So, **Sri:** Krushna was prepared to repeat it all over again to *Arjuna*.

Arjuna was naturally surprised. How could **Sri:** Krushna, who was barely six months older than him, have taught *Su:rya* this philosophy? *Arjuna* belongs to the twenty-seventh *chathuryugam*. Each *chathuryugam* comprises *krutha*, *thre:tha:*, *dwa:para:*, and *kali*. We are currently in about the 5000th year of *kali*, the total length of which is 4,32,000 years. We are also in the last *sahasra:bdi*. There is also a gap between every *yuga* named '*sandhi ka:la*'. So, if **Sri:** Krushna had imparted this knowledge to *Su:rya* at the beginning of time, He must have existed twenty seven *chaturyugams* before!

Sri: Krushna confirmed that He had a different form then when He spoke with the Sun God. He has taken many forms before. The present form, as **Sri:** Krushna, was born on *ashtami* and *rohini nakshathra* day. This form is not permanent.

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The *upanishads* have declared, '*yuva: suva:sa:h parivi:tha a:ga:th sa u sreya:n bhavathi ja:yama:naha*', that when, only He, the Lord, is born, a fresh, divine radiance surrounds everything, and brings auspiciousness. *Arjuna*, *Bhi:shma*, and others were born as well. Similarly, every 'birth' of the Lord had a beginning and an end, but at each birth His auspiciousness radiated afresh. Yet in the twelfth verse, when the Lord said, '*na thwe: va:ham ja:thu na:sam na thvam ne:me: jana:dhpa:ha*', referring to how there was never a time when He did not exist, just like there was never a time when everyone else in the battlefield also never existed, He was referring to the soul within the body.

Sri: Krushna wanted to establish the permanence of the *a:thma* and the transience of the body, which summarizes the very essence of *sa:sthras*. Let's use our discernment and intelligence to understand these concepts in greater detail.

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Metaphors and similes are commonly used to explain concepts. The beauty of one's face is conveyed by comparing it with the moon. One needs to be familiar with how delightful the sight of the moon is to comprehend this metaphor. **Sri:** Krushna cites His eternal nature to explain the eternal nature of all *ji:vas*. He says, "*na thve: va:ham ja:thu na:sam na thvam ne:me: jana:dhpa:ha* - My son, just as you know

that I am eternal, so also you, who are standing there, and all these other beings, are eternal. There was never a time when I, you and they,



we're not there.

In *Chha:ndogya upanishad*, the teaching to *Sve:thake:thu* was “*sade:va so:mya idam agra a:si:th ekameva no dwithi:yam*”. This aphorism asserts the eternal quality of the *a:thma* through indirect perception - *paro:ksha jna:nam*. **Sri:** Krushna elucidated this concept in a way that was *prathyaksham*, direct. **Sri:** Krushna pointed to Himself as being the conglomerate of all beings, both *chethana*, sentient and *achethana*, insentient while asserting that crying over souls that are beyond destruction is uncalled for. Therefore, *Maha:bha:ratha* is known to verily be the *ve:da* and is known as *panchama ve:da*, the fifth *ve:da*.

What the Soul Carries at Death

Page 106 *upanishads* are the essence of the *ve:das*, similarly, *Gi:tha* is the essence of the *Mahabha:ratha* hence is known as *Gi:tho:panishad*.

We use words such as ‘I, you, he, she’ but whom do these words refer to? The body or the *ji:va*? We think that we refer to the body but let’s examine that idea. When someone passes away we say that he’s gone, despite his body being present. Just the day before he died, we refer to him as though he’s the body. ‘He is so fat’, ‘He is so thin’ - Isn’t there a fallacy in the logic of our perception here? At death, the ‘fat’, ‘thin’ body is still there. But ‘he’ has gone. The he, she, I, you, refers to the soul not the body.

It is said that when great people go somewhere an entourage follows them. The *ji:va* is greater than the body so when it leaves the body at the time of death a whole host of entities go along with it as the *su:kshma sarira*. This is explained in *the fifteenth* chapter 15.

Just as the *upanishads* are the essence of the *ve:das*, the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, which is the essence of the *Maha:bha:ratha*, is also called an *upanishad*. Both teach the same truth, but in the *upanishads* the message is given indirectly, while in the *Gi:tha*, Lord **Sri**: Krushna reveals it directly and clearly.

He begins with "*aham*" (I), the *a:thma* or self, and "*thwam*" (you), representing the individual. In daily speech, we use "you," "he," or "they," but what do these words truly refer to, the body or the soul within? When we point and say "he," our attention goes to the body. Yet, when the body dies, we still say, "He is gone," even though the body remains before us. Clearly, what has truly "gone" is not the body, but the inner self that once enlivened it.

This shows a distortion in our understanding. We identify with the body, though what truly exists is the indwelling soul, the *ji:va*. This *ji:va* does not depart alone; it takes some things with it. As **Sri**: Krushna explains later in the fifteenth chapter:

sro:thram chakshuhu sparsanam cha rasanam ghra:name:vacha |
adhishta:ya manascha:yam vishaya:nupa se:vathe: || 15.9

Taking the ear, eye, touch, taste, and smell, along with the mind, the soul experiences the sense objects.

sari:ram yadava:pno:thi yachcha:pyuthkra:ma thi:swaraha |
gruhi:thwaita:ni samya:thi va:yur gandha:niva:saya:th || 15.8

When the soul leaves one body and enters another, it carries the subtle senses and the mind with it, just as the wind carries the fragrance from its source.

Air itself has no fragrance, it only carries what it touches - foul-smelling or aromatic particles. Similarly, at the time of death, the *ji:va* carries along with it, the subtle elements, *tanma:thras*, and the *jna:ne:ndriya:s* - of *sro:thram chakshuhu sparsanam cha rasanam ghra:name:vacha* - hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell, the *manas*, mind, that controls them and the *pra:na*, life force.

These components are so subtle that we can't tell that they've left the body. They weigh nothing yet render the system - our body- capable of activities, just like software. We may liken it to the *ji:va* carrying the software along with it to install it in the hardware - another body.

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When **Sri:** Krushna referred to Himself, *aham*; to everything around, *ime*; to *Arjuna* as you, *thvam*, He meant the souls within the bodies, the *agatha:su* entities, not the bodies. *visishta:dvaitha* says that *Parama:thma* has *prakruti*, nature, and *ji:va*, soul, as His body. This system of triads has existed even before creation and will continue to exist. *prakruthi* and *ji:vas* have an eternal bond with *Parama:thma* and are dependent on Him. It's important to understand how to put this knowledge into practice.

Arjuna did not understand this at first, so **Sri:** Krushna begins to clarify, using Himself as an example.

na thve:va:ham ja:thu na:sam - "I never did not exist in the past"

na thvam Arjuna - "And you, *Arjuna*, are not just your visible body"

na ime: jana:dhipa:h na chaiva na bhavishya:maha sarve vayam atah param - "Nor are these people merely their bodies; souls never cease to exist"

Sri: Krushna explains that "you" (*thvam*) and "these people" (*ime: jana:dhipa:h*) refer not to bodies but to the eternal souls within, which have always existed in the past, present, and future.

Through this, **Sri:** Krushna reveals the secret of the *upanishads*.

yasya sarva:ni bhu:thani sari:ram - "All beings are the body of the Supreme Soul."

Though each *ji:va:thma* (individual soul) seems separate, all exist within and are sustained by the one Supreme Soul, who remains unchanged and all-pervading. He holds both souls and *prakruthi* (nature) as His body, before creation and after. Hence, He is called *visishta:dvaitha*, the "qualified non-dual."

By teaching this, **Sri: Krushna** helps *Arjuna* realize his true nature, the difference between body and soul (*svam*). Understanding this truth leads one to act rightly and be free from sorrow. This is the beginning of the Lord's teaching on how spiritual knowledge must guide practical life.

The dhi:raha: One Undisturbed by Change

Page 109 By disseminating the knowledge of *a:thma*, **Sri: Krushna** showed us the path towards executing our duty. When actions are done with *de:ha:thma vive:ka*, body-soul wisdom and discernment between the body and the *a:thma*, then there are lesser hurdles and obstacles in our paths. **Sri: Krushna's** teachings weren't merely a theoretical treatise but a manual on right action. **Sri: Krushna** showed the eternal link which existed between all three entities, His own *swaru:pa*, *that of the Self and nature*.

The presence of the *a:thma* can be recognized only through the action and movement of the body.

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dhi:raha is one whose mind is undisturbed because it is backed by *buddhi*, intellect. Such a person is unfazed by a bad situation, doesn't crumble or cry, or try to run away from it. *Ka:lida:sa* said "*vika:ra he:thau sathi vikriyanthe: ye:sha:m na che:tha:msi tha e;va dhi:raha:* - one who is not the least bit distracted by a tempting, disturbing or difficult situation is a *dhi:raha*. *dhi:raha thathra na muhyathi*, one who is a

dhi:raha is not blinded by delusion or lost in ignorance. *Arjuna* was not behaving as a *dhi:raha* here, devastated as he was by sorrow.



Verse 13

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de:hino:smin yattha: de:he: kauma:ram yauvanam jara: |
thattha: deha: nthara pra:pthihi dhi:ras thathra na muhyathi || [2.13]

Why sorrow though? A house is distinct from the one who resides in it. Similarly, the body is different from the soul which resides in it. The soul, without lamenting, observes the changes in the body. When we treat the aging of the body as a rite of passage, and celebrate *shashttabdhapu:rthi*, *sapthathi*, and *asi:thi* for the sixtieth, seventieth, and eightieth birthdays respectively, why is the final metamorphosis that comes with the *a:thma* exiting the current body, the dissemination of the *panchabhu:thas* which make the body and the soul's entrance into a new body or a new abode, treated as something to grieve over. The soul is different from the body that it inhabits. The body is a tool

used by the soul for its journey. We don't get attached to a means of transportation nor to a flight of stairs that we use as means to reach a destination. It's only because the body stops being 'alive' that death alarms and saddens us.

Foundation of Self-Knowledge in Chapter Two

Page 112 If *de:ha de:hi sambandha*, relationship between the body and the *a:thma* that inhabits the body is known, then we recognize that *a:thma* is beyond the changes that afflict the body and even though we cannot see the *ji:va* reach a certain destination after death, we will come to realize, through inquiry, that it has progressed along its journey.

The first chapter spoke about *visha:da*. The second chapter is called *sa:nkhya yo:ga*, referring to the knowledge of the *a:thma*, Self. When we are planning to make a high rise building, first a deep pit is dug, then a strong foundation is laid.

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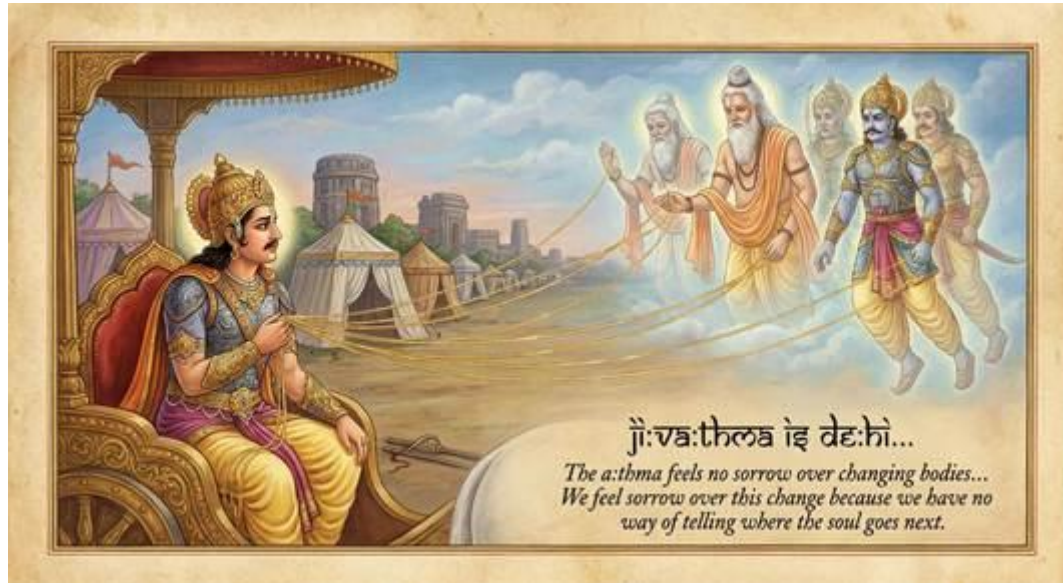
While the first chapter was the pit, the second chapter is the foundation of *a:thma thatthva jna:nam*, knowledge of the Self, or *sa:nkhya* which also means *jna:na*, wisdom. **Sri:** Krushna used many examples and approaches to explain the concept of the soul that is different from the body. Through the twelfth verse, *na thve: va:ham...*, the permanency of the *a:thma*, soul, is explained. In the thirteenth verse, *de:hino:smin...*, it is emphasized that the presence of *a:thma* can be recognized only by the actions of the body it inhabits. The body undergoes change and at death its form transforms. The root of the verb destroy in Sanskrit is '*nas*' which also means 'not to be seen'. When a pot shatters into pieces, the form of the pot is not to be seen any more but the clay remains. We still say that the form of the pot is destroyed. Destruction of the form is actually only metamorphosis. However, *a:thma* is beyond change or destruction. If *Arjuna* had known that body undergoes transformation not destruction and the soul is eternal, *Arjuna* may not have fallen prey to misconstrued grief.

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We see this play out in many ways. Birth and death of the human body, a seed sprouting into a plant, then a tree, yielding fruit that is consumed and digested, and then dying. A building that is painstakingly built and then bulldozed. Everything is in constant flux with its name and form constantly changing and we attribute terms such as 'birth' and 'death' at certain stages along that trajectory of change.

Relationships and the Sorrow of Loss

The loss of relationship with the person who has passed away is another cause for immense sorrow.



Let's examine that further. The steps that we regularly walk on, or even a statue, may be carved out from the same material as many of the random stones we see strewn about. The relationship between the stone, steps and statue must be there, but it is not perceived because they are insentient. Our bodies are all made of the same elements. Yet we perceive relationships because we are sentient beings. For instance, we may be seated next to a friendly dude at a cinema theater, or might have a pleasant chat with a co-traveller. We form a relationship, but do not grieve at the end of the journey, because the relationship is short-lived. The end of a long standing relationship that seemingly comes to an end with death, brings grief. The wise realise that this need not be grieved over, for the *ji:va:thma* continues to live somewhere else.

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Though it's natural to feel sorrow, with a solid foundation in *a:thma thatthhva jna:nam*, the knowledge of the Self, one can avoid misery and grief over death. The next verse *ma:thra:sparsa:sthu kaunthe:ya*, talks about how sorrow can be tolerated and managed. Thus, *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is a lamp of knowledge that guides one on how to deal with the darkness of sorrow that arises from separation and dissolution. Sage *Para:sara* said that we experience misery when something that we cherish, moves away from us due to changes in the object. The *manas*, mind, is like a wall on which we drive in many hooks and nails of hankerings and desires or a sacred cloth on which we tack many beads. We get attached to worldly objects whose nature is that of change. We experience sorrow when we perceive those changes. This is because our attachment and love for the object is constrained by the name and form of the object as is.

Verse 14

The Parable of the Snake and Self-Defence

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Arjuna's response to the idea of losing his kith and kin was sorrow - was he not supposed to feel it? To, this **Sri**: *Krushna* responded -

ma:thra:sparsa:s thu kaunthe:ya! si:tho:shna sukha dukhada:ha |
a:gama:pa:yino:nithya:ha tha:ms thithikshasva bha:ratha! || 2.14

Sri: *Krushna*'s instruction was *thithikshasva*, tolerate it. Tolerance and forbearance are important qualities but it doesn't necessarily amount to showing the other cheek to one who slaps you.

There's a fable about a *yo:gi* who encountered a snake ready to strike. When asked why it threatened without provocation, the snake replied that it was simply acting according to its nature. The *yo:gi* explained that God had not given it the ability to raise its hood and hiss to harm others without cause, and instructed it accordingly. The snake obeyed and thereafter remained peaceful. The *yo:gi* proceeded to the next village.

Later, schoolchildren passing by saw the snake. After initially fleeing in fear, they turned back and noticed that it remained motionless. Encouraged by its lack of aggression, they gradually moved closer and eventually threw a stone at it. Even after being struck, the snake did not react or move away.

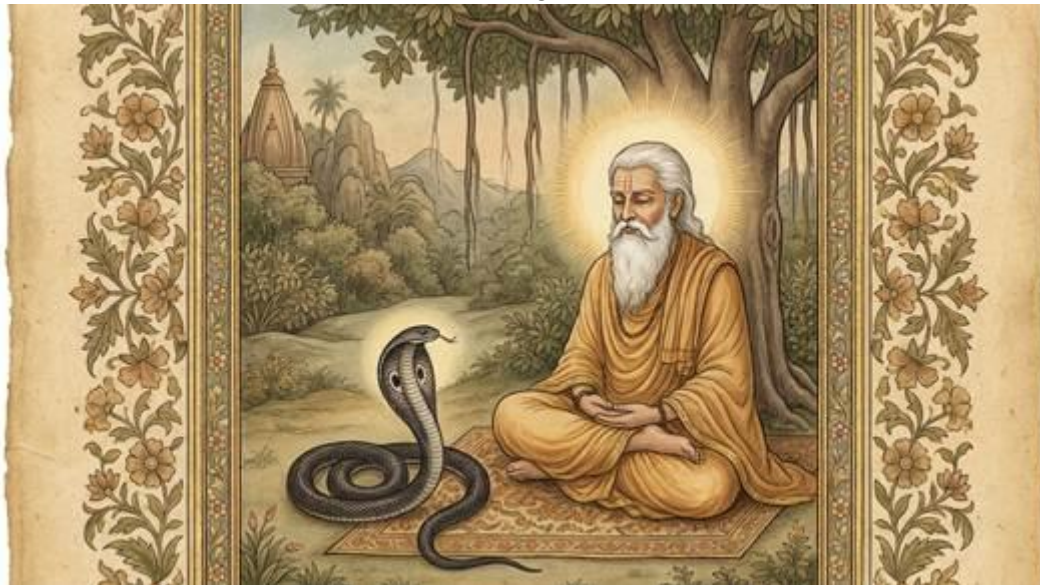
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The children, seeing that the snake neither fled nor retaliated, gradually came closer. They first prodded it with a stick, then touched it, picked it up, and eventually treated it like a toy, tossing it around and playing with it before leaving it badly injured.

When the *yo:gi* returned the next day, he found the snake barely alive. The snake explained that it had faithfully followed the *yo:gi*'s instruction not to attack anyone, which had led to its condition. The *yo:gi* clarified that he had only forbidden harming others without cause, not defending itself. He explained that strength is given to be used wisely, never to oppress the innocent, but to protect oneself, restrain wrongdoing, and prevent harm. Like speech, which should be used with discernment rather than indiscriminately, every ability is meant for righteous and disciplined use, not misuse or complete neglect.

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The *yo:gi* restored the snake's health using his powers. Tolerance and forbearance must be used appropriately.



A robber might have high tolerance while breaking into someone's home, and is able to put up with bruises when he climbs the wall, or falls on thorns or when he gets a beating later. But such patience or tolerance is not appropriate. It only supports his evil tendencies. **Sri:** Krushna clarifies which situations require tolerance and what appropriate forbearance looks like.

In the fourteenth verse, **Sri:** Krushna pointed out to *ma:thra:sparsa:* as what needs to be tolerated. It's natural to feel sorrow, but one must not allow sorrow to get in the way of executing one's *dharma*. One must not be deterred by *ka:ma*, desire, *lo:bha*, greed, *bhaya*, fear, and must also be ready to give up one's life to practice *dharma*. *dharma* is not a vague theoretical idea that one reads about but is a practice or actions that when followed yields results and removes obstacles, not just over time, but for all time in keeping with the eternal nature of *ji:va*.

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(Translation Pages 121, 122)

thithiksha in Sanskrit is the quality of being able to put up with temporary hardship for a future benefit. Acquisition and loss of objects and relationships should be taken in one's stride. The *ji:va* inhabits the body due to *karma* and goes through experiences to consume *ka:rmic* records. These experiences give temporary joys and sorrows. We don't get attached to travel companions. We temporarily tolerate noise on the train. Similarly, we must go through our life situations without making them central to our existence.

When someone is born, they say that *panchathvam* is attained i.e. the five elements of nature have come together to form the body. When someone dies, the elements of the body disintegrate. The body is still there, but in a different form, a disintegrated one. The one who inhabits the body has moved on to another abode. So why must one grieve over this?

Sri: Krushna told *Arjuna* that it is also pointless to cry over something that is in flux. . The river stops for no one's tears. The water that has flowed through in a river can't be brought back or stopped with one's tears. So it is futile to cry over an inevitability.

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Besides, *Arjuna*'s inaction in the battlefield would not preempt the death of *Bhi:shma*, *Dro:na*, and the rest of the *Kauravas*. In fact, they were already destroyed by **Sri:** Krushna the day they humiliated *Draupadi* in the court. Ever since, they have been much like burnt clothes that retain shape or a burnt piece of paper that still has letters on it. **Sri:** Krushna needed *Arjuna* to administer the coup de grace to finish them off. **Sri:** Krushna confirmed in the eleventh chapter, *maye:vaithe: nihatha:h pu:rvame:va* - they have already been killed by Me; *nimiththama:thram bhava savyasa:chin!* - merely become an instrument, *Arjuna!* *Arjuna* was chosen to receive the praise and honors for the task that was already done by **Sri:** Krushna.

Despite nothing being permanent one must adhere to the path of duty and *dharma* and display *thithiksha*, forbearance towards joys and sorrows for this will certainly lead to *mo:ksha*, liberation.

thanma:thras and Elemental Manifestation

Page 124**Sri:** Krushna's consistent teaching throughout this text is on how to rid oneself of sorrow. **Sri:** Krushna emphasized the message specifically three times. First, when *Arjuna* was devastated at the prospect of warring with his kith and kin. Second, in the sixteenth chapter *daiva:sura sampad vibha:ga yo:ga*, where *Arjuna* was second guessing himself, saddened that he might indeed possess *asuric*, demonic qualities, and **Sri:** Krushna consoled him "*ma:suchas sampadam daivi:m abhija:tho::si pa:ndava!* - don't worry *Arjuna* for you have divine qualities!" As long as we possess divine qualities, the Lord plays an active role in our lives. When we display demonic qualities, He is with us however He remains inactive and even indifferent. The third instance was when, in the eighteenth chapter, **Sri:** Krushna urged *Arjuna* to

analyze all the teachings thus far, and decide for himself what his next steps must be. *Arjuna* was alarmed at hearing this and beseeched *Sri: Krushna* that he was incapable of this on his own. At that point, *Sri: Krushna* blessed us with the *charama slo:ka* -

sarva dharma:n parithyajya ma:m e:kam saranam vraja |
aham thva: sarva pa:pe:bhyo: mo:kshayishya:mi ma: suchaha ||18.66

He concludes saying, *ma:suchaha*, do not grieve. Surrender unconditionally and exclusively to Me.

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If, at the outset, *Sri: Krushna* had said, “Tolerate the pain!” to *Arjuna* who was already on the fence, that would have surely nudged the latter into fleeing the battlefield. Instead, *Sri: Krushna* eased the message a bit, talking first about *deha:thma vive:ka*, discernment between *a:thma* and the body, permanence of the *a:thma*, transience of the body, and then proceeded to ask *Arjuna* to tolerate pain. Forbearance in regard to *ma:thra:sparsa*, contact with the subtle form of the five elements. To understand the meaning of the word *ma:thra:*, think of a tree with several branches and sub-branches. *ma:thra:* corresponds to the seed stage of the tree.



The *panchabhū:tha:*, five elements, have subtle forms called *thanma:thra*. The *upasarga*, prefix, *than* renders the meaning of expansion to the *ma:thra:* corresponding to every element. *a:ka:sa*, ether, has *sabda thanma:thra* for sound. *va:yu*, wind, has *sparsa thanma:thra* for touch. *agni*, fire, has *ru:pa thanma:thra* for vision. *jala*, water has *rasa thanma:thra* for taste. *pruthvi*, earth, has *gandha thanma:thra* for smell.

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As explained earlier, a *thanma:thra* is like the seed for the corresponding element. A *thanma:thra* attracts the corresponding elemental particles, helping it to grow. As the *thanma:thra* grows, the *bhu:tha*, element, manifests itself. The manifested element is then recognized by the corresponding attribute. For instance, *sabda thanma:thra* attracts *a:kasa* particles and manifests itself as *a:kasa* element. We then perceive the presence of *a:kasa* by the sound we hear. Just as we recognize a flower by its fragrance, a lamp by its light and we infer the presence of a burning incense from the fragrance, we recognise all *ru:pams*, forms, by their *the:jas*, radiance or luminosity. We recognize the presence of the element of water in something by its taste and of the element of earth by its smell. Thus the presence of an element is detected by the corresponding quality, *guna*, called *asa:dha:rana dharma*, a unique attribute. For example, taste is the unique attribute for water, smell is the attribute for earth, form is the attribute for *the:jas* and sound is the attribute for *a:ka:sa*.

Along with the unique attribute, other qualities may be present, indicating presence of other elements. When there's red colored water, there's not only the element of *jala*, with its quality of taste, but also that of *agni*: with its quality of heat and light. Hence the red colour is seen. The sky is sometimes seen as blue, sometimes as red. That means the sky has both the element of *a:ka:sa* and the element of *agni* corresponding to the color. Since the particles are extremely subtle, we only notice its color but don't see the particles as such. Fragrant air contains the *va:yu* element, with its quality of touch, but also the *pruthvi* element with its quality of smell. Hence the fragrance is perceived. Thus, every *bhu:tha* has a *asa:dha:rana*, unique *dharma*, attribute, or *guna*, quality, associated with it. The *bhu:tha* is a *dharmi*, the possessor of the *dharma*, attribute, or *guni:*, possessor of the *guna*, quality. Each *asa:dha:rana dharma* can be mapped only to one *bhu:tha*, element.

Equanimity Amid Dualities Leads to Liberation

Page 127As we learnt before, an attribute of an object is called *dharma* and the object itself is called *dharmi*. Just as a seed is the source of the tree, there is a seed called *thama:thra* that is the source of an element. For instance, water element has a source that is water *thanma:thra*. However, the *thama:thras* are named by the attribute of the element. Hence, since the attribute of water is taste, the

corresponding *thama:thra* is called *rasa thama:thra*. Initially both elements (*dharmi*) and corresponding attributes (*dharma*) exist in a subtle state. When manifested by expanding, their effect may be experienced. The subtle, unmanifested essence of gross elements is called *thanma:thra*. First there is the *thanma:thra* of space, *śabda thanma:thra*. It is the *ka:raṇa*, causal, *thanma:thra* that sequentially gives rise to space and then to all other *thanma:thras* and *bhu:tha:s*, the process ending with pruthvi which comes from the final *gandhathanma:thra*, called *ka:rya thanma:thra*. The three intermediate *thanma:thras* are both *ka:rya* and *ka:raṇa* as they are the effect as well as the cause of other *thanma:thras*. The flowchart depicts the sequence.

The multitude of objects with forms take shape from these *panchabhū:thas* and *thanma:thras*. The fetus in the womb has *sukha amsa*, all the pleasant aspects of the *thanma:thras*; it gradually begins to grow by accumulating elements of fire, water, earth, wind, and ether. A similar process occurs when a seed grows to a tree. When the *ji:va*, soul, leaves the body, it takes along with it the *jna:ne:ndriya:s*, senses, *manas*, mind, and the *thanma:thras*. Now the *ji:va* has the knowledge of joy, sorrow and feelings of *thanma:thras*.

replace *agni* with *the:jas*

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These records of information, *ka:rmic* records, that travel with the *ji:va* are responsible for the subsequent feelings of joys and sorrows. In reality, nothing is good or bad, but is experienced as favourable or unfavourable by the *ji:va* based on its *karma*. These feelings are born out of the *panchabhū:thas* and their dual effects like heat and cold, hardships and joys, and so on. They are transient and must be endured with forbearance. **Sri:** Krushna urges *Arjuna* to put up with any joys and sorrows that might arise from the war. *Arjuna* wondered what he stood to gain from putting up with the dualities, who would punish him if he didn't, what would he lose if he didn't, and why exactly couldn't he be left to chill at home instead of being on the battlefield. It's human nature to be driven by purpose and the utility of effort. One is ready to undergo strenuous training to lift even 100 or 300 kilograms if they may be awarded an Olympic medal.

Verse 15

Page 129

Animals, on the other hand, don't need any apparent benefit. Knowing human nature, **Sri: Krushna** proceeded to say -

yam hi na vyatthayanthy e:the: purusham purusharshabha! |
sama duhkha sukkham dhi:ram so:mruthaththva:ya kalpathe: || 2.15

“*Arjuna!* Those who can tolerate dualities attain *amrutha thatthvam*, eternal bliss. Such a person is a *dhi:raha*, courageous one. He accepts joys and sorrows with equanimity, and doesn't hasten to flee from the attacker or attack the weak.”

The Body as Vehicle for the Soul

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In this verse, **Sri: Krushna** refers to *purusha*. *puri* is this body, given for a purpose. *purusha* is one who inhabits the body.



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One who desires *amrutha thatthvam*, uninterrupted joy, remains unshaken by the dualities of experience and the vacillations that are but inevitable. Such a person has *dhairyam*, fortitude. **Sri:** Krushna, knowing that everyone desires this, but is ignorant on how to achieve it, blessed us with the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, a manual on how to obtain eternal joy. *Ra:ma: yana* is the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* put to practice. These texts tell us that the path to permanent peace is to tolerate temporary hardships, to accept them, along with joys as *Bhagava:n's prasa:dam*, gracious gift. And to exercise equanimity in the face of both joy and sorrow.

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God has given this body to serve as a vehicle for the journey of the soul. Sadly, bodily maintenance has overwhelmed our lives and daily routines. We live and work for feeding and maintaining our bodies. We see many maids these days that demand to be served coffee and a lot of other special treatment before they oblige with a few strokes of their broom stick to clean the room. Their employers go to great lengths to keep them happy. Similar is our unfortunate situation in regard to our bodies.

Accepting karma as Divine Gift

Page 133 We bring misery upon ourselves by not steering our lives towards *Parama:thma*, the Supreme Being, but instead create a record of attachments and aversions. We utilize our bodies for obsessing on the former and avoiding the latter. This attitude is as ridiculous as trying to get a flu just because the flu medicine is tasty.

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Bhagavad Gi:tha is called *lakshana grantha*, a scripture of principles, while *Ra:ma: yana* is *uda:harana grantha*, a scripture of illustrations. The *Gi:tha* presents these truths in the form of principles, whereas the *Ra:ma: yana* illustrates those same principles through lived examples. When there is a *lakshya*, principle, it has a *lakshana*, quality or characteristic which defines it. **Sri: Ra:ma** stood as an exemplary figure of an ideal man, as expounded in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

For example, *Sri: Ra:ma* had the quality of *sausilyam*, equal accessibility to all beings. *Sri: Ra:ma* befriended *Sugri:va* who was a monkey king. He also looked upon the tiny squirrel as a friend.

One evening, King *Dasaratha* summoned *Sri: Ra:ma* and, troubled by bad dreams, informed him of his decision to crown *Ra:ma* as king the following day. *Ra:ma* accepted his father's decision without objection. That night, he observed the prescribed vows and remained in the temple with *Si:tha* in preparation for the coronation.

At daybreak, *Ra:ma* was summoned again, this time to Queen *Kaike:yi*'s chamber, where King *Dasaratha* sat overcome with grief. *Kaike:yi* informed *Ra:ma* that instead of the promised coronation, he was to leave for the forest in exile. She explained that the king was deeply distressed, fearing how *Ra:ma* would respond. *Ra:ma*, however, received the news with joy, declaring "*ra:jyam va: vanava:so:va: vanava:so: mahodayaha*, kingdom or forest - they mean the same to me".

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"My father knows what's good for me. I have to experience it. I don't need to decide anything for myself". He happily went to the forest without lamenting, protesting, or sulking. Similarly, our bodily experiences are inevitable due to *karma*. We haven't chosen these bodies or sense organs. *Parama:thma*, like a loving parent, has decided these things. So let's accept them as His gifts, with equanimity, which is the

highest state of mind. Such a person who has forbearance while facing joys and sorrows is a *dhi:raha* which **Sri: Ra:ma** perfectly



exemplified.

so:mruthaththva:ya kalpathe: - Lord **Sri:** Krushna explains what is fortitude and patience. Let us learn.

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sa:sthras are texts that spell out the *kruthya:s*, dos and *akruthya:s*, don'ts, based on eons of observation and analysis of actions that either benefit or harm societies. They are not a manual that was handed down by someone as commandments to be followed nor are they a set of rules forcefully imposed upon a society, like that of modern times, which is not ready or is incompatible with the practices. An example is the rules of *dharma* laid out by Sage *Vya:sa* in *Maha:bha:ratha*.

There is a verse in **Sri: Vishnu Sahasrana:mam**, "*a:cha:ra prabhavo: dharmah dharmasya prabhurAchyuthaha*". *a:cha:ra* comprises those practices that, when followed, and those actions that, when avoided, lead to overall well-being and upliftment. These practices, preserved through experience and tradition, form the foundation of *dharma*. **Sri:** Krushna is called *Achyutha*. *chyutha* means to fall away, deviate, or

stray. *Achyutha* refers to the One who never deviates from His own nature and who does not allow *dharma* or those who follow it to stray from the right path.

Sri: Krushna is the protector of *dharma*. He says, “*dharma samsttha:pana:rtha:ya sambhava:mi* - I bear the responsibility of revealing *thatthvam*, the truth, to those who practice *dharma*”.

Page 137-140

Tolerance can soften and change the stance of an adversary to a friend. Resistance or retaliation often doesn't correct unfair treatment. Forbearance identifies the root cause and brings about lasting change. *Bharatha*'s character in the *Ra:ma:yaana* is a shining example of forbearance. He had left for his uncle's house twelve years before *Ra:ma* left for exile. When *Bharatha* returned to *Ayo:dhya* the day after *Ra:ma*'s exile, totally unaware of everything that had occurred till then, everyone seemed antagonistic. His father *Dasaratha* did not greet him like he usually would. *Bharatha* inquired with his mother *Kaike:yi* who was elated to see him with his brother *Satrughna*. *Kaike:yi* tactfully replied that *Dasaratha* had reached the place that everyone, once born, reaches.

Shocked and saddened by the news, *Bharatha* felt like he was struck by a thunderbolt. He asked for *Dasaratha*'s last words. *Kaike:yi* replied, 'Ha! *Ra:ma*! When *Bharatha* inquired where *Ra:ma* was, *Kaike:yi* let him and *Satrughna* in on everything - the boon *Dasaratha* had given her, her motherly desire to see her son crowned, and *Ra:ma*'s exile. *Bharatha* went to *Kausalya* who taunted and blamed him for her son's exile. *Bharatha* collapsed with sorrow and self-blame at that point. When *Satrughna* drew his sword to kill *Kaike:yi*, *Bharatha* stopped him for *Ra:ma* would never forgive them for killing their mother and would not even look at their faces if they performed such a heinous act.

Satrughna then decided to kill *Mandhara*, the maid that planted the evil idea in *Kaike:yi*'s head. *Bharatha* stopped him and said that none of this was *Mandhara*'s fault - she just wanted to serve her mistress. This wasn't *Kaike:yi*'s fault either - she had the natural desire of a mother to see her son flourish. *Dasaratha* was not to be blamed either - he stood by his word as an honorable king must. *Ra:ma* was certainly not in the wrong - he followed *dharma* by honoring his father's word. *Bharatha* said that he was really the one to blame. Thus, he imposed strict austerities upon himself for fourteen years, over which time people's antagonism against him gradually waned.

thithiksha, forbearance, is not loud and prominent but is *anthara lakshana*, inner quality, and *a.thma guna*, characteristic of the soul. However, it is the most effective tool to gain *amrutha thatthvam*, eternal bliss. Tolerance can be practiced through the right knowledge, *deha:thma viveka* - discernment between the transient body and eternal *a.thma*. With such knowledge, we can face adversarial situations without our minds succumbing to sorrow and misery.

There's nothing wrong in experiencing life in all of its variety, but it must be without developing attachment or aversion. *Ra:dha:Krushna Pandith* once said that tolerance is deeply instilled in the Indian way of thinking probably because *deha:thma viveka* is the cornerstone of our philosophies.

Verse 16

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The *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, rooted in the *upanishads*, first presents their essence in a concise form and then expands upon it in detail. This is a method followed by sages and elders: stating the core teaching briefly and then elaborating on it.

The essence of *Ra:ma:yana* is encapsulated in the first *slo:ka*, *ma:nisha:da*. Similarly, the essence of the *Sri:mad Bha:gavatham* is contained in the *chathus slo:ki*, *four slo:kas*.

Similarly, the entire message of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is contained in the four *slo:kas* **1) na chaiva na bhavishya:mi 2) de:hinah 3) ma:thra:sparsa:s thu). yam hi na vyadhyante**. Having laid out the essence, *Sri:Krushna* ensured *Arjuna's mananam*, contemplation over the core ideas from here on to the end of the eighteenth chapter.

Sri:Krushna did not ingrain these ideas merely by giving *upade:sa*, instruction, as a *Guru*, or ordering *Arjuna* like the *sa:sthras*. Instead, like a true friend, He gently guided and convinced *Arjuna* through examples, reasoning, and by showing the accessibility of these teachings and the benefits of following them. He wanted to bring *Arjuna* to a mindset where he understood the following verse:

na:satho: vidyathe: bha:vo: na: bha:vo: vidyathe: sathaha |
ubhayo:r api drushto: nthas thu anayo:s thathva darsibhihi || 2.16

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In the second half of this *slo:ka*, *Sri:Krushna* says, “*ubhayo:r api drushto: nthas thu anayo:s thathva darsibhihi* - seers have also reached this conclusion after studying and observing the nature of both body and soul”. The idea of soul-body discernment, has not been coined by Him but is a foundational tenet established by seers of truth such as *Para:sara*, *Vya:sa*, *Bha:radva:ja*, and *Vasishta* who reached certain

conclusions of all discussions, leaving no room for further debate. The word '*anthaha*' signifies that the goal of certain knowledge has been reached.

The *a:thma* is described as *sath* which has the qualifiers *ana:si*, indestructible, and *aparama:rtha*, unchanging. The body is made of *na:si dravya:s*, perishable materials, and is *parama:rtha*, constantly changing its name and form. This is confirmed in *Pura:na Rathna*, "*yasthu ka:la:ntare:na:pi na:sa samjna:mupaithi vai | parina:ma:di sambhu:tham thadvasthu nrupa thachcha kim ||*"

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Sage *Para:sara* describes *a:thma* as *parama:rtthascha pra:jnairapi*, worshipped by the wise. Some interpret *parama:rttha* as not present or non-existent. However, *Para:sara* clarifies that what keeps changing its form and name is *aparama:rttha*, for example, the body which is made of matter that is prone to constant change. *Sri: Krushna* urged *Arjuna* to follow the path laid out by ancient seers. There was no need to trailblaze new ways to do things. Philosophies like Sage *Kapila's sa:nkhya*, *tharka sa:sthra*, *nya:ya sa:sthra*, and *vaise:shika's* school of thought, though accepting the *upanishads*, strayed from them on the topic of the soul and matter.

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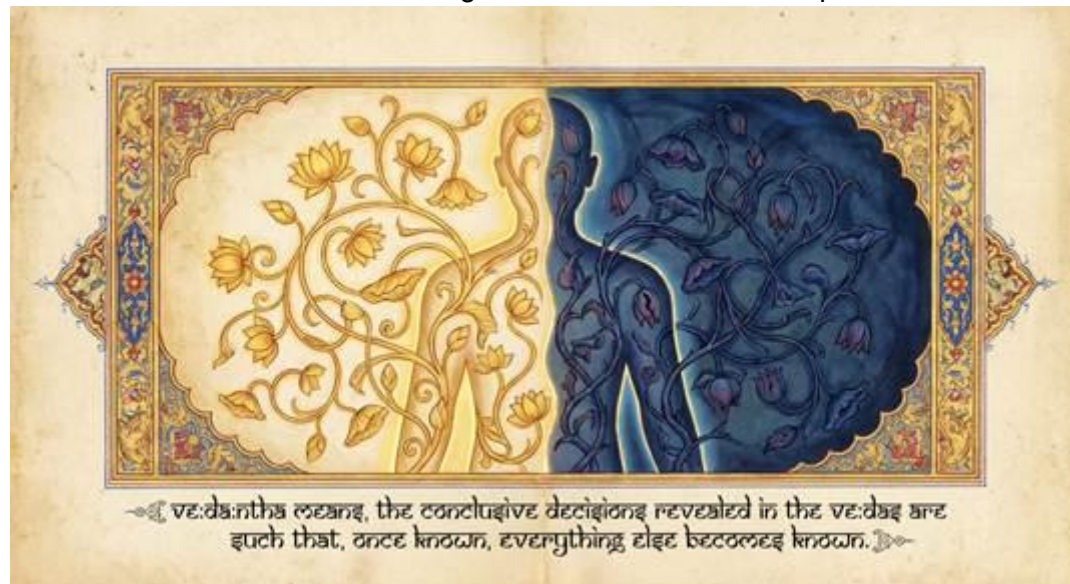
ve:das encompass all aspects of knowledge. They are infallible. Of course we need *tharka*, logic. It involves intellect based reasoning. We make inferences on things based on signs like smoke from fire or smell from an incense stick. Thus, we conclude the *ka:rana* by observing the *ka:rya*. We move from known to unknown. This is what *Sri: Krushna* also did while illustrating concepts. *ve:das* which are *apaurushe:ya*, not originating from humans must be followed. They combine the *priyam*, loving nature, of a thousand mothers, hence the name *ve:dama:tha* and the *hitham*, thought of our well-being, of a thousand fathers, hence its name *ve:dapurusha*. What is *hitham* is ultimately good for us even though it could seem bitter in the beginning. The *nirnayam*, decisive injunctions of the *ve:das* must be adhered to. A good combination of *priyam* and *hitham* is required for the well-being of the children. *ve:da:ntha* is the essence of the most beautiful parts of *ve:das*.

Verse 17

Etymology of De:ha and Sari:ra

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Sri: Krushna used *tharka* in defining the *a:thma* as *avina:si*, imperishable, in this verse:



avina:si thu thad viddhi ye:na sarvam idam thatham |
vina:sam avyayasya:sya na kaschith karthum arhathi || 2.17

The logic employed here is that *a:thma*, being the subtlest, pervades everywhere in the body, hence can never be destroyed itself. Let's examine the idea. Only something smaller or subtler can enter something bigger or grosser. Say, someone smashes a pot by hand. Here, the hand has not entered the pot.

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When a pot or a coconut is smashed, wind molecules penetrate with intensity and force thus breaking apart the cohesion between the particles of the object being smashed. Similarly, the human body can be penetrated by a needle which is thinner and subtler. Whenever an

object is *avayavi*, a conglomeration of components, it is susceptible to breakage by something, a subtler entity, that can penetrate it with force and intensity. **Sri:** Krushna used this physical phenomenon to explain that the *a:thma* is imperishable, by referring to it as *anu*. *anu* in Sanskrit does not mean atom, but the subtlest particle that cannot be split further.

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a:thma is subtler than subatomic particles like protons and quarks. “*ye:na sarvam idam thatham*” - **Sri:** Krushna confirmed that *a:thma* pervades everything. This concept may be hard to grasp but worth understanding. Our ancestors provided us the tools to grasp these subtle truths.

Sri: Krushna has provided a recap of those intellectual tools for our convenience. Let's recap these concepts -

1. **Sri:** Krushna explained that the form and nature of some entities constantly change and no efforts can be made to keep them constant. The Lord already stressed on how one must not grieve over *gatha:su*, that which inevitably departs, and *agatha:su*, that which does not depart. Souls that are *agatha:su*, never get destroyed and need no grieving. Bodies that are *gatha:su*, are bound to get destroyed so why grieve over them.
2. **Sri:** Krushna then systematically went on to explain why the *a:thma* which is the subtlest and cannot be split further, remains imperishable or unaffected by anything else by pointing to physical phenomena. We may consider the following examples
 1. Dissolving sand in water. Water, which is a subtler element than earth, percolates between particles of sand, spreads itself in accordance to its nature, wets the sand, softens it, and finally dissolves it. This is because sand is *avayavi*, consisting of sub-components that are susceptible to being split apart.
 2. Evaporation of water. When we heat water in a vessel on a stove, the elements of fire which are subtler than earth or water, enter through the earthen pot into the water. The temperature of the water increases as particles of *the:jas*, fire, enter it. This ultimately leads to evaporation.
 3. Spreading of fire - particles of *va:yu*, wind which are subtler than that of fire have the ability to penetrate into and occupy the fire, thus making it spread.

As a rule, this is the order in which assimilation is possible everywhere in nature, from the grossest to the subtlest. earth->water->fire->wind->ether.

Being extremely subtle, wind and ether are invisible to the naked eye. The soul is even more subtle than those elements, and has the ability to pervade *idam*, here all that is manifest and visible. The soul can enter, change, and destroy anything but it remains beyond these transformations - *na kaschith*.

3. What can be destroyed can also be produced. As a corollary, something that cannot be destroyed is not produced. Production is the assimilation of elements, and is not the creation of something from thin air. Earth becomes a pot and when shattered becomes

pieces. Several threads are weaved together to form cloth. Several threads make a piece of cloth. Similarly, the human body is the organization of sub-components. Thus, everything in nature is *avayavi*, having components, unlike the soul.

Thus, **Sri:** Krushna laid out a logical framework using *tharka* to convince *Arjuna* that he need not grieve over warring with his relatives because -

1. The body can never be truly destroyed - it can only be transformed
2. The soul can never be destroyed or transformed

Thus, the body and soul are antithetical entities and can never be equated. When we describe ourselves as fat, short, tall, thin, etc. we describe our bodies, not our selves. The Self is beyond these descriptions.

Verse 18

Bodily Powers Versus the Soul's Nature

Page 151 **Sri:** Krushna presents the tenets of the *sa:sthras* using logic, so that they can be coordinated with one and other, and ingrained in our minds, so that lasting peace can be achieved.

Sri: Krushna says -

anthavantha ime: de:ha:ha nithyasyo:ktha:s sari:rinaha |
ana:sino:prame:yasya thasma:d yuddhyasva bha:ratha! || 2.18

ime:, these, *deha:ha*, bodies - **Sri:** Krushna pointed to what is *prathyaksha*, directly visible. Previously, the Lord referred to the souls as *avina:sithu thahth viddhi*, as *paroksha*, an indirectly perceivable entity that is imperishable. In contrast, the *de:ha*, body is *anthavantha*, perishable. The *a:thma* is *sari:ri*, that which inhabits *sari:ra*, the body. Hence, the word *sari:ranaha* is used for describing bodies in this verse. *a:thma* was referred to as *thath*, that, previously - due to its inevident nature, while the bodies are referred to as *ime:*, these, obviously visible here. Entities that can be perceived are called *prame:ya*, objects of knowledge. *ji:va* can also be perceived by intellect so it is *prame:ya*. *ji:va* is called *visuddha manasa: gra:hyaha*, comprehensible by a pure mind.

Parama:thma is called *aprime:ya* because He is beyond the comprehension of our limited faculties.

prama:tha, is the knower, the subject who experiences the objects of knowledge, *prame:yas*.

Parama:thma is *prama:tha*, the possessor of limitless knowledge but He is *aprime:ya*, not perceivable by our limited faculties.

ji:va:thma is *prama:tha*, the possessor of limited knowledge. He is *prame:ya*.

prakruthi, insentient matter, is not *prama:tha*, it is only *prame:ya*.

Therefore, the *ji:va* is described as *ana:sino:prame:yasya* in this verse. The *a:thma* can only be understood through knowledge of the *sa:sthras*, obtained through qualified *a:cha:ryas*.

Bodies are made for souls and not vice versa. When the purpose of the soul is served in a body, it exits the body. The body thus 'dies' and is referred to as a corpse. It can only be preserved chemically but a corpse can never be functional.

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The soul has precedence over the body. Happiness of the soul should not be sacrificed for that of the body nor should it be under-prioritized for bodily pleasures. *de:ha:ha* refers to bodies that grow, which implies that they are also likely to reduce. In contrast, the soul doesn't expand or shrink.

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Both the words *de:ha:ha* and *sari:rinaha* are used to describe the body. The usage of each word is contextual. When under the age of thirty, *de:ha* is the correct term for one's body since the *dha:thu*, root verb, for *de:ha* is *diha*, *nourish* and *upachai* means to grow or expand. *de:ha* is frequently attributed to that which can go through *dahanam*, combustion, but that's an incorrect meaning.

de:ha is not to be used to describe the body of someone over thirty years of age, as that would imply undesirable or unnatural growth of his body - either horizontally or vertically.

sari:ra is used for the body of a person over thirty years of age since bodily decline starts then. *si:ryathe ithi sari:ram*, it is deteriorating thus it's a *sari:ram*. Similarly, the term *sari:ram* is inappropriate when used to describe the body of a person under thirty, because it is growing and expanding, not deteriorating

The soul is described as nithya, unchanging in all of the three states. Unlike the body that gathers and loses *avayava:ha*, parts, the soul neither acquires nor loses.

Thus, **Sri:** Krushna imparts, with thoroughness, the concept of *deha:thma vive:ka*, wisdom of discrimination between body and soul. He urges *Arjuna* to tread the path of righteous duty and not grieve.

In reality, the word **sari:ra** can be given for all visible forms - humans, animals, birds, trees, stones, mountains, rivers. However, it's usual to consider only sentient beings as embodied. This is because the body of insentient beings are incapable of being used for the happiness or benefit of the *ji:va:thma* within it. It is the sentient beings who are using insentient beings for their purpose.

The Master and Servant Clothes Analogy

Page 154 Every object has within it a *ji:va:thma* and *Parama:thma*. The *ji:va:thma* uses the body for itself while the *Parama:thma* empowers the *ji:va:thma*. An insentient object has *ji:va:thma* and *Parama:thma* present, but its body is not equipped for consciousness. The body is the tool through which the soul has experiences, hence it is said '*bho:ga:yathanam sari:ram*'.

Any object is recognized by its unique characteristic, like the dewlap of a cow, and a horse not having cloven hooves.

bBho:gam, experience, is one *lakshana*, characteristic of the sentient body. Another characteristic is *che:shta:vaththvam*, the ability of meaningful effort. *che:shta* are not random actions but movements done with a definite purpose of reducing harm and increasing benefit. When a tree sways in the breeze, it is not called *che:shta*.

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The growth of a tree from the stage of a seed is a result of the *ji:va* in it. Yet, it is customary to praise or criticise the actions of humans, not that of trees or other beings. This is because in human beings, there is *che:shta*, the ability to perform meaningful actions. What arises

from actions, no matter whether subtle or obvious, is *karma:nubhava*, the experience of *karma*.



Sri: Krushna explains that every activity taking place in the body, whether it is considered significant or insignificant, is part of the functioning of nature. Blinking the eyes, opening or closing them, inhaling and exhaling, moving, speaking, eating, or sleeping are all natural bodily actions. He says,

pasyan srunvan sprusan jighran asnan gachchan svapan svasan [5.8]

pralapan visrujan grunhan unmishan nimishan [5.9]

Whether seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, or performing any bodily action, it is only the body carrying out its natural functions.

karma exists only for *ji:va:thma*, not for the Parama:thma. The body of the *ji:va:thma* serves the purpose of increasing or reducing its *karma*. As long as a *ji:va:thma* is in a mother's womb it has no independent *karma* and remains as a fetus, until the umbilical cord is cut. There is no *che:shta* in the fetus.

Verse 19

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At the micro level we use the terms *anda*, egg, *pinda*, embryo, fetus. At the macro level the term *brahma:nda*, cosmos, is used.

sari:ram, the body, is a *sa:ma:nya lakshanam*, common characteristic. Everything in the universe is a body for *Parama:thma*. For a body to be functional, it needs to be inhabited by a sentient being controlling it. Such a being is *sari:ri*. The individual soul is the *sari:ri* and uses the *sari:ra*, body for its purpose. Similarly, *Parama:thma* is the *sari:ri* and uses His *sari:ra*, all beings in the universe, for His purpose. Just as the body is subservient to the soul, so also, all beings are subservient to God. This has been explained by **Sri: Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya** as the *sari:ri-sari:ra* concept.

We *ji:va:thmas* are sentient like *Parama:thma* but we are not able to control our *pravrutthi*, tendencies. Like a parent yearns to be close to children, *Parama:thma* wants us near him, and helps us rid ourselves of *ka:rmic* records. *Parama:thma* is a *sari:ri* and is within the *ji:va:thma* which functions as *sari:ram*. **Sri: Krushna** expands on this, saying,

ya e:nam ve:tthi hantha:ram yas chainam manyathe: hatham |
ubhau thau na vija:ni:tho: na:yam hanthi na hanyathe: || 2. 19

Understanding What Makes a Body Worn-Out

Page 157 **Sri: Krushna** expounded that the *ji:va:thma* is neither the *hantha:ram*, slayer nor the *hatham*, slain. One who attributes either of those roles to the soul is ignorant.

We do in depth studies of the chemical composition and phenomena in materials in physical sciences. When so much of analysis and study goes into observable objects, one can only imagine how much more should go into gaining an understanding of the *a:thma* which is unseen. **Sri: Krushna** does this beautifully, presenting the truths of the *upanishad*, through examples. None of the statements are in contradiction with *ve:das* or *prathyaksha*, visible, and *anu:ma:na*, inference-based, *prama:na:s*, tools of knowledge. **Sri: Krushna** brought the *upanishads* to us in His own inimitable style, hence the *Gi:tha* is called **Sri:mad Bhagvad Gi:tha upanishad**. Scriptures speak about the eternal nature of the soul. In the *Katto:panishad* there is a line, *na:ja:yathe: mriyathe: va:vipaschith*. For the soul, there is neither birth nor death.

Verse 20

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Transience of the body and the eternity and true nature of the soul is explained by **Sri: Krushna**. He accepts the statement in Katto:panishad with a slight modification.

He says:

na ja:yathe: mriyathe: va: kada:chith na:yam bhu:thva: bhavitha: va: na bhu:yaha |
ajo: nithyas sa:svatho:yam pura:no: na hanyathe: hanyama:ne: sari:re: ||2.20

a:thma is neither born nor dies at any time. A *chathuryuga* is a combination of four *yugas*, 4,320,000 human years. One thousand *chathuryugas* are a day time or one *kalpa* for four-faced *brahma*. *a:thma* does not cease to exist even at the end of such a *kalpa*. It was not born at the beginning of another *kalpa* too. There are *ji:vas* at different stages. Above the human strata is that of *de:vas* who are sub-classified into celestial beings like *gandharvas*, *a:ja:nadevas*, *karmade:vas*, *kinnaras*, *kimpurushas*, and *yakshas*. *de:vas* may have a longer life than humans but those lifetimes only pertain to the body, not to the soul which is eternal.

Pages 159 & 160

Our bodies don't always obey our command. For instance, we cannot contort our bodies into positions that we'd like to while doing *yoga:sanas*. This is the extent of our *sa:dhana*, dedicated practice. Nor can we, without turning our heads, see behind us, or see through opaque objects. *de:vathas* on the other hand are known to be able to move through opaque surfaces. Such powers belong to the body, not to the soul. They arise out of the ability of a particular body and dedicated effort to access that ability. Just like excessively sandstoning and polishing a rough surface might eventually turn it into a smooth mirror-like surface. While some of us can't do the most basic *a:sanas*, some others become gymnasts and circus artists through effort. While most of us don't know where the food we're eating goes, many can tell their exact location internal to their bodies.

Based on the *karma* of a *ji:va:thma*, it goes to different places, and enters bodies suitable for those places. Some animals can easily shrink and go through small spaces. Cats can leap and monkeys can jump. Deer can run fast on their skinny legs. Amphibians can live in water and on land with equal ease. All of these seem like impossible feats to humans. Brahma can live for thousands of *yugas* and *de:vathas* can walk through doors - this is merely because of their *karma* which has embodied them in a body with a particular configuration of the *panchabhuthas*, elements. Nothing more needs to be attributed to any of these special powers. *ji:va:thmas* that inhabit all beings - insect,

man, or four-faced *brahma*, have the same nature. All *ji:va:thmas* have the same *jna:na*, knowledge, **sakthi**, power, *svaru:pa*, innate abilities, and *svabha:va*, innate nature. These can be expressed or remain unexpressed depending on the bodies they inhabit. *ji:va:thmas* are never born and will never die. **Sri:** Krushna listed the four characteristics of *ji:va:thma* as *ajaha*, never born, *nithyaha*, eternal, **sa:svathaha**, with an unchanging form and *pura:na*, always fresh.

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a:thma is whole and has no constituent components - it is *niravayavam*. It doesn't change throughout the three states, waking, sleeping, or dreaming. It is **sa:svathaha**, permanent in form, *stthira:ha*, stable. **sa:svath stthirathi**, permanently stable, **sa:svath thishttathi**, permanently present. *pura:na* doesn't mean old but may be expanded as *pura:pi navam*, ever-fresh, evergreen.

a:thma acquires a body through *karma*. The body is to be used to reduce *ka:rmic* burden. No one is born as an island. We came to the world with certain relationships and must fulfill the obligations of those relationships- there is no escaping that. It's human nature to try escaping responsibilities. Human potential when used fully can achieve ten times more than what we currently do at an average level.

Arjuna, being our ancestor, had the same tendency of trying to shirk his duty. After spending thirteen years in exile, he wanted to flee from a war that was his duty to wage to correct many wrongs committed by the *Kauravas*.

Verse 21

Pages 163 & 164

When a doctor performs a surgery, he does it to the best of his capability and leaves the results in God's hands. Instead of adopting such an attitude, *Arjuna* confused himself with false roles and identities such as killer and killed. **Sri:** Krushna instilled *mananam*, constant reconsideration and contemplation on the concept of body-soul discernment in *Arjuna* to help him get rid of his misery. **Sri:** Krushna said -

ve:da:vina:sinam nithyam ya e:nam ajam avyayam |
kattham sa purushah pa:rttha! kam gha:thayathi hanthi kam || 2.21

The soul cannot be killed nor is the killer. It is eternal, indestructible, unborn and unchangeable. The nature of the *ji:va:thma* is uniform across the *cha:thurvarnyam*, four classifications - *sttha:vara*, immovable beings, *thiryak*, beings that move horizontally, *manushya*, humans, and *de:vas*, celestial beings. *a:thma* undergoes no loss of knowledge or reduction in size. It cannot be the killer nor is it killed.

Arjuna proceeded to wonder if the body would undergo pain even though impermanent. Which body wants to be rendered dead? And if he were to kill his enemies at war, what if their souls don't easily find bodies to inhabit in their next birth? Or what if they get degraded births in the *cha:thurvarnyam*? In the *Chha:ndo:gya upanishad*, there is a reference to how certain *ji:va:thmas* land in deserts and oceans and don't easily enter bodies and remain with their accumulated *karma*, having no access to bodies that can help offload their *ka:rmic* debt. What if such a state were to befall an enemy slain at war, wondered *Arjuna*. **Sri:** Krushna responded to this with the twenty second *slo:ka* in the second chapter, which is well-known.

Verse 22

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It's common knowledge that when a maid behaves and serves her master in a way that makes her master happy then the master would in turn take care of the maid. We can see this during the time of festivals. During festivals like *Di:pa:vali*, *Dasara*, or *Uga:di*, it is customary to procure new clothes. Families purchase new clothes and the master who is satisfied with the maid's service gives new clothes to the maid and maid's family as well. However, if the maid's service is not completely satisfactory, then the master still gives her clothes to her but not

wholeheartedly and will definitely not give to the maid's family. We can see this behaviour in the mundane world.



The Lord takes the same approach where if we behave favorably to Him and perform our activities as per His instruction then He promises that He graces us with good clothes. The clothes here are analogous to our bodies. There is a beautiful analogy in this verse:

vasa:msi ji:na:ni yattha: viha:ya, nava:ni grunha:thi naro::para:ni |
thattha: sari:rani viha:ya ji:na:ni, anya:ni samya:thi nava:ni de:hi: || 2.22 ||

As a person discards worn-out garments and wears new ones, likewise, at the time of death, the soul casts off the body that has served its purpose and enters a new body.

Lord **Sri**: Krushna is stressing that the living beings inhabit new bodies based on their *karmas* and not out of choice. For instance, let's say we have eight five outstanding *karmas* to experience. He selects two *karmas* and gives a suitable body to experience the two *karmas*. Along with the body, He also gives a manual on how to use the aforementioned body. This is very similar to an appliance that we purchase. The appliance comes with a manual on how to use it, how to start it, stop it, clean it, where to put the battery, etc. In case we violate the instructions given in the manual then the appliance will cease to function. We will end up destroying the expensive appliance.

The Farmer's Wisdom on Misplaced Mercy

Page 166 Our bodies also come with a manual with instructions on how to use it - how to walk, what to eat, how to eat, etc. It is natural for humans to walk on two legs. However, we see some children proudly walking on two hands or worse walking on all fours. Let's put them aside and remember that it's natural for humans to walk on legs. Some people, thinking that they are smart, argue why we should eat only through the mouth and not with our nose. It is a good argument, however, people who take food through their nose are patients in ICUs. Clearly, if one wants to be healthy and happy, one must consume food only using his mouth. If not, then he becomes sick and ends up taking food through pipes stuck through his nose

Hence, one has to see through the eyes, hear through ears, breathe through nose, etc., Each organ is given for a purpose and the Lord gave us the scriptures outlining how to use our bodies. Moreover, the Lord intended for us to use the senses and our body in a way so that the soul journeys towards attaining Him. If we follow the instructions and stick to the rules, then the owner, the Lord, will be happy with us. As a result, He acknowledges that we experienced the two *karmas* in a satisfactory way.

The Lord then appreciates us for performing our duties as per His instructions and as a reward He writes off ten *karmas* (out of eighty five). Now, we will have seventy three outstanding *karmas* to experience. He then gives another two to experience with a new body and the cycle continues.

In case we perform our duties with sincerity and as per His instructions then there is a good chance the Lord might reduce the *karmas* just as a convict who is undergoing punishment with a fifteen year jail time. Based on the good behavior of the convict, their jail time is reduced to five or three years. The Lord also looks at our sincerity in following His instruction and if He is happy He might even write-off the entire remaining seventy three *karmas*. We can then attain the Lord and we become like Him. Meaning, the Lord gives us a divine body that is not made up of the five mundane elements. Instead, He gives us a body that is similar to His and that is made of five divine elements called *apra:krutha pancha upanishanmaya divya mangala vigraham*.

Our bodies right now are made up of the five mundane elements. The bodies are dirty, giving out bad odors. Even after taking a bath, it does not take five minutes for it to start secreting all kinds of dirt from different orifices. The divine body is not like that. It always stays new and fresh.

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On the other hand, the divine body gives out an attractive aura. Others become prosperous by just looking at someone who is graced with the divine body. Moreover, the divine body is in complete control of the one inhabiting it, unlike the mundane body, which enslaves. . The

divine bodies are called *apra:krutha de:has*. If one wishes for five bodies to carry out five activities, then the divine body becomes five different bodies allowing us to perform five different activities, all at the same time.

There are great people such as *Saubhari* who have the power to create as many bodies as they wish. Such people can at-will create five or fifty bodies at the same time. However, they are nothing compared to the elevated souls in *paramapadam* where *nithya su:ris* and *muktha ganas* can at-will create infinite bodies and put them in service of the Lord. They don't use their bodies for mundane activities such as for drinking, eating, watching movies, playing, etc. In *paramapadam*, they use the bodies for the sole purpose of bringing a smile on the Lord's divine face. That is the state achieved by the one who performs their duties as per the Lord's instructions.

However, we are not in that state now. The mundane bodies that we have make us hungry, cannot sit still for sometime and always bring stress and frustration to us. These bodies do not listen to us and are controlled by hunger, thirst, desires, etc. We would be much happier if we had a body that listens to us - it should grow, shrink, jump, etc., as per our wishes. As per Sage *Va:Imi:ki* in *Sri: Ra:ma:yana*, *Hanuma:n* has such a body. Before *Hanuma:n* decides to jump across the ocean, he expands his body and when he lands in *Lanka*, he again as per his wishes shrinks his body. He does the same when he encounters *Surasa* and again, when he meets *Si:tha*, he shows his strength by making his body much larger. The Lord blesses us with such a divine body if we act as per His will. *Sri: Krushna* is promising us in this slo:ka. He is comparing the body with clothes and is promising that He will grace us with such a divine body.

Arjuna then has a question. He asks, "We are unfortunately destroying all these fine bodies. There is no concern if we kill old people, because they will die pretty soon, however, we are killing young boys. *Abhimanyu* and *Uththarakuma:ra* are only sixteen year old boys. How can we lose these kids? They have a bright future ahead of them and I cannot fathom losing them."

The mind takes us in the wrong direction when we feel pity towards wrong doers. *Arjuna* is showing pity towards *Kauravas* who deserve punishment as they have harmed *Pa:ndavas* in many ways, at many times. We see similar behaviour these days - the justice system shows pity towards young criminals who set buses on fire, shoot innocent people at point blank, etc. Instead of giving them a death sentence, the judge worries about how to give the death sentence to these minors who behave like hardened criminals. *Arjuna* is in the same misguided dilemma. He laments, "I agree with you O! *Sri: Krushna* for killing *Bhi:shma*, *Dro:na*, etc., as they are old, however, how can we have children like *Abhimanyu*, *Uththarakuma:ra* killed as they still have a bright future." Lord *Sri: Krushna* is responding.

Verse 22

vasa:msi ji:rna:ni yattha: viha:ya, nava:ni grunha:thi nara::para:ni

Lord **Sri**: Krushna says, “worn-out clothes are discarded for new ones”. That’s exactly *Arjuna*’s question, “*Bhi:shma*’s body is old and worn-out, however, *Abhimanyu*’s body is not”. In order to answer *Arjuna*’s question, one needs to know what it means for the body to become worn-out.

For instance, during summer time we see vendors selling coconut water. They take the full coconut and drill a hole into the shell. Later they insert a plastic straw for us to drink the refreshing coconut water. Once we drink the sweet water we throw away the coconut along with the straw. Although the straw that is made of plastic is intact, we do not wash it and take it with us. Instead we throw away the straw as well. Similarly, we eat ice cream in a beautiful cup using a neatly carved wooden spoon. Just as we throw away the plastic straw, we discard the beautiful cup and spoon. We don’t keep them even though they are perfectly fine and are decorative. The reason is that the plastic straw, the cup and wooden spoon - all have become ‘worn-out’. Meaning their utility has been served.. However, one might ask that the straw, cup and spoon look fine then how can we say they have become ‘worn-out’. The company that manufactured those devices made them for a purpose. Once the purpose is over, the device is considered useless even though it might look perfectly fine. Hence, the straw, cup and the spoon are considered ‘worn-out’ and are thrown away despite looking physically fine. The same principle applies to our bodies. As we learnt earlier, a body is created to experience *karmas*. If a body is created to experience two *karmas*, once those two *karmas* are experienced then the *a:thma* leaves the body irrespective of age. It could be one or two years and in some instances, the *a:thma* will be in the body for two hundred years until the two *karmas* are experienced. Until the two *karmas* are not experienced, the body is not considered worn-out.

Bodies of *Bhi:shma*, *Dro:na*, etc., are about to get worn-out and bodies of *Abhimanyu*, *Uththarakuma:ra*, etc., have also come close to becoming worn-out. Their allocated time is only sixteen years and their bodies will become worn-out soon. Hence, one must remember that anything made for a purpose becomes worn-out once the purpose is served.

Hence, Lord **Sri**: Krushna says, “Hey *Arjuna*, the bodies of these people are now worn-out. Their purpose is coming to an end and you can kill them, in a righteous war, without any hesitation. Move forward with conviction.” Saying so, Lord **Sri**: Krushna is encouraging *Arjuna* to proceed with the battle by giving the analogy of bodies and clothes. **Sri**: Krushna is further explaining the nature of our bodies.

The Certainty of Death and Rebirth

Page 169 We cannot generalize that anything old is useless. Nor can we generalize that anything new is important. We cannot assume that old things are less valuable and it is also a mistake to assume new things are more valuable. Sometimes, old things can be more valuable than new ones. For instance, kids collect stamps. Over time, the stamps become more valuable than the new ones. So are the collectibles we call antiques. The older the antiques, the more valuable they become. We see people taking extreme measures to preserve the antiques for their increased value.

In response to **Sri:** Krushna's "*vasa:msi ji:rna:ni*", *Arjuna* asks, "Is there any rule that we need to respect something just because it is new?" For instance, someone builds a brand new jail and suggests a poor guy living in a ragged hut to come and stay in the jail. The poor guy would never be willing to leave the old, ragged hut and stay in the jail even if he were given a brand new cell. Similarly, no one would be willing to discard even old, ragged clothes for a brand new burlap, a coarse hessian fabric of jute.

Sri: Krushna gives another analogy. Doctors use disposable syringes on patients. Once a syringe is removed from its package and is used on a patient, doctors are not supposed to reuse it. Instead it is thrown away because its purpose is completed and hence the syringe is now considered 'worn-out'. The doctor doesn't say, this could have been used for ten cc. I have used it only for three cc. Despite the needle, the syringe and the medicine looking fresh and new, the whole thing is thrown away.

Abhimanyu's body is created for only sixteen years, so are the other bodies meant for their respective lifetimes. Once they complete the allocated age, those bodies are considered worn-out and are discarded irrespective of whether they are young or old. Just as we would discard the sparingly used syringe, we would discard the bodies even if they are young, hence, **Sri:** Krushna urges *Arjuna* to not to worry about younger warriors like *Abhimanyu* and *Uththarakuma:ra* losing their lives.

Ajruna further asks, "Hey Krushna, just because they are getting new bodies, do you think the new bodies would be any more favorable than the current ones? We do not know what kind of lowly bodies they get. There is no guarantee that they would get a better body. Hence, how can I accept the likelihood of a bad outcome? How can I not worry about it? However, you are asking me not to worry, *kam gha:thayathi hanthi kam*. How can I not feel sorry and sad?"

Addressing *Arjuna*'s concerns about uncertainty of new bodies, **Sri: Krushna** suggests *Arjuna* not to worry about that as well. Because the battle is a righteous one, no matter what the outcome is, all warriors are bound to acquire better bodies in the heroic heavens. Whether one loses or wins this righteous battle, every one of the warriors will definitely go to the heavens, there is no doubt about that. Hence, there is no



need to worry about the new bodies as well.

Hence, if one loses life, he is prepared to give up life while performing one's ordained, righteous duties, because he will be blessed with a body that is more charming than the current one. The scriptures underscore that such people would surely get a new body that brings more prosperity.

Hence, **Sri: Krushna** urges *Arjuna* not to worry, "*vasa:msi ji:na:ni yattha: viha:ya*", these bodies are worn-out and are to be discarded, "*nava:ni grunha:thi nara:para:ni*", they will get much better bodies, there is no doubt about it. There is no doubt that they will get newer, more favorable and much superior bodies. Hence, there is no reason to feel sorry or sad., Your action of 'killing' will give them better bodies. "*thattha: sari:ra:ni viha:ya ji:na:ni anya:ni samya:thi na:va:ni de:hi*", all these beings will acquire better bodies that way. Saying that, Lord **Sri: Krushna** instructs *Arjuna* to fight.

To explain further, **Sri: Krushna** compares the body with clothing. If we understand the nature of clothes, what they are doing then we would in turn understand the nature of the bodies. When we wear clothes and after a few hours they become dirty, we replace the dirty clothes

with the fresh ones. The clothes we wear are under our control and we use them to make us look fresh and good. However, the clothes are not creating a unique identity for themselves. They are enhancing our identity.

Our bodies are also similar, *vasthra*, clothes. Just as the way the clothes are worn, *vas*, onto the body and they are protecting, *thra*, the body from the elements, so does the body to the *a:thma* within it.

Verse 23

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The body acts as a tool for *ji:va* to erase *ka:rmic* records by experiencing them. Because the body is 'worn' by *ji:va* and in turn 'protects' him, it is called a *vasthra*. Hence, just as the clothes are to the body, the body is to *ji:va*. The body should be in control of the *ji:va* and it should be beneficial to us and not the other way around.

Lord **Sri**: Krushna is reminding *Arjuna* that all these people exist in the above mentioned way. It is only beneficial for all the *ji:vas* to achieve better bodies. Moreover, they are achieving better bodies from this righteous war. Hence, there is no reason to feel sad. Saying so, Lord **Sri**: Krushna explained about the nature of bodies, while emphasizing that grief for their inevitable destruction, is unnecessary.

a:thma also needs an explanation. These are complex concepts that need to be explained again and again in different ways, only then we would understand. Now **Sri**: Krushna decides to explain the nature of *a:thma*. One should worry if there is something in the universe that can destroy *a:thma*, however, Lord **Sri**: Krushna is confirming in the twenty third *slo:ka* that there is no such a thing:

nainam chchhindanthi sasthra:ni, nainam dahathi pa:vakaha |
na chainam kle:dayanthya:po:, na so:shayathi ma:ruthaha || 2.23

This is the nature of the *a:thma*, "*nainam chchhindanthi sasthra:ni*". No *sasthras* can pierce it. *sasthras* means arrows, swords, scythes, hammers, etc. Can they penetrate through *a:thma*?

If any object is to be destroyed, one needs to penetrate the object and then destroy it. One can only squeeze inside if it is a compound object that is made of many parts. *a:thma* can penetrate anything, however, nothing can enter *a:thma* as it is not a compound object. *a:thma*

is the subtlest entity. Hence, if nothing can squeeze into *a:thma* then there is no question of destroying it. **Sri:** Krushna is very eloquently explaining the concept. There are four elements that we can perceive - earth, water, fire and wind. None of the elements can show their effect on the *a:thma*.

nainam chchhindanthi sasthra:ni - all these weapons are made up of the elements and hence they cannot penetrate *a:thma*.

nainam dahathi pa:vakaha, for fire elements to penetrate *a:thma*, there has to be enough space inside *a:thma* for fire to enter. Since there are no components in *a:thma*, no matter how small the fire particles they cannot enter *a:thma*. Hence fire cannot destroy *a:thma*. In order to burn a piece of cloth, fire elements are able to enter the earth particles that make up cloth and burn it. Because there are no parts of *a:thma*, nothing can destroy it.

A container gets hot when fire particles are able to penetrate its earth particles and are able to heat it up. Fire particles are able to penetrate the earth particles of the container because they are subtler and more minute than the earth particles.

Verse 24

Why We Grieve Bodies But Not Flowers

Page 172As long as the fire particles are circulating within the container, we say that the container is hot. In fact, the container is not getting hot, we must remember that the fire particles are circulating in between the container (earth) particles. If we remove the source of fire and keep the container aside, then the container slowly comes down to room temperature. It means that the fire particles have receded from the container. On the other hand, if we keep the container in the fridge, after a while we say that the container has become cold. It means that water particles have entered the container as water particles are subtler than the earth particles. The nature of water particles is to be cold. If we take the container out of the fridge then the container slowly comes up to room temperature. It means that the water particles have receded from the container and brought it back to room temperature.

However, water particles cannot penetrate *a:thma*. “*na chainam kle:dayanthi a:po:*”

If we say something gets wet, it means the water particles are able to penetrate, however, they cannot penetrate *a:thma* and hence water cannot make *a:thma* wet. Similarly, “*na so:shayathi ma:ruthaha*”, nor can air dry *a:thma*. Air particles are not small enough to penetrate

a:thma and hence cannot dry it. It's like using a beetle leaf to break open the ground. Just the way the leaf has no capability to break open the ground, air has no capability to affect *a:thma*.

achhedyo::yam ada:hyo::yam, akle:dyo::so:shya e:va cha |
nithyassarvagathah sttha:nuhu, achalo::yam sana:thanaha || 2.24 ||

Throughout *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, the *slo:kas* seem like they are repeating the meaning again and again. However, there is no reason for Lord **Sri: Krushna** to repeat, instead He is reinforcing the same concept in new ways so that it sticks to our minds. A teacher tries to explain a concept in multiple ways so that the students are very clear. Similarly, *JagadGuru Sri: Krushna* is explaining the wisdom of 'body-soul' discernment to *Arjuna* from different angles so that he understands really well. Earlier **Sri: Krushna** said, *a:thma* can never be altered by any object.

Sri: Krushna then reinforces the idea in a different way that it is not the *a:thma* that does not undergo change, instead, it is that the objects do not have the ability to alter *a:thma*. First, let us understand how one might misconstrue as if they have the same meaning. The terms “*nainam chchhindanthi*” and “*acche:dyaha*” from previous *slo:kas* sound as if they are repeating the same meaning.

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achhedyo::yam ada:hyo::yam, akle:dyo::so:shya e:va cha. a:thma can never be cut, burned, wetted, or dried. These are its four qualities. In the previous verse, **Krushna** says weapons cannot pierce *a:thma*, water cannot wet *a:thma*, wind cannot dry *a:thma* and fire cannot burn *a:thma*. However, in this verse, **Krushna** says, *a:thma* is impenetrable, incombustible, and beyond dampness or dryness. In both verses, the words sound exactly the same, however, only the one who examines the words carefully will understand the subtle difference.

Let's examine. For instance, we see smoke rising into the sky and we decide to catch it. As we reach for the smoke and try to catch it, it escapes through our fingers and palm. The reason is our hands do not have the capability to catch the smoke. Moreover, we cannot create any hand-like instruments to catch the smoke. The reason is that smoke by nature cannot be caught by an instrument. Hence, smoke lacks a nature to be caught by hands or hand-like instruments. On the other hand, hands lack the capability to catch the smoke. Similarly, we cannot use a leaf to break a clay pot. The reason is the leaf has no capability to break the pot and the pot is ineligible to be broken by the leaf. In other words, we learn that a pot is incapable of being broken by a certain object and a certain object cannot break a pot.

We examine the relationship from two perspectives. First from the smoke's perspective and then from the hand's perspective. In the second example, first from the pot's perspective and then from the leaf's perspective. Similarly, we first examine from the perspective of physical

elements and then from *a:thma*'s perspective. For the elements, Lord **Sri**: Krushna is selecting four - earth, water, wind and fire. He is not considering the fifth element, space. He is saying that *a:thma* cannot be destroyed by anything that is made of earth, water, wind or fire. None of the four elements or any combination of them have the ability to alter *a:thma* and the *a:thma* lacks the nature to be disturbed by any of the four elements. Lord **Sri**: Krushna shows the nuance of examining from the two perspectives. Hence, we can agree that it is not a repetition. This elaboration is called "*mukha: nthre: na*". He gives a reason for why one cannot alter another and why some things cannot be changed. It is in the nature of the two objects.

There are some people in this world who are stubborn. No reasoning can help change their mind. They do not change their mind even if Brahma tries to convince them otherwise. We say that it is in their nature or it is their innate ability and are born in that way. As a result, no one can

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convince such people otherwise. *Ra:vana:sura* is one such person who did not correct himself despite the advice from *Hanuma:n*, *Vibhi:shana*, his own ministers, *Si:tha*, or *Ra:ma*. He refused to change his mind.

Si:tha urged *Ra:vana* to reconcile with *Ra:ma*. She suggested that if bowing at *Ra:ma*'s feet felt impossible, he could at least extend the hand of friendship. Even toward an enemy, a simple gesture of goodwill was possible.

Ra:vana refused. *Si:tha* warned that such stubbornness would lead to his destruction, yet he remained unmoved, even when reminded of the suffering it would bring.

When asked why he would choose a path that harmed himself, *Ra:vana* replied that it was simply his nature: "*e:shame: sahajo: do:shaha* - This is the flaw I was born with."

Si:tha questioned whether one could not rise above one's nature. *Ra:vana* answered with "*svabha:vaha durathikramaha* - Just as one's true nature is difficult to transcend, I cannot overcome my own flawed nature."

a:thma's true nature is not subject to change. Behaviour is affected when *a:thma* is associated with *prakruthi*, primordial nature. When it is separated from *prakruthi*, then *a:thma*'s true nature shines through. Lord **Sri**: Krushna wants to convey this to *Arjuna*. That is the reason, **Sri**: Krushna shows the four elements and all the objects we see around are made up of the four elements. Even though the objects keep changing, the *a:thma*'s true nature never changes despite it being associated with them. Just like the water poured in a red colored glass looks red even though the water itself did not change the color, *a:thma* too does not change even if it is in this mundane world made up of

the four elements. It is said that if two people live together for six months then they both behave similarly. *a:thma* is not like that even if it is associated with this mundane world.

“*ajaha, nithyaha, sa:svathaha, sana:thanaha, achalaha, stthanuhu*”, says Lord **Sri**: Krushna beautifully about *a:thma*.

ajaha - *a:thma* has no birth like that of the objects in the *prakruthi*.

nithyaha - There is no destruction for *a:thma* in all three times (past, present or future). It always exists.

sarvagathaha - *a:thma* can enter into anything.

Chh:andogya upanishad asserts,

se:yam de:vathaikshatha hantha:hamima:sthisro: de:vatha: anena |

ji:ve:na:thmana:nupravisya na:maru:pe: vya:karava:ni:thi ||

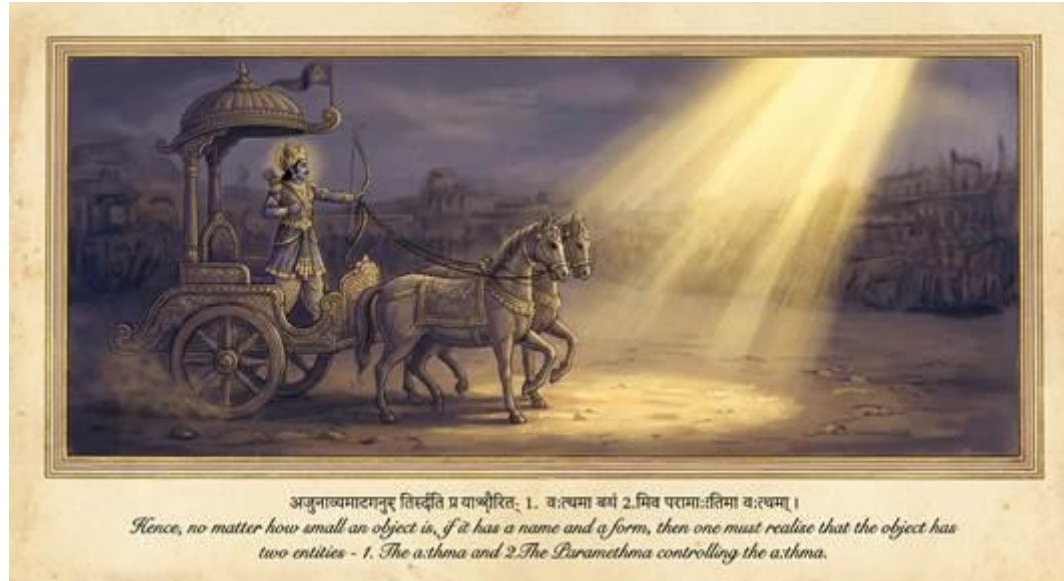
Meaning, the Lord takes a vow for the manifestation of the universe. As the entities emerge, He places the *a:thma* inside them. He then follows the *a:thma* giving the objects support from within and all around.

Focus on Present Righteous Action

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One might ask, as *a:thma* is invisible how can we be sure? Yes, *a:thma* cannot be seen in any object, however, when one dies it is common to say that one has gone. Even though the dead body with all its parts is still available, the person does not speak or respond. Hence, it proves that when the *a:thma* is inside the body, the body is giving an opportunity for *a:thma* to use his inherent *jna:nam* to perform activities. The body does not always allow knowledge of *a:thma* to shine through. For instance, a stone which also has a form and a name also has an *a:thma* and *Parama:thma* residing within. However, the stone body does not allow the *a:thma* to use his *jna:nam* to perform activities. It's like a person sitting in a well lit room with all the doors and windows of the room shut. Looking from outside, one would not see the light nor the person inside the room. At least a door or a window must be opened so that light from the room can spread outside. The bodies of all living beings are like a room with a door or a window opened. The bodies allow the *a:thmas* inside to use their *jna:na* appropriately. On the other hand, a stone body is like a room with completely shut doors and windows and hence it does not allow the *a:thma* to use their *jna:nam*.

l:sa:va:sya upanishad states that the *a:thma* inside a stone experiences a kind of profoundly deep darkness as a result of their extremely



sinful, *ka:rmic* records.

Hence, *a:thma* is present in all objects that have a form and a name. Moreover, *a:thma* is *sarvagatha* - “*nithyah sarvagathah stthanuhu*”. *Sarvagathaha* means immutable. *a:thma* does not change. Just as a foundation for a house does not change, while the external structure, etc can change, the *a:thma* does not change, though the bodies keep changing. Immutability refers to the *a:thma* that stays the same even though it takes different bodies as per the *karmas*.

“*sarvagathah stthanuhu achalo:yam*” - *achalaha* means the one without movement. *a:thma* is *achalaha* as he does not move even though he is associated with the body that moves. *a:thma* does not experience growth nor deterioration. Also, *a:thma* does not experience the joy or sorrow that is possessed by the body. *a:thma* stays superior to the body.

“*achalaha sana:thanaha*” - some folks interpret *sana:thanaha* as something that is ancient. *sana:thanaha*, however, means “*sada: asthi*”, something that does not change and always stays uniform. *a:thma* is *sana:thana* and hence it does not change.

A synonym for *sanathanaha* is *puranaha*, meaning something that stays fresh and does not age with time. *Arjuna* then asks, “Hey *Krushna*!, I understand that common people like me cannot see the *a:thma*, however, scholars and great people should at least see or perceive *a:thma* with their mind and knowledge.” To which, **Sri:** *Krushna* responds, “*Arjuna*!, *a:thma* is such a thing that it cannot be seen by anyone. It is only through *ve:dic* scriptures that one can understand *a:thma*’s nature and acquire knowledge its existence. Hence, there is no reason for you to cry over it.” Saying so, Lord **Sri:** *Krushna* is attempting multiple ways to relieve *Arjuna* from his sorrow. Let us understand further.

In fact, **Sri:** *Krushna*’s deep love is not just for *Arjuna*, He has love for all of us. It is that love that is compelling **Sri:** *Krushna* to keep repeating the quintessence about *a:thma* to us. He wants to make sure that all of us have a clear understanding of *a:thma* so that we let go of our sorrow and become blissful. However, one might wonder why **Sri:** *Krushna* is repeating it so many times. We might think, “We understand. The *a:thma* is eternal and the body is temporary. We have already understood it.” So thought *Arjuna* as well after hearing **Sri:** *Krushna* so many times. However, much later towards the end of **Sri:** *Krushna*’s *avatha:ra*, He called upon *Arjuna* asking him to repeat a verse and its meaning from *Gi:tha*. **Sri:** *Krushna* was aghast to learn that *Arjuna* did not remember any verse, let alone say the meaning, but also blamed **Sri:** *Krushna* for not telling him anything called *Gi:tha*!

Luckily for us, out of abundant mercy, Lord **Sri:** *Krushna* continues to make sure that we understand the nature of *a:thma* so that we are relieved from despondency. He is using *Arjuna* as a means to convey the message to us. The Lord is making *Arjuna* realize his ordained duties for the greater good.

Verse 25

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Suppose a farmer sows some seeds and the crop is now ready for reaping. Right at the time, the farmer sees his cow grazing near the crop, destroying it. He immediately yells at his son to scare the cow out of the fields. The son, on the other hand, shows mercy on the cow and lets the cow graze near the crop. The farmer knows that the cow is destroying the crop and he is also aware when and how to feed the cow. The son on the other hand is not mature enough to know that the cow is destroying their crop, which feeds many people. Hence, the cow needs to be driven out of the field. Similarly, when a fruit tree is infested with insects, the insects have to be killed to protect the fruits that feed many people. It is unwise to spare the insects under the pretext of non-violence. Insects have to be killed to spare the fruits just as we would kill viruses to spare the health of a body. One would consider a doctor incompetent if they argue against killing viruses just because they are living things. That is exactly what **Sri:** *Krushna* is trying to convey to *Arjuna*. Eliminating *Kauravas* is justified because only then the world will be a safer place.

Thus, Lord **Sri**: Krushna is motivating *Arjuna* (and us) towards performing our ordained duties. Under the misplaced concern of killing his relatives, *Arjuna* is backing away from his duty to punish *Kauravas*. Motivating people to perform their duties is no ordinary task. That is the reason Lord **Sri**: Krushna is trying to convince *Arjuna* in many different ways. In the second chapter, Lord **Sri**: Krushna is explaining the eternity of *a:thma* and urging *Arjuna* to overcome his sorrow.

avyaktho::yam achinthyo::yam, avika:ryo::yam ucchyathe: |
thasma:de:vam vidithvainam, na:nuso:chithu marhasi || 2.25 ||

Sri: Krushna says, “*Arjuna*!, it is not appropriate for you to feel sad. Your sorrow is spreading indiscriminately. It is starting with one issue and is creeping onto many unrelated issues. It has started with *Kauravas* and is spreading to unrelated people. This sort of sorrow is not appropriate for you.”

Why is it not appropriate for *Arjuna*?. *e:vam vidithva e:nam* - because *Arjuna*’s knowledge of *a:thma* is getting shrouded by deep sorrow.

Then what should *Arjuna* know? How come *Arjuna* cannot see *a:thma*?

“*avyaktho::yam achinthyo::yam, avika:ryo::yam ucchyathe*” - *a:thma* is not perceivable by any of our senses.

There are dust particles in the air. We cannot see them. When such dust particles collect on the surface of an object, we perceive them through the sense of touch.

The Endless Wonder of a:thma Knowledge

Page 178 For instance, despite cleaning a mirror we can still feel a few dust particles on the surface. The particles are called *avyakthas* as we cannot see the particles with our eyes. Some cannot see people sitting right before them and they need glasses for better eye sight. Similarly, we cannot see the *a:thma*. *Arjuna* laments, “I understand that some people might have weak eye sight and hence cannot see *a:thma*. How about people who do not have defective eyes?”

Sri: Krushna responds, “*a:thma* is invisible even to healthy eyes. *a:thma* cannot be perceived by any of the senses even if they are pure. Hence, it is called *avyaktham*. *vyaktham* means something that can be seen such as a pot, cat, dog, tree, etc. However, *a:thma* has no visible form and does not deteriorate like the *vyaktha* objects.” *Arjuna* says, “Nevermind, if I cannot see *a:thma* then I will imagine its form just as we can infer the existence of the builder by looking at a building.” Just as we look at the mundane objects and infer that there has to

be a manufacturer, similarly, by looking at this universe we can infer the existence of a creator. Extrapolating the same concept, because the body is walking, eating, talking, etc, we can imagine the existence of *a:thma* inside the body.

However, imagination too falls short in realizing *a:thma*. *achinthyaha ayam* - *a:thma* is such an object that it is impossible even to imagine. The reason is that even for imagination we first need a visible object of reference. For instance, by observing a cat, we can imagine a tiger, by seeing smoke on a distant hill, we can infer the existence of fire even though we cannot see the fire on the hill. Coming back to *a:thma*, no object exists in this universe that will help us in imagining *a:thma*. There is no way we can imagine an entity without a reference object that provides us with clues about the form, nature, etc. That is the reason *a:thma* is considered both *avyaktham* and *achinthyam*.

avika:ryo::yam - *a:thma* has no *vika:ram*. *vika:ram* means change. *a:thma* does not change at all. What we are seeing in this mundane world are the objects that keep changing. Since, *a:thma* does not change, it does not deteriorate.

“If no one can see, then who has the authority to talk about *a:thma*?” - *ve:da* is the authority.

Lord **Sri:** Krushna says, “*Arjuna*, don’t assume that I am talking about something new about *a:thma* In fact, I am simply reiterating what *ve:da* says. When you understand this *ve:dic* knowledge I am imparting, your sorrow will be relieved.”

Verse 26

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Arjuna retorts, “You are asking me not to worry because body and *a:thma* are separate and that *a:thma* cannot be seen. What if I consider that the body is the same as *a:thma* and that they are not two different entities. What will you say then?”

Arjuna continues, “Believing body and *a:thma* as the same could very well be an illusion. In that case, is it still wrong for me to feel sad? Forget about me, how about other people who think body and *a:thma* are the same? They have to cry anyway, don't they?”

Sri: Krushna responds, “My dear *Arjuna*, on the contrary people who think that body and *a:thma* are not different do not have to worry at all.” *Swa:mi* out of abundant mercy continues to impart right knowledge to all of us.

Lord **Sri:** Krushna starts with a subtle grammatical usage “*attha*” to convey that the context is changing going forward.

attha chainam nithyaja:tham, nithyam va: manyase: mrutham |
tattha::pithvam maha:ba:ho:, naivam so:chithumarhasi || 2.26

"There is no reason to cry in either case. Let's say you think the body is *a:thma*. You can observe that the body changes every day. Yesterday it was a certain size. Today it is reduced. Tomorrow it deteriorates to a still smaller size and eventually disappears. Then we cremate the body. When the body is cremated, the water evaporates, air is released into the atmosphere and the solid turns into ashes. As you can see, the body simply changes form. We are calling this change, 'death'. No one can stop the change despite many spending millions of dollars to escape death. *nithyaja:tham nithyam mrutham* - everyday the bodies are changing. Everyday the bodies are born and bodies are 'dying'. What exactly is being born? Anytime a body takes a new form then it is said to be born. Also, it can be said to be dead as well and we are becoming sad. On the other hand, when a fruit is cut into pieces, we don't say the fruit is dead or pieces are born. Also, we don't say the fruit pieces are dead when we eat them. We know that the fruit has simply changed its form to pieces and then the pieces disappear into our stomach. We do not feel sad because we know that the fruit has changed from one form to another. Our bodies are also similar. They are simply changing form and there is nothing we can do. Hence, there is no reason to cry over something that is a natural phenomenon."

tattha::pithvam maha:ba:ho:, naivam so:chithumarhasi - Even if you believe that nothing is created or destroyed, you still need to accept transformation. It goes by the name *sathka:rya va:dam*, we are only giving the transformation names like birth and death. Crying over the names is futile.

The following beautiful verse is given by **Sri: Krushna** for the benefit of people who think body and *a:thma* are one and the same.

Verse 27

ja:thasya hi dhruvo: mruthyuhu, dhruvam janma mruthasya cha |



thasma:dapariha:rye::rtthe , na thvam so:chithumarhasi || 2.27

ja:thasya hi dhruvo: mruthyuhu - death is inevitable to anything that is born
dhruvam janma mruthasya cha - re-birth is also inevitable to everything that dies

No one can stop it and hence there is no reason to cry over it.

This verse raises a lot of questions. We see people passing away, however, we do not see them reborn again. Moreover, if everyone who dies is reborn then the world population will spiral up and there won't be enough space for everyone.

Sri: Krushna is clarifying for the people who think that the body is the same as *a:thma*. All objects keep changing their form and everything that dies has to be re-born. However, they are not necessarily reborn in the exact form as before. It is impossible to imagine for them to be reborn in a certain form or place or name. The material with which the body is formed will take another form at another place or at another time. The material is made up of five elements that sometimes take the form of a human or an animal or a tree. Moreover when it dies, the

body goes back into the material form. No one can stop this phenomenon and hence there is no need to cry over it. An ignorant person may cry, however, a *maha:ba:ho* - a mighty person, with great intellect, such as *Arjuna* should not lament..

This world has people of different faiths. Some only believe in what they can see. Some others believe in the invisible. Some carry on through lives reconciling both the seen and invisible. There are people who follow whatever is available to them and carry on with their lives. Also, there are people who follow the words of scholars and well-meaning people and live their lives accordingly. Likewise, everyone in this world adopts a path and lives a life that is beneficial to them without hurting others.

Among such people, who are willing to follow the path laid by *ve:dic* scriptures are called *a:sthikas*. Those who do not believe in *ve:das* and live their life in a non-*ve:dic* way are called *na:sthikas*. There is a common belief that *a:sthika:s* are more respectable than *na:sthikas*, however, the wise denounce such an idea. *a:sthikathvam* and *na:sthikathvam* are two distinct paths for anyone who wants to progress. Anyone who is bound to a certain path lives their lives as per the rules of that path. Without a path, the mind wanders in wrong directions. Human intellect is very powerful and without a path it can become detrimental to others.

The Ever-Wondrous Mystery of the Soul

Page 181 Only when one abides by the discipline of a chosen path does it serve as an embankment, like a channel guiding water for the benefit of others. Without such an embankment, water cannot be put to good use. It may rush aimlessly to the ocean, flood villages along the way, or irrigate barren lands, bringing little real value.

In the same way, the human intellect needs a boundary, a firm guide, to keep the mind in check. A mind without restraint is prone to wander on reckless adventures, leading to harm rather than good. In the *ve:dic* tradition, an uncontrolled mind is described as *visrunkhala pravrutthi*, activity without discipline. Those who keep the *ve:dic* scriptures as their guiding “choke chain” are called *a:sthikas*. Such people hold three core beliefs:

1. ***prakruthi*** – The material world, which manifests in various forms and is experienced through the five qualities: ***sabda*** (sound), ***sparsa*** (touch), ***ru:pa*** (form), ***rasa*** (taste), and ***gandha*** (smell).
2. ***ji:va* or *a:thma*** – The individual self or soul, that animates *prakruthi*.

3. **i:svara-thathva or Parama:thma-thathva** – The Supreme Being who governs both *prakruthi* and *a:thma*, guiding and sustaining them, from within and all around. The *ve:das* offer many names for this truth, and our revered *a:cha:ryas* affirm that all these ultimately refer to *Na:ra:yana*.

Some accept the *ve:das* as the supreme authority in understanding these three entities. Others follow different sources to shape their beliefs and propagate their philosophies. Regardless of the source, every person depends on their chosen authority to interpret life's events.

Throughout life, everyone encounters both joy and sorrow. We face successes and failures, gain and loss, praise and criticism. These experiences stir happiness or sadness, and at times deep sorrow. The wise learn to keep sorrow in check, knowing it is an inevitable part of existence; the unwise become enslaved by it.

This is the lesson Lord **Sri**: Krushna is impressing upon *Arjuna*, showing how different people respond to the same emotions. The intelligent recognize that sorrow is unavoidable, yet they do not let it overpower them.

Consider a simple example: when we buy an expensive, beautiful glass, we use it with great care. Over time, we know there is always a risk of it breaking-it is, after all, glass. If it shatters by accident, we naturally feel sad. But because we understood its fragile nature from the start, we eventually reconciled with the loss.

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Think of a delicious, aromatic dish. We savor it fully, appreciating its taste, yet we don't cry when it's gone. Why? Because we know from the start that it was meant to be enjoyed and then consumed.

Or take the example of a beautiful, fragrant rose. We nurture the plant so the blossom is perfect. Once it blooms, we admire its fragrance, color, and shape. We may even pluck it, place it in water, and add nutrients to extend its freshness. But no matter what we do, the rose eventually withers. We may feel a pang of sadness, but we don't sink into despair because we understand its nature. Flowers are destined to fade.

With small objects like a dish or a flower, our sadness stays within limits. We enjoy them while they last, we protect them while we can, and when they are gone, we let go.

Our bodies are no different. They are formed , grow, change, deteriorate, and eventually perish. While they are here, we act through them. But because we deeply identify with our bodies, we feel strong attachment - and this attachment makes us grieve deeply when loved ones die. A wise person reflects on the truth that the body is like a withering flower. This helps them face loss with equanimity.

This is the situation *Arjuna* faces. He is grief-stricken at the thought of killing *Bhi:shma* and the *Kauravas*. He sees only the body and not the deeper truth -the *a:thma* , the self - that supports it. The body changes and dies; the *a:thma* never does. This is what **Sri:** Krushna, revealing the wisdom of the *ve:das*, is trying to convey to *Arjuna*, explaining it in many ways so that he may see beyond grief.

Verse 28

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We can easily control our emotions when it comes to flowers, water, or food. We don't feel deep sorrow when they are gone. Yet, when it comes to human bodies, for some reason, we sink into deep, inconsolable grief. This is due to ignorance.

The *ve:das* say “The body and the *a:thma* are different.” Even if one does not believe that the body and *a:thma*: are different, **Sri:** Krushna says there is still no need to grieve. Beginning with *attha chainam nithya ja:tham* and concluding with *naivam so:chithumarhasi*, there is no need for such sorrow.

e:vam na so:chithumarhasi—Some sadness is natural, but excessive weeping is not fitting.

ja:thasya hi dhruvo: mruthyuḥu, dhruvam janma mruthasya—Even if one thinks the *a:thma* and the body are the same, the body will inevitably change. Death is certain for the born, and birth is certain for the dead. This means that for those who identify the soul with the body, death and birth are simply natural transformations.

Death and birth, in this sense, mean a change of form. A rose wilts and loses its shape, yet it makes way for new roses to bloom. A tree sheds its leaves, which decompose and nourish new life. Everything in the universe follows this cycle. Likewise, *dhruvam janma mruthasya* reminds us that all things that are ‘gone’, come back in a new form. It is neither wise nor possible to stop this cycle, nor to weep over what we cannot control. With this understanding, **Sri:** Krushna blesses another verse to further lift *Arjuna* from his grief.

avyaktha:di:ni bhu:tha:ni, vyaktha madhya:ni bha:ra:tha |
avyakthanidhana:nye:va , thathra ka: paride:vana: || 2.28

Eternal Soul and Duty Without Attachment

Page 184 In this verse, Lord **Sri**: Krushna is consoling *Arjuna*, urging him not to grieve, by explaining that all beings are unmanifested before birth, manifested at birth and again unmanifested on death.. Whenever we wish to establish a concept, we must first understand and reconcile three key aspects—the **context**, the **background**, and the **consequence**. In Sanskrit, this is called *upakrama* and *upasamha:ra*. The meaning of a text should never be interpreted in isolation; one must know its beginning, its conclusion, and what lies in between before speaking on it.

Once, there was a grand conference on **Sri:mad Bha:gavatham**. Many scholars and respected dignitaries had gathered to discuss the nature of God and His devotees. Suddenly, a man entered the assembly and began criticizing them: “You are all deluded! The *Bha:gavatham* does not speak of God, On the contrary, it says there is no God!”

Everyone was stunned into silence. The man continued: “What have you been studying all these years? I can prove it—look at this page, this paragraph, this very verse.”

The scholars turned to the verse, and to their surprise, it indeed seemed to deny God’s existence. But one thoughtful scholar decided to examine the earlier pages. He discovered the truth; the verse was part of a conversation between *Prahla:da* and his father, *Hiranyakasipu*. In that scene, Hiranyakasipu declares that he has searched for God and found nothing, and therefore claims there is no God, demanding that *Prahla:da* worship him instead.

The misunderstanding arose because the statement was taken out of context. This is why one must always grasp the **context**, **background**, and **consequence** before interpreting any text.

Similarly, Lord **Sri**: Krushna urges *Arjuna* to reflect on where these people (the *Kauravas*) have come from, and where they are destined to go. Only then will he understand the reality and be free from grief.

Some people focus solely on the physical body, ignoring the existence of the *a:thma*. Lord **Sri**: Krushna addresses this very point in his discourse with *Arjuna*, reassuring him that even those who hold this view need not despair. To continue his argument, **Sri**: Krushna then poses a crucial question to *Arjuna* about the true origin of all visible bodies.



In sharp contrast, modern scientists propose the theory of evolution, suggesting that life on Earth has evolved over millions of years. This theory posits that a single-celled organism gradually evolved into more complex life forms, eventually leading to vertebrates, apes, and finally, humans. They speculate that we may continue to evolve over millions of years, potentially losing limbs or other features, much like cyclops in a myth. Scientists often point to examples like the dinosaurs to support their theories of change and extinction. However, these ideas remain conjectural, based on hypotheses rather than verifiable, direct evidence. It is a fundamental challenge to do both, look into the distant past and predict the far-off future, with certainty.

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It's impossible to claim with absolute certainty what has happened in the past, just as it is to predict what the future holds. It is easy to comment on hindsight. Our true concern, therefore, should be the present, and our actions should always align with righteousness.

In his dialogue with *Arjuna*, Lord **Sri**: Krushna emphasizes this point by recounting the *Kauravas*' transgressions against the *Pa:ndavas*. The *Kauravas* relentlessly inflicted suffering upon them: they burned down their house, publicly insulted their wife *Draupadi*, stole their kingdom, and repeatedly tried to take their lives. They even forced them into a long, difficult exile. **Sri**: Krushna's message is clear: even if you deny the existence of the *a:thma* and only care about the physical body, the *Kauravas* must still be punished for the suffering they have caused. The reason being it is our duty to protect the body and remove obstacles that are preventing us from doing so.

Verse 29

Divine Will Behind the Dharmic War

Page 187Even though death is inevitable, losing a loved one naturally brings sorrow because the familiar form is no longer seen. Yet grief cannot change reality. Eventually, everyone must let it go.

However, *Arjuna* is no ordinary person. He knows the *ve:das* and has faith in their teachings. Therefore, **Sri**: Krushna reminds him that one who understands the distinction between the body and the *a:thma* should not grieve.

Most people identify only with the body. In such a world, hearing about the *a:thma*, understanding it, or speaking about it is rare. Rarer still is someone who lives by that knowledge. Such a person is as extraordinary as a white lotus blooming in blazing fire or someone chanting *Ra:ma*'s name in the midst of *Lanka*. The very nature of the *a:thma* makes it incredibly difficult to describe or comprehend.

a:scharyavath pasyathi kaschide:nam,
a:scharyavath vadathi thatthaiva cha:nyaha |
a:scharyavath chainam anya sruno:thi,
sruthva:pye:nam ve:da na chaiva kaschith || 2.29

Some see the soul as amazing, some describe it as amazing and some hear about it as amazing, while others, even on hearing, cannot understand it at all.

Sri: Krushna repeats the word "*a:scharyam*" which translates to "wonder" or "marvel." An object is considered *a:scharyam* when it captivates us, making us exclaim "*a:ha!*" with awe. This sense of wonder brings us joy because it reveals a new aspect each time we encounter it.

There is a mention in the poem *Ma:gha*, "*kshane kshane yan navatha:m upaithi thad e:va ru:pam ramani:yatha:ya:ha*," which means, "That which is ever new, moment after moment, is the essence of beauty." This is the true nature of God, it is an endless source of *a:scharyam*. Each time we "see" the divine, it feels entirely new. Even after blinking, we perceive it in a fresh light, making us exclaim, "*a:ha!*" again and again. This perpetual newness is the profound *a:scharyam* that **Sri:** Krushna is describing.

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If *a:thma* is so very amazing, how much more amazing would *Parama:thma* be !!

a:thma is something so impossible to even imagine, that it is difficult to find anyone who can truly speak about it. Even rarer are those who have realized it. Among the very few who have attained realization, most prefer solitude and do not mingle with others. And even if such a realized soul chooses to interact with people, they rarely speak about *a:thma*. Only in very rare cases does one who has realized it openly share their insights.

Moreover, no matter how long one speaks of *a:thma*, there is always more to say. No matter how much one knows, there is always more to know. And no matter how much one listens, there is still more to understand. Such is the boundless nature of *a:thma*.

Consider technology as an example. About a hundred years ago, when radios were invented, people were astonished to hear voices from far away. In time, it became ordinary. Then came tape recorders, and once again people were filled with awe, until they too became common. Next came television, which amazed people for a while, until it became mundane. Then computers arrived, inspiring fresh wonder. In this way, the cycle of amazement and familiarity continues. Similarly, the realization of *a:thma* is ever-expanding and never fully exhausted.

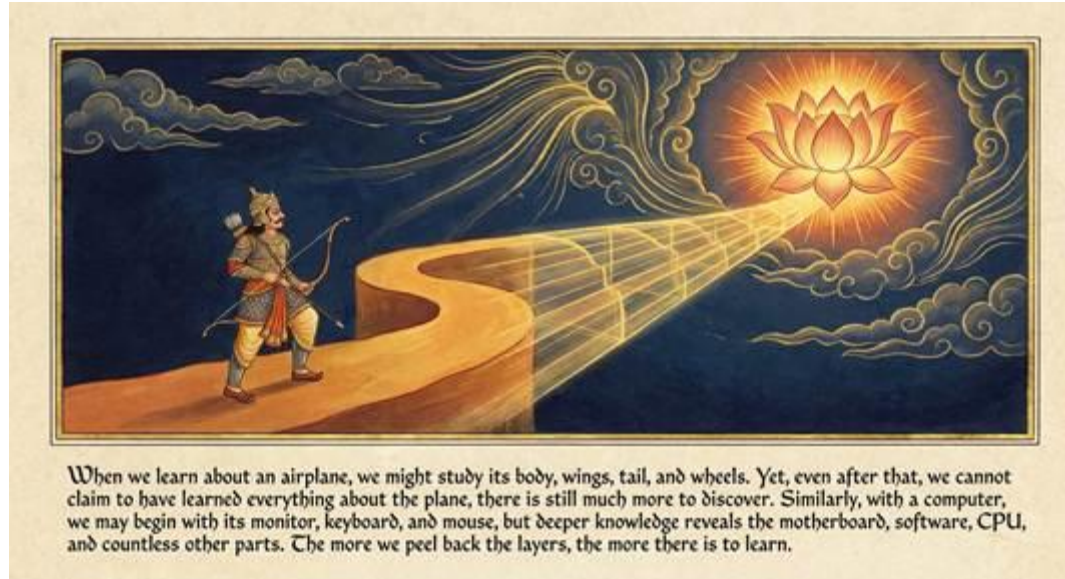
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There are many things in this world that are visible, many new inventions that arouse amazement. They inspire awe at first, but eventually we get accustomed to them and they seem dull and ordinary. In contrast, *a:thma* is not perceivable; its knowledge is limitless—no matter how often we listen or speak about it, it is impossible to ever claim complete understanding.

Performing Duty as Path to Liberation

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Can *a:thma* be understood in the same way? Scholars say it is not possible. Unlike worldly objects, the more we learn about *a:thma*, the more wonder it inspires. *a:thma* always exists, yet it cannot be fully known. And to understand anything, we usually rely on an analogy,



something to compare it with.

For example, if someone asks, 'How big is the sky?' we cannot answer by saying, 'It is as big as my garden.' The garden is far too small. In fact, there is nothing in this world larger than the sky to compare it with. That is why we say, *gaganam gagana:ka:ram*—the sky is like the sky. The same applies to the ocean: since there is no greater reference point, we say, *sa:garam sa:garopama*—the ocean is like the ocean. Sage *Va:Imi:ki* used this very method while describing the epic battle between *Ra:ma* and *Ra:vana*, writing: *ra:mara:vanayor yuddham ra:mara:vanayor iva*—the battle of *Ra:ma* and *Ra:vana* was like the battle of *Ra:ma* and *Ra:vana*.

In the same way, *a:thma* has nothing with which it can be compared. There is no temporal object that can serve as its analogy.

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There is, however, one possible analogy—and that is God. God is *paramache:thana*, Supreme Consciousness. *chaithanyam*, consciousness, is present both in God and in the *a:thma*. In that sense, we may compare *a:thma* with God. Yet, if we do not truly understand *a:thma*, how can we ever hope to understand God? Comparing one unknown with another unknown is not the way of the wise.

Therefore, since there is no true analogy for *a:thma*, scholars and **Sri: Krushna** declare that *a:thma* is *ascharyavath*—a reality that inspires endless awe. Lord **Sri: Krushna** now begins to delve deeper into this profound truth.

Once upon a time, a frog from the ocean visited a frog who lived in a well. The well-dwelling frog, who had never left the well, asked curiously, 'What is this ocean you speak of?' The ocean-dwelling frog replied, 'It is a place filled with water, just like the water in your well.' The well frog exclaimed, 'Oh! Is it bigger than my well?' The well was only four or five feet wide and perhaps forty to hundred feet deep. The ocean, on the other hand, was vast, beyond imagination. The well frog then asked, 'Can I swim across it? I can easily swim across my well, you know.' The ocean frog was astonished and said, 'No, it is impossible to swim across the ocean!' No matter how hard the ocean frog tried, it was impossible to convey the true magnitude of the ocean to the well frog.

In the same way, people of this world cannot fully comprehend the nature of *a:thma*. There is no object in this world that can truly serve as a comparison to it. That is why even the greatest scholars exclaim in wonder, *a:scharyam*, *a:scharyam*, amazing, amazing, when speaking of the *a:thma*.

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Hence, there is no need to worry, for even the greatest scholars cannot fully comprehend the nature of the *a:thma*. Just as the number of sand grains on earth or the stars in the sky are beyond human calculation, so too is the mystery of the *a:thma* beyond imagination. That is why Lord **Sri: Krushna** says the *a:thma* is always awe-inspiring, each time we hear about it, reflect upon it, or speak of it, its wonder is ever new.

Some people claim to be self-realized and say they have 'seen' the *a:thma*, often describing it as a glowing light on the forehead between the eyebrows. But such notions are misconceptions. They arise more from imagination rather than truth, fueled these days by television, movies, and special effects that make us believe in what is not real. With modern technology, one can upload a simple photograph into an artificial intelligence platform and generate images of oneself with wings flying in the sky or even walking on the moon.

Yet, the human mind is more powerful than any TV screen or AI tool. It can project images so vivid that we get deceived by our own imagination. Still, even with all its creative power, the mind cannot conceive or construct an image of the *a:thma*. Its true nature remains beyond the reach of thought, imagination, or vision.

Upholding Dharma and Consequences of Retreat

Page 193The *upanishads* say, “*a:thma* is not something that floats in thin air; it dwells within the body. From there, it sustains the body, enabling it to function in an orderly manner and making it lively. *che:shta:va:n*—*a:thma* gives the body the ability to act and engage in activities.”

If someone claims they have “seen” the *a:thma* and know everything about it, we should regard that claim the same way we would regard someone who says they have counted all the stars in the sky, measured every drop of water in the ocean, or numbered every grain of sand on Earth. Such a person would be considered delusional. Lord **Sri**: Krushna Himself says that a person who boasts of having “realized” the *a:thma* in such a manner is no different from a madman. Even the great *rushis*, after thousands of years of deep meditation and *thapasya*, could only glimpse a fraction, an iota, of its reality.

The *a:thma* cannot be grasped by the senses, the mind, or even the intellect. Its existence is known only through the testimony of the *ve:dic* scriptures. Yet, the scriptures also say that one must strive to gain *a:thma vijna:nam*, knowledge *about* the *a:thma*, even though its true essence can never be fully known. What does this mean?

Consider this: if you understand that the sky is so vast that you can neither hold it nor measure it, then you possess knowledge about the sky. If you acknowledge that it is impossible to count every drop of water in the ocean, then you truly grasp the ocean’s immensity. If you realize it is beyond human ability to number every grain of sand on Earth, then you already know something essential about sand.

In the same way, if you understand that the *a:thma* can never be fully known or grasped by the human mind, then you have gained true knowledge *about* the *a:thma*.

Verse 30

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Recognizing that the incomprehensible cannot be comprehended is itself a mark of wisdom. A truly intelligent person claims to know only what can be understood. On the other hand, it is folly to claim comprehension of what is beyond understanding. *a:thma*, by its very nature, is incomprehensible, therefore, Lord **Sri**: Krushna tells *Arjuna*, there is no need to worry about it.

At this point, *Arjuna*'s face showed bewilderment. His expression seemed to ask: "If *a:thma* cannot be known no matter how much I listen, then why are you speaking about it at such length?"

Sensing *Arjuna*'s inner conflict, **Sri:** Krushna gently explained: "Yes, you do not know anything about *a:thma* , so why do you grieve? We have already seen that there is no reason to weep over the perishable body. But if you wish to speak of your grandfather, your *Gurus*, or others reaching the higher realms such as *svarga*, then you must understand the *a:thma* first. Right now, you speak from a superficial knowledge, not from realization. You must learn more about the *a:thma* before discussing *svarga* or the afterlife.

Even if you believe that you yourself might perish in battle, there is still no reason to cry, because the *a:thma*, your true self, can never die

Sri: Krushna further explains with the verse:

de:hi: nithyamavadhyo::yam, de:he: sarvasya bha:ratha |
thasma:th sarva:ni bhu:tha:ni, na thvam so:chithumarhasi || 2.30

Oh *Arjuna*, the soul that resides within the body is immortal, so you should not cry at the loss of any being.

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Sri: Krushna begins by stating the obvious and gradually leads *Arjuna* to understand that the body is perishable, but the soul is eternal. He explains that there is no reason to grieve for the people on the battlefield, because their real Self, soul, is eternal. The soul in every being is indestructible, and what truly matters is performing one's duty without attachment to outcomes. Success and failure, joy and sorrow, are temporary.

Sri: Krushna reminds *Arjuna*, "*thasma:th sarva:ni bhu:tha:ni*", that empathy should extend to all beings on the battlefield, not only humans, but also the elephants, horses, and countless other creatures who will perish. This teaching goes beyond humans and is inclusive of all living beings, animals, birds, and insects, as true brotherhood comes from recognizing this connectivity. The earth sustains all life, and nature gives unconditionally, yet humans often grieve only for other humans, overlooking the suffering of other creatures. This limited sorrow stems from ignorance, a failure to see the deeper unity of life.

Sri: Krushna later explains in the fifth chapter that the soul is equal in all beings.

vidya: vinaya sampanne: brahmane: gavi hasthini |

sunī chaiva svapa:ke: cha panditha:s samadarsinaha || [5.18]

The wise, endowed with knowledge and humility, see everyone as equal, whether it is a *bra:hmin*, a cow, an elephant, a dog, or even a person who eats dogs. In this way, **Sri:** Krushna teaches *Arjuna* that the same soul pervades all beings, and wisdom lies in seeing that oneness rather than grieving over the body's changes.

Pages 197 & 198 Translation

The body can be in many forms - human, animal, bird, tree, leaf, just like flour, once kneaded, can be made into a variety of shapes for savories or sweets. In the twenty seventh *slo:ka*, **Sri:** Krushna emphasized on the futility of crying over the body that constantly changes, reminding *Arjuna* “*thwam na sochithumarhasi*, do not grieve”. Instead He urged him to execute his duty as a warrior and right the wrongs. An executioner isn't supposed to feel remorseful about hanging a criminal, and police officers are supposed to protect society from anti-social elements. **Sri:** Krushna urges *Arjuna* to adopt the very same mindset.

Even if *Arjuna*'s heart overflowed with sympathy for his relatives, he was still doing them a favor by killing them and saving them from the most horrifying of hells that were befitting of their crimes.

Previously, **Sri:** Krushna had pointed out the following pitfalls of the seemingly tempting yet unrighteous option of fleeing the war - a) *ana:ryajushtam*, not befitting of an *a:rya*, b) *aswargyam*, not leading to higher worlds, c) *aki:rthikaram*, leading to infamy, the very opposite of being sung praises about even after leaving the world.

a:rya is one who is noble and honourable and not the concept propagated of the term referring to those who migrated from Central Asia to India. So far, **Sri:** Krushna had outlined that not acting with the wisdom of body-soul discernment would lead to actions that can be classified as not following the example laid out by elders, and hence classified as *ana:ryajushtam*. Furthermore, not carrying out his *dharma* as a *kshathriya* king, a warrior king, would not lead *Arjuna* to higher worlds.

Verse 31

Pages 199, 200, 201, 202, 203

Sri: Krushna urges *Arjuna* to do his duty. He says,

svadharmam api cha:ve:kshya na vikampithum arhasi |
dharmya:ddhi: yuddha:th sre:yo::nyath kshathriyasya na vidyathe: || 2.31

Considering your duties as a warrior, you must not waver. For a warrior there is nothing better than being engaged in waging a righteous war.

Sri: Krushna lays out that the path to reaching higher worlds is following one's *svadharma*, individual duties as ordained by scriptures. These duties of an individual may vary as per one's *ashram*, stage in life or *varna*, occupation in life. They involve how one must deal with relatives, friends, enemies, and mere acquaintances. One's *svadharma* is to perfect performance and functionality. A camera's *svadharma*, so to speak, is to capture an image but not emanate sound like a speaker. The *svadharma* of each camera may vary as per its make or brand. Since human beings have intelligence, they must be aware of their *svadharma* and to what extent it is being adhered to or violated.

As seen in the first chapter, *Arjuna* displays his lack of wisdom of body-soul discernment, forgets his *svadharma*, collapses in his chariot, and refuses to fight saying, seeing my own kinsmen arrayed for battle here and intent on killing one another, my limbs are giving way and my mouth is drying up.

si:danthi mama ga:thra:ni mukham cha parisushyathi |
ve:patthus cha sari:re: me: ro:maharshas cha ja:yathe: || 1.29
My body is shuddering and the hair on my body is standing on end.

Arjuna speaks like a coward here, claims to have goosebumps from fear and sorrow and trembles at the thought of the war.

Sri: Krushna gently reminds *Arjuna* of his valor and ability as a warrior and asks him to arise and fight, *na vikampithum arhasi*, by instilling in him body-soul discernment to rid *Arjuna* of his darkness and ignorance.

Arjuna's thamas matched that of someone in an inebriated state and **Sri:** Krushna sought to rid him of that in the thirty-first verse by pointing to the path of *svadharma*.

Performing one's *svadharma* is of the highest priority. When *Hanuma:n* delivered the news of *Ra:vana* being slain by *Ra:ma*, an overjoyed *Si:tha* asked him what boon he desired for having played a key role in the victory and in setting her free. *Hanuma:n* desired taunting and punishing the demonesses who had tortured *Si:tha* for the past ten months. We get a sense of *Si:tha's* boundless mercy from her response to *Hanuma:n*, "*thakaschinna:para:ndhyathi*, there isn't a single being on this earth that hasn't made a mistake". "Didn't you err, O *Hanuma:n*,

by setting fire to *Lanka*, when your task was merely to deliver a message to me? Didn't *Ra:ma* err by teasing *Su:rapanakha* and we know that was the incident that spiraled into a war today! Didn't I err by desiring a deer when I had Lord *Ra:ma* by my side. Did I not allege *Lakshmana* of unspeakable things when he only wanted to protect me? O *Hanuma:n*, don't speak of punishing these demonesses. Moreover, they were carrying out their duty as torturers of *Ra:vana*'s prisoners perfectly. They must be rewarded with salary increments and promotions, not punished!

Sri: Krushna says, *kshatha:th thra:yatha ithi kshathriyaha*, the *svadharma* of a *kshathriya* is to protect others from hurt and damage. **Sri:** Krushna wanted *Arjuna* to execute his *svadharma* - *kshathriyasya na vidyathe*:

Sri: Krushna adds, blessed are the warriors who get to defend righteousness *yadruchchaya*. The word *yadruchcha* is used. We often mistake this word to mean 'by chance' or 'happenstance' but it really means 'by God's will'. *Bhagava:n* being all knowing and all experienced, through His *sankalpa*, will, for us what is the most beneficial.

Verse 32

Page 204, 205, 206

Bhagava:n's *sankalpa* grants one what's *hitham*, beneficial. Sometimes what's beneficial for us is not pleasing in the short term but this path must be adhered to nevertheless. The war at *Kurukshe:thra* was going to take place as per **Sri:** Krushna's *sankalpa*, it wasn't something that either party, *Kauravas* or *Pa:ndavas* desired, nor was it by random chance.

He tries impressing this once again on *Arjuna* here -

yadruchchaya: cho:papannam svargadva:ram apa:vrutham |
sukhi:nah kshathriya:h pa:rttha! labhanthe: yuddham i:drusam || 2.32

This is a *dha:rmic* war designed by Divine Will, not a petty one meant to provoke the enemy or to satisfy personal vendettas. It's a *kshathriya*'s honor to fight such a *dha:rmic* war, and such opportunities are rare, points out **Sri:** Krushna. **Sri:** Krushna had personally made sure that this war happens. When *Sanjaya*'s negotiation on behalf of the *Kauravas* was not fruitful, **Sri:** Krushna went on behalf of the *Pa:ndava*:s. The Lord volunteered to this with the intention to foil the negotiation and ensure that there is a war.

Before leaving for the negotiation, **Sri:** Krushna personally walked up to every one of the five **Pa:ndavas** and asked them if they had any specific message to relay to the **Kauravas**. Each one of them replied uniformly with “o:m **sa:nthi**”. **Draupadi** had a different response, however. She asked **Sri:** Krushna if the Lord will ensure that she can tie her hair up once again - she had taken an oath that she wouldn’t tie her hair up until **Dussa:sana**’s chest is torn and **Duryo:dhana**’s thigh is broken. **Bhi:ma**’s oath needed to be kept, and the **Kauravas** had to be punished. **Sri:** Krushna smilingly reassured her -

pathe:th dyauh himava:n si:rye:th prutthivi: sakali:bhave:th |
sushyeththo:yanidhi:hi Krushne: na me: mo:gham vacho: bhave:th ||

Higher worlds may fall, the earth might quake, mountains may shatter, and oceans may dry up, but I will never go back on my word to my devotee.

True to His word, **Sri:** Krushna handled the negotiation accordingly. Accepting **Vidura**’s hospitality, He declares to **Duryo:dhana** that he’s the enemy, so He cannot partake of meals at his home. **Sri:** Krushna who was capable of great diplomacy and possessed exemplary negotiation skills could have gotten the **Pa:ndavas** their share of the kingdom, but this **dha:rmic** war was by His will. To adhere to the path laid out by **Parama:thma** and do what is favourable is **punya**, virtue, and to do what is contrary to His will is **pa:pa**, vice. **Si:tha** sought to serve **Ra:ma** and be connected to **Parama:thma**.

If we follow the righteous path, doors to heaven open, *svargadva:ram apa:vrutham*.

Thus **Sri:** Krushna urges **Arjuna** to wage this **dha:rmic** war.

Page 207, 208

Arjuna may have questioned the need to go to **indralo:ka**, the abode of **Indra**, his biological father. **Sri:** Krushna explains that by fighting the **dha:rmic** war, **Arjuna** would be paving his way to **svargam**.

Let’s pause here to understand what ‘**svargam**’ means. **Sri:** Krushna is not referring to **indralo:ka**, the world ruled by **Indra**. Stay at **indralo:ka**, enjoyment of the heavenly pleasures there are very tempting. There is **ka:madhenu**, wish fulfilling cow, **kalpavruksha**, wish fulfilling tree, **soma**, intoxicating divine drink, **amruth**, nectar and also celestial dancers. However this five-star hotel like ambiance, has a period of expiration, as confirmed in the sixteenth verse in the eighth chapter:

a:bramha bhuvana:llo:ka:h punara:varthino::rjuna! |

ma:mupe:thya thu kaunthe:ya! punarjanma na vidyathe: || 8. 16

In all these worlds of material creation, up to the highest abode of *brahma*, you will be subject to rebirth. But on attaining My abode, there is no further rebirth.

When one's 'credit' runs out, one is pushed out of *indralo:ka* that very second. That is what happened to *Nahusha* who was even granted the throne of *Indra*, but was cursed back to earth when he became too arrogant. Such a time bound heaven only leads to misery and insecurity. The heaven that **Sri**: Krushna refers to in thirty-secondth verse, is of a permanent kind, one that is obtained by consistently staying true to *Bhagava:n*'s law and *sankalpa*.

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Indra's world is susceptible to attacks by *Naraka:sura*, *Ra:vana:sura*, and *Hiranyakasipu*. Every now and then, someone with more strength, attacks the *de:vathas* and ransacks this 'heaven'.

The *svargam* that **Sri**: Krushna refers to is bereft of heat and cold, has no dullness, aging, misery,. There is no returning back to earth from this heaven.

The *Kattopanishad* describes a conversation between a young boy *Nachike:thas* and *Yamadharmara:ja*. *Nachike:tha* did not ask for ordinary blessings or even for heaven. Instead, he wanted to know about the highest state beyond death. He explained that he was seeking a place where there is no old age and where even *Yama*'s power does not reach. He asked *Yama* to teach him the way to attain such a state. This was a remarkable request because *Yama*'s authority extends even over the celestial worlds. Even great beings like *Indra* eventually come under *Yama*'s rule when their time comes to an end. Yet *Nachike:tha* was seeking that which is beyond *Yama*'s control.

Yama was deeply impressed by the wisdom and clarity of *Nachike:tha*'s question. He then taught him the knowledge of attaining that supreme state, and named it *Nachike:tha:gni*.

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Arjuna wouldn't be motivated to go to *indralo:ka* since he's already been there once and earned the name of *jithe:ndriya agre:sara*, the greatest of one who's conquered their senses. **Sri**: Krushna therefore dangles the reward of *paramapadam* to motivate. Just carrying out our

responsibility or doing our jobs carefully paves a way towards *mo:ksha*, liberation. **Sri:** Krushna views this as a beautiful way to attain



paramapadam, but this was lost on *Arjuna*.

nahi prapasya:mi mama:panudya:th yachcho:kam uchho:shanam indriya:na:m |
ava:pya bhu:ma:vasapathnamruddhamra:jyam sura:na:m api cha a:dhpathyam || 2.8

Here, *Arjuna* states that his senses are failing him and he couldn't be bothered about reaching heaven. He would like to remain happy in this very world with his kith and kin and not kill them in the hope of reaching higher worlds. *Arjuna* downright refused **Sri:** Krushna in fighting the war. If he hadn't been the husband of the Lord's younger sister, *Arjuna* might have faced **Sri:** Krushna's wrath and been punished.

Page 211

Arjuna tries different ways to convince **Sri:** Krushna that it's a good idea for him to renege the war. It's common to see people who don't follow through on their responsibilities. Such people are usually despised by society. We saw a similar story surrounding *Uththarakuma:ra* and *Arjuna* in *uththarakuma:ra pragalbha:lu*. It's jovially referred to as *a:rambhasu:rathvam*, courage in the beginning, and which eventually falters into cowardice. *Arjuna* exhibits this, asking **Sri:** Krushna to place the chariot between the two factions and soon breaks down at the very sight of them, justifying his behavior with soliloquies on morality. Since a confused *Arjuna* turned to **Sri:** Krushna with *yachche:ya*

sunischitham thanme bru:hi, tell me what you think is best for me, **Sri**: Krushna replies with firm direction here to act as per *bhagavath sankalpam*, and attain everlasting happiness.

Page 212

Many claim not to believe in *sa:sthras* or God but to adhere to a life of righteousness. This is based on personal standards of righteousness and a code of ethics that one decides for oneself, and doesn't necessarily adhere to that laid out by *Parama:thma*, who is the very cause of our existence. The Lord's word is in the *sa:sthras* - *sa:sana:th sa:sthram* - which commands the methods by which we must use our bodies. We must follow this, just as we use manuals for vehicles or equipment. *Arjuna* also seems to have his own notion of *dharma*. He was mute when *Draupadi* was insulted.

Verse 33, 34, 35, 36

Pages 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218

The *Pa:ndavas* remained mute at their wife being stripped and humiliated in public, out of *dharma* laid out by the *sa:sthras*. The ruler at the court was *Duryo:dhana* and his word was the law. Hence, even *Vikarna* was silenced by *Karna* when he rose to protest the mistreatment meted out to *Draupadi*. **Sri**: Krushna asks why *Arjuna* wants to now spurn the very *dharma* he adhered to that day in the court. Further, he points out that he will be subject to defamation if he retreats from the war like a coward.

attha che:th thvamimam dharmyam sangramam na karishyasi |
thathas svadharmam ki:rthim cha hithva: pa:pam ava:psyasi || 2.33

aki:rthim cha:pi bhu:tha:ni katthayishyanthi the::vyaya:m |
sambha:vithasya cha:ki:rthihi marana:d athirichyathe: || 2.34

Infamy is worse than even death. Only those who are well-reputed run the risk of being defamed. *Arjuna* had a reputation and legacy to uphold. The *sa:sthras* state that *svarga*, heaven, exists for the soul of a deceased person for as long as people sing his praise after his death, and *naraka*, hell, for as long as people speak ill of him. Retreating from the war will ensure that *Arjuna* will remain to be insulted even posthumously, points out **Sri**: Krushna in these verses. Even if *Arjuna* claims to remain unfazed at insults, he cannot remain peaceful due to the sin he's incurring by not acting in accordance to his *dharma* as a *kshathriya*.

Just as an incense stick is recognized by its smell or a lamp by the light it emits, a person's nature can be concluded based on his practices and behavior that he consistently exhibits over time and not based on one-off outlier occurrences or hearsay or surface level factors like external appearances and demeanour. The *upanishads* state, *yattha: vrukshasya sampushpithasya du:ra:d gandho va:thye:vam punyasya karmano du:ra:d gandho va:thi*, the virtue of a person spreads far and wide based on his deeds. If *Arjuna* retreats from the war, society will likely speak of him as morally reprehensible regardless of his intentions. The sympathy and compassion he harbors for his kith and kin will likely not be remembered but instead he will be spoken of as a spineless coward who retreated from a war.

Arjuna knows all of this but his *so:ka*, sorrow, had him in the throes of *thamas*, ignorance, making him forget the truth about the soul and deterring from his *dha:rmic* duty. He tries hard to convince *Sri: Krushna* of his good intentions but the Lord reminds *Arjuna* that his actions matter more than his intentions to society.

bhaya:d rana:d uparatham manyanthe: thva:m maha:rattha:ha |
ye:sham cha thvam bahumatho: bhu:thva ya:syasi la:ghavam || 2.35

One is expected to shape oneself in harmony with society and cannot view oneself as an isolated individual. Just as a wheel, nut, bolt, or wing of an airplane has meaning and purpose only as part of the whole, an individual is connected to and defined by the larger system of which they are a part. The credit of success goes to a team. Team work is more important than maintaining individuality. One must take the opinions and suggestions of people around them and it's wrong to rebut them, especially out of the need to aggrandize one's individual ego. *Sri: Krushna* points out the importance of society's opinion here -

ava:chyava:da:ms cha bahu:n vadishyanthi thava:hitha:ha |
nindanthas thava sa:marthyam thatho: dukhatharam nu kim? || 2.36

If he were to retreat from the war, he would likely be slandered by those lesser in status and capability than he, such as *Duryo:dhana* and *Karna*. It's tolerable if his teachers and preceptors like *Bhi:shma* and *Dro:na* chastise him, but being repeatedly criticised by someone less capable is worse than even death. Many politicians and rulers are known to resign their titles and even lives due to slander.

Verse 37, 38, 39

Pages 219, 220 translation

One who understands his duty, has determination and remains steadfast on his goal is praised by society and remains invincible. Hence, **Sri: Krushna** urges -

hatho: va: pra:psyase: svargam jithva: va: bho:kshyase: mahi:m |
thasma:d uththishta kaunthe:ya ! yuddha:ya krutha nischayaha || 37

Arjuna is called *kaunthe:ya* to help remind him of the hardships his mother *Kunthi* underwent, when they were in exile, during the incognito phase, and when their house was burnt down. **Sri: Krushna**'s intention is to remind *Arjuna* of the sterner stuff his kind are made of. He urges *Arjuna* to remain true to his duty for that would bring him worldly happiness as well as the eternal bliss of higher worlds.

Duryo:dhana was known to steer his people into favoring him over the **Pa:ndavas** by making promises and creating systems for the material benefit undeserving people, much like some politicians of recent times. This doesn't do any good to society.

Arjuna wonders if the war is worth fighting when there's no guarantee of winning. **Sri: Krushna**'s message is to fight anyway - for his own and everyone's good. Either *Arjuna* will win the kingdom or he will attain higher worlds. Thus **Sri: Krushna** conveys the essence of *a:thma thaththva jna:na*, knowledge of the Soul and urges *Arjuna* to pursue his duty as a means to *mo:ksha*, liberation -

sukhaduhkhe: same: kruthva: la:bha:la:bhau jaya:jayau |
thatho:yuddha:ya yujyasva naivam pa:pam ava:psyasi || 2.38

Treating alike sorrow or joy, loss or gain, defeat or victory, fulfill your duty. In this way you will not incur sin.

Pages 221, 222, 223, 224, 225 - Revisit highlighted parts

Here, **Sri: Krushna** urges *Arjuna* to exercise equanimity in behavior and attitude. One must not hanker for lost status, position, or wealth. One must not let the mind get affected by the experiences of the body. In **Chapter 8 s/o:ka 49**, (I THINK YOU ARE REFERRING TO 18.49. Please check) **Sri: Krushna** teaches us how to integrate these concepts into our lives so that we may live free of bondage.

The *va:sanas*, tendencies, and *samska:ras*, impressions from countless previous births are encoded in the *manas*, mind. We see several terabytes of written, audio, and visual data stored in a small flash drive, and the mind which is much subtler is capable of storing a lot more. These *ka:rmic* records play out as an individual's circumstances and reactions to them. **This is why we see two children born to the same**

parents have very different attitudes and behaviors. A calf innately knows where to turn to for milk, while a baby needs to be shown a mother's breast. Thus, samska:ra:s cause *ji:vanadrushti*, a guiding intelligence for life. (HAS HH SAID THIS IN TELUGU?)

When you want to erase a cassette or CD, you don't scrub it with a brush but rather just overwrite it with fresh data. When you want to clean out the dirt in pipes you just increase the intensity of the water through it. Living in accordance with Lord's will and aligning our actions accordingly creates a strong current that purges our mind of past impressions and also effectively stops the accumulation of new ones. You can stop seeds from sprouting into plants by heating them. Similarly, our *karma bi:j:as*, seeds of *karma*, must be heated by *jna:na*, knowledge of the soul. Acting with this knowledge of body-soul discernment helps one attain equanimity towards dualities of the human experience.

Knowledge of body-soul discernment and the control of *Parama:thma* over both is *sa:nkhya*, and implementing actions in alignment with that knowledge is *yo:ga*, a means. Using *sa:nkhya* as a *yo:ga*, a means to overcome bondage, comes with consistent *abhya:sa*, practice.

In the thirty-ninth verse **Sri:** Krushna says, He has so far spoken about the theory of the knowledge of the soul, *sa:nkhya*, and from this verse onwards talks about *yo:ga*, how wisdom backed action becomes a means for liberation.

e:shathe::bhi:hitha: sa:nkhye: buddhi:r yo:ge:thv ima:m srunu |
buddhya: yuktho: yaya: pa:rttha! karmabandham praha:syasi || 2.39

The fruit of this practice is attaining *samadrushti*, equanimity, and ultimately the breakage of *ka:rmic* bondage. Any action that's done with a strong foundation of *sa:nkhya* becomes *yo:ga*. Such action without desire for fruit, is called *nishka:ma karma* or *karma yo:ga*, which are often scary terms. Let's avoid technical terms for now and call it 'doing without any expectation of results'.

Sri: Krushna sets out to elaborate on this concept and like any truly great *Guru* presents it in a way that's palatable to *Arjuna*. *Arjuna* wonders if he would be able to grasp all of it and **Sri:** Krushna says 'worry not! You reap the fruit of the extent to which you understand'.

Verse 40

ve:das Cater to All Three Temperaments

Page 226 There are different types of *Gurus* - those who take it upon themselves to pass on the wisdom of elders down a lineage, just as some people feel compelled to pass ancestral wealth to their children. The other type disseminates knowledge only to those who explicitly seek them out and serve with due discipline. The next category goes even further and shares knowledge with a person who's suffering, purely out of compassion, as a charitable act. The fourth type is truly unique - they share knowledge regardless of whether the others know how or what to ask. Such *Gurus* are so full of grace and compassion that it just overflows. They are known as "*krupa:ma:thra prasanna a:cha:ryas*". In the *kaliyuga*, *Namma:lwa:r* who graced us with the *Divya Prabandham*, and *Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya* of the eleventh century are shining examples of *krupa:ma:thra prasanna a:cha:ryas*. **Sri:** Krushna, Himself, is paramount. The Lord couldn't refrain from sharing what *Arjuna* didn't know how to ask.

Pages 227,228,229,230 translation

By causing a situation that made *Arjuna* feel the need to heed **Sri:** Krushna's words, the Lord presented His message in an easily absorbable format. Some people are known to use jargon and present material very complexly and this scares people away. **Sri:** Krushna stoked interest in *Arjuna*, kindled a conversation, and kept it alive throughout the course of this text. He exhibited the qualities of a skillful teacher.

Another example of a skillful teacher is sage *Vysampa:yana*. Once, he visited a king and urged him to read the *Maha:bha:ratha* consisting of one lakh twenty five thousand *slo:kas* and *Ra:ma:yana* with twenty five thousand *slo:kas*. The king, overwhelmed by their length, firmly refused. He resisted despite the sage's repeated visits and requests. The sage offered that the king read at least one *ka:nda* of *Ra:ma:yana*, which has about three to four thousand *slo:kas*, or at least one *parva* (chapter) of the *Maha:bha:ratha*. When the king remained resistant, the sage proposed one *slo:ka* of thirty two syllables and finally one *pa:da* of eight syllables. The *pa:da* recounted by the sage merely was "*dvau mu:dhapurushau lo:ke:smin*", there were two fools in the world. With this, he walked away.

Interest piqued, the king ran behind the sage and pleaded with him to give more details. The sage revealed the two fools to be *Duryo:dhana* and *Dasa:nana*. *Duryo:dhana* who participated in *uththarago:grahanam*, seizing of *Uththarakuma:ra*'s cattle, and *Dasakannta* who destroyed the forest. The king got even more curious and the sage revealed more about the incognito and exile phases, the game of dice that the *Pa:ndavas* lost, and the *ra:jasu:ya ya:gam*. Thus, the sage recounted the entire epic.

Using the same technique, the sage narrated the *Ra:ma: yana* to the king, tracing back *Hanuma:n*'s burning of *Aso:ka vanam* to the boon that *Dasaratha* gave *Kaike:yi* thus prompting everything that ensued - *Kaike:yi*'s desire, *Ra:ma*'s exile, and *Si:tha*'s abduction.

Sri: Krushna uses the same technique here and piques *Arjuna*'s interest by clearly stating that the benefit of knowing and following the doctrine of *karma yo:ga* is the freedom from bondage. However, *Arjuna* is in a state of lethargy and apathy cloaked as *vaira:gya*, detachment. He wonders if there's any point of hearing the discourse any further when he might quit this body at any moment.

Sri: Krushna encourages him saying,
ne:ha:bhi: krama na:so::sthi prathyava:yo: na vidyathe: |
svalpam apyasya dharmasya thra:yathe: mahatho: bhaya:th || 2.40

There is no loss or adverse result of righteous action, in alignment with *ve:das*. Even a little effort saves one from great danger.

Page 231

Arjuna also wonders if his efforts to heed Krushna's words sincerely, would go waste if he were to die before he had heard it all. Or, say, he were to be convinced that it's worth setting out on the path of doing the work, what if he were to die before he even took the first step. Thus *Arjuna* is plagued by doubts. *Arjuna* wonders if not completing a righteous activity, either due to death or some other mishap might yield no results, or even worse, undesired ones. The *Kaisiki Pura:na* speaks of a man who began a seven day *yajna* and died on the sixth day. As a result of the incompleteness of the *yajna*, he was born as a Brahma *ra:ksha:sa*, one who is knowledgeable but trapped in a demonic form.

Complete Surrender Invokes Divine Intervention

Page 232 *sa:sthras* systematically prescribes the procedure for *yajnas* must be adhered to for producing the desired benefits. Even the chanting of *manthras* must be done with the right intonation *uda:tha*, high pitched, *anuda:tha*, low pitched and *svaritha*, falling pitched. Pronunciation and enunciation are important. We must place our tongue in certain positions to produce sounds that accurately represent the *manthras*.

Furthermore, the materials used in the *yajna* must be prepared in very specific ways. For example, we can't use a modern grinder to prepare the flour, but the grains must be beaten, soaked, boiled - only in specific types of vessels, for a particular duration. This is not merely for the sake of fuss but because the intended results do not come about unless these procedures are adhered to.

Think of trying to retrieve a file on a computer. If you modify its name even slightly while searching for it you will not find it.

If there is an error in the procedures, danger befalls. The *ve:das* warn us of an incident about *Indra* and his enemy.

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The *ve:das* prescribe every action with great precision, leaving no room for even the slightest omission, mistake, or deviation. *Arjuna* questions if similarly engaging in *karma yo:ga* without completing it would cause undesirable results. If so, would it not be better not to undertake *karma yo:ga* at all?

Sri: Krushna gives a definitive answer saying that "In this path, there is no loss of effort, nor are there any adverse consequences. Even a little of this *dharma* protects one from great fear." The word *abhikrama* means "that which has been started." Simply beginning this path is itself beneficial; the effort is never lost. Every effort made in *karma yo:ga* yields a corresponding benefit. There is no requirement that the practice must be completed in its entirety before it bears fruit.

ne:ha:bhi: krama na:so::sthi - even if the practice is discontinued, the effort is never lost. *prathyava:yo: na vidyathe:* - stopping midway does not produce adverse consequences. *svalpam apyasya dharmasya thra:yathe: mahatho: bhaya:th* - even a little practice of this *dharma* gradually frees one from the great fear of *samsa:ra*. *karma yo:ga* thus gradually frees one from the worldly tendencies and attachments that bind the individual.

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One who acts righteously stands to gain benefit both in this and in higher worlds. **Sri:** Krushna reiterates this assurance in sixth chapter:

pa:rttha! naive:ha na::muthra vina:sas thasya vidyathe: |
na hi kalyanakruth kaschith durgathim tha:tha! gachhathi || 6.40

No harm can ever befall on anyone who engages on the spiritual path. Such a person, *kalya:nakruth*, one who strives for God realisation, stands to free himself from *samsa:ra*. *samsa:ra* refers to the notion of 'me' and 'mine' that our loved ones, friends, possessions invoke in us.

It doesn't refer to the objects themselves but to the feelings we carry towards them. *mo:ksha*, liberation, which is the base of *ve:danthic* teaching, denotes freedom from such feelings of attachment, which will, in time, lead us to freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

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The root cause of *samsa:ra* is *ahanka:ra*, false identity. The true *aham*, I, is the *ji:va:thma*, soul, which is expounded on by **Sri**: Krushna in many verses. Bodily experiences and relationships are mistaken to be that of the soul due to *rajas*, passion and *karma va:sanas*, *ka:rmic* tendencies of the mind. Anything that a person does is executed by his body, and not by the subtle *ji:va:thma* within him. *Parama:thma* empowers the *ji:va:thma* to enliven the body and control it to some extent. The body is given as a tool to the soul by God to experience *karma*. The body gains its strength and ability to act from *Parama:thma*, not from the *ji:va:thma*. If the *ji:va:thma* were totally controlling the body we'd have been able to achieve feats like flying and living underwater as per our will. Our desires, such as hunger, are bodily in nature. The body craves the replenishment of the earth element and that manifests as hunger. The *ji:va:thma* doesn't have a stomach. The body eats but the satiation is experienced by the soul. Yet we say, 'I' have eaten. One wraps himself around the body and considers everything related to the body as his own. This is *ahanka:ra*, false identity. Freedom from such mental afflictions and reactions caused by one's circumstances and not necessarily the circumstances themselves, should be sought through self realisation. Such freedom is *mo:ksha* from



samsa:ra.

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The prefix *sam* means together or united with. The word *sa:ra* means to flow with. *samsa:ra* refers to the continuous flow with the cycle of birth and death. This is caused by *ahanka:ra*, false ego, believing falsely that the Self is the body. This ignorance causes the soul to be 'trapped' in a cycle of embodiment in *ka:rmic* bodies. One can be liberated here and now by destroying ego and false identities, by self realisation.

There is no need to escape anywhere. When one follows the path of *karma yo:ga*, knowing how, why, and for whom to work, the role of one's body and the true nature of Self, one breaks free from the grip of *ahanka:ra*. That is the meaning of *thra:yathe: mahatho: bhaya:th*. Then one's *karma* is backed by *jna:na*. This arises from knowledge of the soul and body-soul discernment.

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nishka:ma karma yo:ga - action done without a sense of doership, ownership and expectation of result, is the same as *karma yo:ga*. The word 'yo:ga' comes from *yuk*, and *yuk* means to join. It is the union of right knowledge of the Self with the performance of one's duties through the body. Action performed with this understanding is *karma yo:ga*.

In the second chapter, while teaching *sa:nkhya yo:ga*, *Sri: Krushna* explains two kinds of *buddhi*, the intellect: one pertaining to *a:thma thaththvam*, the knowledge of the Self (*sa:nkhya*), and the other pertaining to *yo:ga*, the performance of action. The intellect governing action is of two kinds: one acts seeking the fruits of action, while the other acts simply because it is the Lord's command and one's duty. The former becomes divided among many desired results, whereas the latter remains single-pointed. It is this steadfast *vyavasa:thmika buddhi* that *Sri: Krushna* begins to expound in the second chapter.

Verse 41

Arjuna's Rising saththva and Righteous Action

Page 238 *vyavasa:ya:thmika: buddhihi e:ke:ha kuru nandana ! |*
bahusa:kha:hy anantha:s cha buddha:yo:vyavasa:yina:m || 2.41

Oh *Arjuna*, the resolute intellect is single pointed, whereas the thoughts of the irresolute are many branched and endless. The *buddhi*, the disposition of the intellect towards knowledge, is of two types - *vyavasaya:thmika: or nischaya:thmika:* and *avyavasaya:thmika: or anischaya:thmika:*. The former is resolute, firmly established in a single, definite goal. The latter is unsteady, wavering

among countless objectives. Gaining knowledge of the soul requires the *vyavasa:thmika buddhi*. The intellect must be firmly fixed with its goal - *a:thma sa:ksha:thka:ram*, the knowledge of the soul.

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Consistent practice with the intellect and senses focused on the goal is required. Side-benefits, as material benefits, might arise along the way but one should not be distracted by them. One's sight must remain fixed on the final goal. Pursuing side-benefits will lead to wastage of time and effort as well as undesirable results.

For instance, the *ve:das* prescribe the *jyo:thishta ya:gam*. The purpose of performing this sacrifice is to attain heaven, but heaven is obtained only after leaving the body. If performing this *ya:gam* meant that one would immediately die and be taken to heaven, no one would undertake it. Likewise, if going to a temple and offering prayers resulted in immediate liberation, no one would visit temples. What a person desires is not to leave this world immediately, but to remain here for a long time and live happily. Therefore, while describing the results of such practices, the *ve:das* also speak of blessings desired during this life - the attainment of a long lifespan, good health, and good progeny. These too become things that one seeks.

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If one performs the prescribed sacrifices and rituals only for longevity, children, or wealth, each of those results may or may not be obtained. But when the higher goal is kept in view, these accompanying benefits are attained without separately seeking them.



This is like inviting a national leader to one's home. When the visit of the leader is the main purpose, all the necessary arrangements such as repairing the roads, providing lights, electricity, and water, are made automatically. But if one seeks only these individual facilities separately, they may or may not be provided.

Purity of Effort Vs. Transactional Action

Page 241 Therefore, **Sri: Krushna** teaches that one should not become attached to limited desires, but should fix the mind firmly on the highest goal. Some people have a resolute intellect, while others allow their thoughts to branch out in many directions. Like a person unable to choose among many fruits, they lose the opportunity by being attracted to everything. Since it is difficult to determine the highest goal by oneself, **Sri: Krushna** reveals that *a:thma svaru:pa jna:nam*, the knowledge of the true nature of the Self, is the only goal worth pursuing. The Self is the foundation of all things; it gives them their existence and sustains their nature. Just as obtaining the root of a plant brings along its

branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits, seeking the root brings everything else along. But when the intellect spreads toward countless objectives, *bahusa:kha:hi anantha:s cha*, it loses its focus.

Sri: Krushna advises *Arjuna* to cultivate resolute intellect, for then one's actions become *karma yo:ga*, equanimity arises, and knowledge unfolds.

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Arjuna then asks **Sri:** Krushna: "Are all these results—longevity, progeny, heaven, and other benefits—also taught by the *ve:das*? If so, why does the *ve:da* describe all these? Would it not have been better if it had mentioned only the highest goal instead of presenting so many choices?"

Sri: Krushna explains that among people there are those who are firmly determined to achieve a particular goal, and there are others who remain indifferent and move wherever their interests take them. Such people have no clear decision or commitment, yet they consider this lack of focus to be a virtue. A person with a single-pointed intellect and a definite goal develops excellence and capability in that direction. Without such focus, one becomes a person with a little knowledge of everything but mastery in nothing.

The Lord has given the mind so that one may choose a goal and steadily move toward it. However, many people study the *ve:das* and, seeing the various results described there, pursue whichever appears attractive at the moment. Their minds therefore never become firmly established.

Similarly, when a person chooses one form of worship and directs all efforts toward it, others may call it narrow-mindedness. Instead, some prefer to accept every form equally, saying that all are good. Though this may appear broad-minded, each form has its own name, nature, qualities, position, and method of practice. One path cannot simply be substituted for another, and different goals cannot be treated as the same.

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Every *de:vatha*, has been bestowed by the Supreme with particular powers, means of worship, and associated benefit . We cannot make blanket statements like, 'Oh! All are the same!' Such a notion might make one seem like a good person but doesn't serve to advance him in the spiritual path.

This is like a person arriving at a railway station and saying, "Any train is fine; all trains are the same." If the destination is Delhi, one must find the correct train and board it. Boarding any train will not take one to the desired destination. Similarly, a person who sets out without knowing where to go and says, "Anywhere is fine," is considered directionless. This is also like water stored in a tank and released through many taps. When the water is divided among many outlets, the flow from each tap becomes weak. But when it is directed through a single outlet, the flow becomes powerful. Likewise, when all one's focus and effort are directed toward a single goal, the desired result is achieved more effectively.

However, people are often drawn toward temporary benefits. Although such ideas may sound appealing and broad-minded, **Sri:** Krushna teaches *Arjuna* that they do not lead to true well-being. One must develop a focused intellect and direct oneself toward the highest goal.

Verses 42, 43, 44

Five Factors Contributing to Human Action

Page 244 **Sri:** Krushna makes this clear in the following verses:

ya:m ima:m pushpitha:m va:cham pravadhanthya vipaschithaha |
ve:dava:daratha:h pa:rttha ! na:nyad asthi:thi va:dinaha || 2.42

ka:ma:thma:nas svargapara:ha janma karma phalaprada:m |
kriya: vise:sha bahula:m bho:gaisvarya gathim prathi || 2.43

Those with limited understanding, get attracted to only those portions of the *ve:das* which advocate certain rituals for benefits in celestial abodes. These benefits please their senses. In their ignorance, they presume that no other higher principle is recommended in the *ve:das*. Their thoughts remain absorbed in obtaining and enjoying these pleasures, and their minds are carried away by them.

bho:gaisvarya prasaktha:na:m thaya::pahrutha che:thasa:m |
vyavasa:ya:thmika: buddhihi sama:dhau: na vidhi:yathe: || 2.44

With their minds deeply attached to worldly pleasures, their bewildered intellects become fickle and cannot be single pointed towards God realisation.

Sri: Krushna does not say that worldly comforts must be rejected. Just as a student preparing for an exam is provided with food, clothing, rest, and other comforts, these are necessary supports. But the student's focus must remain on the goal of learning, not on the comforts themselves. Similarly, one may use comforts and resources, but they should serve as means toward the higher goal and not become the object of attachment. The problem is not the comforts themselves, but the mind becoming absorbed in them and losing sight of the purpose.

One should remain amidst pleasures without allowing them to occupy the mind, just as a boat may remain in water, but water should not enter the boat.

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For a boat to successfully carry us from one bank to another, it must be in the water but water must not be in it. Similarly, we can be with the objects but they must not be with us. We must not get mentally attached to them even while the body experiences them. They say, *nivruththara:gasya gruham thapo:vanam*. The home of a detached and desireless person is like a forest where *thapas*, austerity, is performed. His family and surroundings will be benefitted his spiritual progress. In contrast, it's entirely futile for one whose mind is filled with

attachment, desire, and cravings to go away to the forest for meditation. He is likely to regret it or spend all his time brooding over his worldly



life.

People often mistake physical disciplinary practices that are severe and intense to austerity. However, keeping one's mind and intellect focused on the ultimate goal, while the body experiences everything, is superior even though it's not apparent.

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The result of hankering after sensuous enjoyment is some trivial benefit followed by misery. Extreme caution must be exercised with people who misuse their knowledge of the *ve:das* and prescribe only rituals and practices for selfish motives rather than welfare of society at large. They claim the *ve:das* as *prama:na*. They speak high-sounding flowery words that are as useless as flowers that yield no fruit. *vipaschith* is one who knows things clearly, as though right in front of him. Such charlatans however are *avipaschith*, unlearned.

Duty Without Attachment to Inaction

Page 247 They speak in an attractive and persuasive manner, making their words sound profound and final. Yet such words bear no real fruit. They are called *pushpitha:m va:cham* - "flower-like words", beautiful in appearance but without lasting benefit. The *ve:das* prescribe subsidiary rituals for limited worldly benefits and praise them to encourage their performance. But some people become absorbed in these promises, mistaking them for the ultimate teaching. They compose hymns praising newly established forms of worship, making extravagant

claims that merely reciting a hymn, remembering a deity, or offering a flower can destroy the sins of countless births or even grant liberation - *ko:ti janma krutham pa:pam smaranena vinasathi*. Those making such claims may not truly understand the nature of liberation, yet others are easily convinced and begin following them because the promises sound so great.

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Many forms of worship are promoted, each being proclaimed as the highest, with the *ve:das* cited in support and limited benefits held out as an attraction. Such teachers miss the essential teaching of the *ve:das*, using them more for argument than for conveying their true purpose. It is unwise to seek petty rewards.

Instead, one should seek the Lord Himself rather than His gifts. Just as one who seeks the king's grace gains the king's company, honor, and all the privileges that accompany it, whereas one who asks only for a broom receives nothing more than a broom, seeking the highest naturally brings everything else along with it.

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Similarly, by seeking the grace of *Parama:thma*, we stand to gain everything that we desire and more. Society is fraught with charlatans who play with people's psychology, using advertising and marketing tactics, and publicize practices or *manthras* claiming that they yield immediate benefits. They say, 'Chant this *manthra* X number of times, to get that company to finally respond to your application', or 'If you chant this *manthra* Y number of times, you will likely get into your boss's good books and get promoted quickly!'. Even if one were previously uninterested in such things, he may get psyched into thinking, 'Hey! Let's try that.' Extreme caution must be exercised with such charlatans who sadly outnumber genuine and qualified people.

Equanimity in Success and Failure

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We already practice similar discernment in our daily lives. A student enrolled in a university only chooses courses that are relevant to the subject that he wants to major in. We don't eat the entire mango tree, but just the fruit. Everything is God's creation, but we only choose to



eat those substances that are appropriate for us.

Verse 45

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God may have created many things, but not everything is deemed fit for human consumption. If we eat the grass along with the grain, what is left for the cows to graze on? Similarly, one must choose practices that are conducive to one's goal.

If *mo:ksha*, liberation, is the goal then a *sa:ththvik* diet and lifestyle must be followed - since this is conducive to purity in thought, word and deed. The idea is not to morally police, but it must simply be clear that every goal has rules to be practiced. One must alter his practices. according to his goal. as **Sri**: Krushna says -

thraigunya vishya: ve:da:ha nisthraigunyo: bhava:rjuna! |
nirdvandvo: nithyasathvasttho: niryo:ga kshe:ma a:thmava:n || 2.45

Seeking Refuge in Knowledge, Not Results

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The *ve:das* deal with the three *gunas* of material nature. O *Arjuna*, rise above these three modes, free yourself from the dualities and fix yourself to the ultimate Truth, without thought of gain or loss.

The *ve:das* which contain the benevolence of countless mothers and the strictness of countless fathers prescribe practices for all types of people. Just like a mother caters to the taste and digestive capabilities of all her children by cooking all types of sweet, spicy, and sour foods. All objects, including our bodies, have the three *gunas*. This is not obvious externally but their presence can be gauged through the actions they spur - *ka:rana*, cause and *ka:rya*, effect. When *saththva*, purity, dominates it makes us clear-headed, peaceful, and content. When *rajas*, passion, dominates, we feel restless, contentious, greedy and drag ourselves into further misery.

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When *thamas*, ignorance, dominates one feels perpetually sleepy, fatigued, and lethargic. Oftentimes, one cannot recognize *thamas* himself, since he's constantly in a state of slumber.

One's desires are in accordance with one's dominant *guna*. People follow recommended practices as per that dominant *guna*. If the *ve:das* do not have a way for the different types of people to follow, where will they turn for their upliftment? They might go astray and seek and follow unwholesome paths. Thus *ve:das* prescribe various practices for gradual upliftment of all, whichever be their dominant *guna*.

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The *ve:das* can reveal the mysterious truths of the universe. Knowing the *ve:das* amounts to knowing everything as there's a wealth of information about materials, their properties, and utility. As previously seen, the *ve:das* cater to the good-hearted *sa:ththvik* person, the arrogant *ra:jasic* one, and the ignorant *tha:masic* one as well. It's for the third category that practices like animal-sacrifice and methods to destroy the enemy are suggested. The intent of the *ve:das* is to attract people with *tha:masic* proclivity as well, so that gradually they

understand the better practices and move to a higher state. The *ve:das* have something for those who crave the permanent truth and it also



caters to those who seek temporary pleasures .

Righteous Action Offered to God

Page 256 Say, a non-believer in the *ve:das*, fervently desires some material result , and he is advised to follow the austerities and practices in the *ve:das* to attain that result. Merely out of desperation to reach his goal - not out of any particular belief in the *ve:dic* path, he does the austerities sincerely, and gains the desired result. Then, he tries something else from the *ve:das* to solve another problem. Gradually, he is drawn into the *ve:dic* fold and he begins to hear words like *a:thma* and *mo:ksha*. Simultaneously, he notices the essentially transient nature of his material status and possessions. This propels him to seek higher things. Thus, *ve:das* also have a path for the systematic evolution of seekers.

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Just like a child is patiently taught to write, sometimes using laborious methods, the *ve:das* do not banish, but gently welcome even one who desires temporary benefits. They hold his hand through his evolution. The *ve:das* is impartial towards *a:sthikas*, believers and *na:sthikas*, non-believers.

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Sri: Krushna asserts, *nisthraigunyo: bhava: rjuna*, “come out of the grip of the three *gunas*, O *Arjuna*!” However, he does not want *Arjuna* to turn *nirguna*, completely without *gunas*. Rather, it means becoming *nirdvandva* - free from the sway of dualities such as gain and loss, victory and defeat, and pleasure and pain. One should learn to accept both favorable and unfavorable situations with the same composure.

Since *Arjuna* thinks of himself as having won over his senses and virtues, **Sri:** Krushna wants him to be *nithya saththvasthaha* - remaining steadfast in actions that cultivate *saththva*.

Sri: Krushna also advises him to be *niryo:gakshe:ma*. *yo:ga* pertains to attaining what one doesn't have and *kshe:ma* to preserve what one already possesses. Rather than assuming personal responsibility for either, one should place that responsibility on the Lord with complete faith. As He compassionately declared, *yo:gakshe:mam vaha:myaham*, I will take the responsibility.

Hierarchy of Intellect, Mind, and Senses

Page 259

Surrendering to the Lord increases one's *saththva guna*. Such a person continues his journey focused on the ultimate goal. Even if he engages in activities which have *ra:jasic* or *tha:masic* results, his mind doesn't get attached to the activity or the result.

There are all types of people in the world. *ve:das* cater to all of them. The results people seek are based on their dominant *guna*.

sa:ththvik people desire only what's good for others, while *ra:jasic* people want benefits for themselves as well as others. But they try to fulfill their selfish desires without violence. *tha:masic* people have only selfish desires and do not hesitate to resort to violence to fulfill them.

Knowledge can be gained through *prathyaksha*, direct perception through our sense organs. It can also be acquired through *anu:mana*, inference.

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A lot of knowledge, which is beyond both direct and indirect perception, is obtained from *sabda prama:na*, reliable, authentic testimony. *ve:das* are an infallible source of such knowledge. People of different dominant *gunas* should adopt methods suitable to them. Methods

used by one group may not jibe well with people in another group.



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It's one's duty to recognize his dominant characteristic and tailor his methods accordingly. These characteristics, while not physically obvious, can be inferred from their effects - the desire and actions they spur in a person. Even if the person himself can't realise his dominant *guna*, society can make out if someone is *sa:thhvic*, *ra:jasic*, or *tha:masic*. *Dhruthara:shtra*, blinded by love for his son, remained passive to injustices like burning of the *Pa:ndavas'* house, humiliation of *Draupadi*, and foul play in the game of dice. Society has labelled him as a man of *thamas*.

yo:ga as Skill Through Steadfast Resolve

Page 262 *Duryo:dhana* was decidedly *ra:jasic*, with his obsession towards material wealth, and aggrandizement of his ego. Any seemingly good deeds performed by him had an ulterior motive that was ego driven. The *Pa:ndavas* followed *dharma*, suppressing their emotions even while losing their kingdom and the honor of their wife. They were considered to be *sa:ththvik*.

The *ve:das* are called *thraigunya vishyam* as they provide instructions on practices for all three types of people to be directly emancipated from the shackles of *karma*. There is no requirement for a person of *thamas* to transition to *rajas* and then to *saththva* and finally to liberation. It would be unproductive for a person of one type of tendency to follow the methodologies prescribed to another type.

Arjuna wonders: If the *ve:das* are the highest authority, why do they prescribe so many rituals for worldly enjoyments and material benefits? *Sri: Krushna* recognizes this doubt and prepares to explain the true greatness and purpose of the *ve:das*.

People naturally act with some expectation of personal benefit. As the poet *Guraja:da Apparao* said, “Sacrifice a little of your own benefit for the good of your neighbor. The nation isn't just soil. The nation is made of people.” One may not be able to give up self-interest completely, but one should at least set aside part of it for the welfare of others. Human-authored works inevitably have limitations, but the *ve:das* are of a different order.

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Humans are forgetful, mistake one thing to be another and don't have true knowledge on the essence of things. Therefore, the speech and actions of humans are afflicted by defects. Such works are *paurushe:ya*, authored or invented by man.

ve:das, on the other hand, are *apaurushe:ya*, not authored by man. They are *parama prama:na*, the ultimate, indisputable, source of knowledge. It is said *a:dau ve:da prama:nam thatham hitham*, whatever these *ve:das* ordain, is for our ultimate well-being .

Those scriptural texts that adhere to *ve:das*, are also considered as *prama:na*, source of knowledge.

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From the *ve:das*, we should take what's applicable to us for attaining our goals. *yo:ga* is acquisition of new things, and *kshe:ma*, their preservation. We cannot do this on our own. Seeking His grace, we should surrender to the Supreme, *Parama:thma*, the *mu:la ka:rana*, primal cause for all the systems which manifest as *ka:rya*, effects, in the universe. *Parama:thma* who is responsible for the planetary movements, is the same one responsible for the beating of tiny hearts, the flow of blood through the veins of all beings, for the passage of breath. In the form of *Sri: Krushna*, He assures us, *yo:gakshe:mam vaha:myaham*, I shall carry the responsibility of *yo:gakshe:ma*.

The Lord did not say *dada:mi*, I shall give or grant *yo:gakshe:mam*, but he said *vaha:mi*, I shall carry. Like a laborer, or perhaps even as a 'slave' that accepts orders, He accepts this responsibility like a 'slave', out of immense love for us.

Guarding the Mind Through Right Association

Page 265

When complete surrender is done, we become unreactive to the swings of dualities in experience and vacillations of life. The ultimate benefit of *niryo:gakshe:mah*, is gaining a clear understanding of the Self and being of help to others. You reach a state of *nirdvandvah nithyasathvastthah*, free from the grip of dualities and situated in the mode of goodness.



Verse 46

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saththva is conducive to an attitude of surrender. **Sri:** Krushna asks *Arjuna* to become purely *sa:ththvik*, untainted by *rajas* and *thamas*. A person of such an attitude leads a transparent life that's blemishless. **Sri:** *Ra:machandra* is a shining example. In the following verse, **Sri:** Krushna likens the *ve:das* to an overflowing lake that never dries out.

ya:va:narttha udapa:ne: sarvathas samplutho:dake: |
tha:va:n sarve:shu ve:de:shu bra:mhanasya vija:nathaha || 2.46

Whatever purpose is served by a small well is also served by a large lake but with a lot more. One who realises the Ultimate Truth, automatically fulfills the purpose of every thing prescribed in *ve:das*.

Besides water, a large lake has fish, soil, sand and moss. People go to a lake for different things. We must only take what we require from the lake, not all of it. Some want water, some want other things as well.

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Just as a person seeking water is not concerned with the fish, and a person seeking sand pays no attention to the fish or the water, likewise, a *Bra:hmana* is discerning about what he needs from the *ve:das*. One may wonder if this is only for *Bra:hmanas*. Let's examine the meaning of that word here.

In *Bruhada:ranyaka upanishad*, *Ya:jnavalkya* speaks about people being *Bra:hmanas* or *krupanas*. In a discussion with *Ga:rgi*, he talks about the universe working and being supported by *aksharam*, the imperishable, immutable Supreme. He says: "*Ga:rgi*, O *Ga:rgi*! One who leaves the world without knowing this imperishable *Bra:hman* - the ultimate truth, are *krupanas*, and those who do recognize this ultimate truth are *Bra:hmanas*."

Valuing the Soul Over Worldly Pleasures

Page 268 The human species is the only one that can understand the Ultimate Truth and tailor their actions in accordance to that realization. The necessary actions and practices are laid out in *ve:das*.

For society to function smoothly, people were classified into castes like *bra:hmins*, *kshathriyas*, *vaisyas* and *su:dras*. This classification had its purpose but, let's not cling to these labels but rather understand the meaning of the word '*bra:hmin*'. "*brahma nayathi ithi Bra:hmanaha*", one who leads us to *Bra:hman* is a *bra:hmin*. *Bra:hman* means the greatest, supreme - both in size and in nature. What we ultimately want is happiness and that's the impetus for all of our actions.

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Most happiness is tainted with sorrow and is transient like waves. Only *brahma:nanda*, the bliss of *Bra:hman*, the Ultimate Truth is everlasting and blemishless. Only the *ve:das* have the right answers to all questions related to *brahma:nanda*. Thus, *ve:das* are referred to

as *Bra:hmanah*. However, they can't come to us out of the blue. The *ve:das* need to reach us through a medium, who are *rushi:s* or *Bra:hmana*. A *Bra:hmana* is therefore one who has studied the *ve:das*, embraced the tenets, is without attachments and acts selflessly. He constantly thinks, *loka:samastha:sukhinobhavanthu*, may the entire world be happy.

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A person should not claim the title *brahmana* merely for status or authority. A true *Bra:hmana* knows what is truly beneficial and takes only what is needed from the *ve:das*. Like a hen that searches through waste only for the insect it needs and ignores everything else, one should



discern what is useful and accept only that.

Similarly, one should examine the many things available in the world and take only what is truly necessary and beneficial. It is incorrect to think, "Everything exists only for me; if I do not take it, who will?" God has created different things for different beings. The *ve:das* clearly state, *aushadhi:bhyo: annam*, human food comes from plants. One should obtain nourishment from plants, rather than from animals or other sources.

Therefore, though the *ve:das* contain knowledge related to all three *gunas*, **Sri: Krushna** advises *Arjuna* to take from them only what is truly beneficial, like a wise person drawing only the required water from a vast lake. Here, **Sri: Krushna** specifically addresses him as *Arjuna*, though He uses other names for him elsewhere.

Verse 47

Devotion to the Lord's Lotus Feet

Page 271 The name *Arjuna* means 'white', a symbol of goodness. **Sri: Krushna** observes the rise of *saththva* in *Arjuna* leading to surrender. Hence the Lord referred to him as '*Arjuna*' which means 'white'. **Sri: Krushna** advises *Arjuna* to nurture this quality of *saththva* by eating *sa:ththvik* food and performing *sa:ththvik* actions. One's duty is to collect what's necessary to increase *saththva* and apply it to one's life.

Bhagavad Gi:tha is a *ve:danthic* scripture. Several *ve:danthic* scriptures steer one away from his duty. On the contrary, this text points one towards the right action and asserts the need for righteous activity till one's last breath. This is elucidated in one of the most beautiful verses of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* -

karmanyē: va:dhi:ka:ras the: ma: phale:shu kada:chana |
ma: karma phala he:thur bhu:hu ma:the: sango::sthv akarmani || 2. 47

Sri: Krushna says here, 'you have the right to perform your ordained duty, but are not entitled to the fruit of your actions. Do not consider yourself the cause of the results of your actions, nor be attached to inaction.'

This teaching is so profound and impactful that *Arjuna* who had previously slumped down in the chariot, stood ready for battle and said, "*stthitho::smi gatha sande:haha*", I am now firm, free from all doubts, "*karishye: vachanam thava*", I shall act according to your word.

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Nature is a wondrous system which automatically rewards the dutiful. As long as one acts in awareness of the greater good without constantly worrying about personal gain, he is certain to receive his dues, sooner or later. That's just the way God has set up the system. Our body has millions of cells. They exist and function in unison for the body. The body symbiotically reciprocates by routing nourishment to

the organisms. There is no comparison or competition between them. They may not get equal quantity or the same type of the resources from the body that's housing them. But every one of the million cells gets exactly what it requires to keep the body functioning healthily. Our place in the entire mechanism of this universe is much like these cells, and our mental attitudes must reflect that.

One must work according to his *dharma*. Even the one having the authority to punish, has to do so as per the laws. He cannot make his own laws. The laws have been spelt out in the *ve:das*. Even if we cannot understand them on our own, we must follow what the elders say and proceed accordingly. This attitude seems contrary to what's popularly adopted these days. It's not driven by gratification or self aggrandizement, nor does it assert one's identity. It's not materialistic.

Sama:dhi: Where Self-Knowledge Resides

Page 274 These days, if results can be obtained without work, people run after any *manthra*, ritual, saint, magic, or trick that promises them quick fixes. Our desire is for the result, not the work. But **Sri**: Krushna teaches the opposite: "Do the work, don't desire the result." This may sound contrary to present day worldly thinking, but it's actually the righteous way that once kept people's minds pure. When that changed, corruption began.

Earlier, people thought, "To earn money, you need a job; for a job, you need a certificate; for a certificate, you need marks; for marks, you must pass exams; to pass exams, you must study and work hard." This chain ensured effort. Now, people think: "Is there a shortcut to marks without studying? Who corrects the exam papers? Let's bribe them. Then we can get 98–99% without effort." Further, if certificates can be bought without marks, they will do that. If jobs can be bought without certificates, they will do that too. In every case, instead of working for the result, people take the easiest, often corrupt, shortcut.

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Purity of effort has been replaced with transactional action. Only financial rewards or grades or certificates are sought, instead of the true essence of the work - which is gaining a deep understanding of concepts and their application in our jobs. Guides that help one ace exams have become more popular than textbooks that delve into the depth of concepts. This verse tells us to do our responsibility, study to understand the subject. Results in the form of grades, certificates, salaries, wealth, and happiness will follow in the right way. However, employees, teachers, and students have become very transactional. Their goal has become, not focused work, but easy results. Their

efforts are hence diluted. They are adopting the wrong way.



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One has no right to the fruit but only has the right to act, so he must do so without expectation of personal recognition, praise, or selfish gains. That's a basic human duty. This *slo:ka* is like the life force of *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

There are three types of *karmas*, actions, that one performs - *nithya*, daily, *naimiththika*, occasional, and *ka:mya*, desire-based. Our routine and daily bodily duties and functions fall under the realm of *nithya karma*. In our jobs, this may be likened with what we must do as part of our basic duties. *naimiththika karma* are actions performed contingent upon special reasons like festivals, or eclipses, and so on. *pu:jas* performed as prescribed for *uththara:yana* and *dakshina:yana* are also examples of *nithya karma*. One must not expect any result from these actions yet they must be performed.

At work, the perfect analogy would be doing something on a special occasion 'since the boss said so'. We must not expect some reward from this type of action as well. Finally, *ka:mya karma* are actions triggered by our desires and impulses. Examples are performing rituals for gains like health, wealth, and family. At work, this may be equated with those projects that we desire and take on for job satisfaction. While *nithya* and *naimiththika karmas* are mandatory, *ka:mya karmas* are optional.

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Not hankering after the gains from the work allows us to focus on the tasks at hand without the temptation of shortcuts. **Sri:** Krushna asks us to forfeit any claim over not just the result but even on the work.

When a seed is sown, it sprouts into a plant not merely because of the act of sowing it, but because of its latent power to sprout, and because of the energy that light, water, and the soil supplied to the seed. Even the sowing of it was not by our will but because of an inner power driving us to do so. If everything happened purely by our will, we might want the plant to sprout much sooner, and we wouldn't volunteer the wait.

When we perform work as part of a larger ecosystem, how can we expect rewards solely attributed to our credit? Similarly, the psychophysical human mechanism functions because of several entities. How can we, just one entity of the entirety of that mechanism, expect reward for the functions? Let's further explore what these entities are.

Self-Realization and Permanent Bliss

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adhishta:nam thattha: kartha: karanam cha prutthag vidham |



vividha: cha prutthak che:shta: daivam chaiva:thra panchamam || 18.14

There is the body. There is the *kartha* - doer; *a:thma* - soul which is essentially knowledge. It makes the body operative, through both, the sense organs *jna:ne:ndriyas* - sense of smell, taste, sight, touch, and hearing - and motor organs, *karme:ndriyas* - limbs and excretory organs.

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The fourth contributory factor is *manas*, mind, an *anthahkaranam*, internal tool, available to the *ji:va*, soul. The most important, is the indwelling God, that is behind all of these factors, supporting them and rendering them functional. This indwelling Divinity stays with us even during deep sleep, digests what we eat, and makes us move. Therefore, our human functions are not purely out of personal will - if that were true, we wouldn't end up with sickness and disease. There's an entire system that's operational with all of the factors having their roles. Hence, sole claim on the fruit of any activity is entirely baseless.

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Every action is a cooperative effort—no one can rightfully claim, "I alone do everything." Just as a successful business depends on people performing different roles according to their expertise, the body functions through the coordinated roles of the body, senses, *ji:va*, and *Parama:thma*. Claiming exclusive doership means taking sole ownership of both success and failure.

The body and senses are partners in this process, not enemies. They should neither be neglected through harsh austerity nor indulged without restraint, but cared for and used with moderation. Scripture teaches that life is a joint enterprise in which each participant fulfills its proper role, and human beings should recognize this truth and perform their own duties without ego or possessiveness.

Nischala Vs. Achala: Unshakeable Knowledge

Page 283 The body has been given for a purpose. It is our duty to engage the body and the senses in prescribed duties, without claiming right over the result.

Krushna says "*ma: the: sangaha asthu akarmani*", you must not get attached to things other than *karma*. Whether one is a student, householder, a warrior or even a monk, duty must be fulfilled. **Sri:** Krushna never encourages us to give up our duties and run to the forest in the pursuit of *jna:na*. The essence of *ve:das* is to make man active not passive. Through execution of our duties, we achieve mental equanimity.

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Sri: Krushna however shows *Arjuna* how to avoid further accumulating *ka:rmic* records by performing actions which are backed by right knowledge. It's human to want to reap benefits for good actions no matter how rare they are, and avoid punishment for bad deeds despite their frequency. *Duryo:dhana* exemplified human nature when he stated, “*ja:na:mi dharmam na cha me: pravrutthihi*”, I know what I must not do yet I cannot stop myself from doing it, I know what I must do yet I cannot bring myself to do it.

Sri: Krushna, steers man towards avoiding actions that cause his downfall, and teaches him to train himself to carry out his duties as part of a whole. Like one amongst many rowers on a boat. *Arjuna* wonders how it is fair to expect to not want desirable fruit or do something that seems difficult. **Sri:** Krushna proposes a tool, *yo:ga*, as the response to this.

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yo:ga is a beautiful word with several meanings in Sanskrit. The meanings of words are contextual and situational in Sanskrit. Hence, it is crucial to be guided by elders with knowledge and experience on the inner meanings of words to avoid misunderstanding the concepts. *Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya* guides us on the use of the word *yo:ga*. It can mean control of mind through *dhya:na*, meditation. *yo:ga* can also mean reining in one's mind - “*chiththa vrutthi niro:dhaha yo:gaha*”. Another meaning of *yo:ga* is *upa:ya*, tool or means. ‘*upa*’ is near

and 'aya' is what takes us near. It's an instrumental tool that takes us to our goal while *apa:ya* is what takes us away from our goal.



Here, **Sri**: Krushna is the *upa:ya* instructing *Arjuna* to control his mind, and do his duty with no expectation of reward.

Verse 48

The Path to Steady Wisdom

Page 286 **Sri**: Krushna instructs us not to be despondent over failure or overly elated over success. *yo:ga* is to accept results with equanimity. This requires trimming out emotional excesses.

Krushna says,

yo:gastthah kuru karma:ni sangam thyakthva dhananjaya! |
siddhya siddhyo:s samo: bhu:thva: samathvam yo:ga uchyaathe: || [2.48]

Be steadfast in performing your duty, *O Arjuna*, abandoning attachment to success and failure. Such equanimity is called *yo:ga*.

One is not to assume that something will not happen without their participation. An employee of a company is not as invested in its profit and loss as the investor. The former receives his due no matter what. Athletes and sportspersons must ideally be sportive and focus on bettering their skill but we see them show effusive joy over victory or devastation over defeat in tournaments. This is a shame.

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Don't thump your chest when you face victory, don't wallow in depression when you face defeat, be in control always, says **Sri: Krushna**. Carrying out duty without reacting in extreme ways to the results is equanimity.

samska:ras, impressions from this and countless past births are etched in our minds, resulting in mountain-high heaps of *karma*. These aren't visible but subtle like software. Only the effects of these impressions are evident. Impressions block the knowledge of the *a:thma* from illuminating and spreading out. The effect of *ka:rmic* impressions can be likened to the soot or grime on a glass lamp shade. One does not clean a glass by chanting, "May the dirt go away, may the dirt go away." Instead, one wipes it with a cloth.

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No amount of knowledge about the grime on the lamp shade makes it go away, but in fact only increases anxiety, however, the act of wiping it out does. It is a diamond of superior hardness that cuts another diamond. Similarly, it is only *karma* backed by right knowledge that can help the mind to rid itself of *ka:rmic* impressions which stop the inner light of the *a:thma* from illuminating - "*kasha:ye: karmabhihi pakve:*", right actions make mental impurities go away. Pursuing the right action with equanimity also helps contain our reactions to either success or failure.

A surgeon's focus is on the surgery itself, while the relatives of the loved one are hoping and praying for their loved one to survive the operation. Our attitude must match that of the surgeon's - intent on carrying out action with equanimity, precision, and accuracy. We take *vrathas*, vows or observances during which we practise strict austerities for a set number of days. We wrongly believe that the vows yield the fruit, but it is actually the *Bhagava:n*, out of His own divine will, who gives us the intended fruit. The vow merely prepares us mentally to receive His grace. During the period of the *di:ksha*, vow, the one observing it curtails unnecessary or wrongful actions, speech, and thought and follows strict disciplines. Thus, they help him to focus, however, they do not yield the intended results. The results come through the grace of *Bhagava:n*.

Verse 49

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A wise one remains mindful of the action and not of the results. One who constantly keeps an eye out on what he stands to gain cannot attain *a:thma sa:ksha:thka:ram*, knowledge of the soul, and is further called as *krupanaha*, pitiable in the following verse -



du:re:na~~h~~y avaram karma buddhiyo:ga:th dhananjaya! |
*buddhau **saranam** anvichha krupa**na**:h phalahe:thavaha || 2.49*

Krushna advises one to keep the intellect fixed and seek refuge in divine knowledge. Obsession with the result leads to sadness and frustration. Think of *Kamsa*'s constant efforts to kill **Sri**: Krushna and *Hiranyakasipu*'s to torture *Prahla:da*. They were left frustrated by the futility of their actions.

Those who do service to society without the result in mind, get happiness. Others who do this with a personal gain in mind, should be pitied.

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One's primary focus should be executing action perfectly and not on the result. Detachment must be exercised towards the outcome of the action. Such a mental attitude of equanimity is *buddhiyo:ga* and provides *saranam*, refuge, to the doer. One must decide to carry out duty irrespective of temporary inconveniences while not getting distracted by intermediary results. Just like we use a car to go from A to B and don't get distracted if it gets wet or dirty along the way.

Suka De:va: Born in Divine Consciousness

Page 292 *jna:na*, knowledge and *buddhi*, intellect are fortresses that protect us from the vagaries of life and keep us focused on the goal despite things not going as planned. *Krupana*, the pitiable one, is he who doesn't perform the right action nor attains equanimity during his stay in the human body. Equanimity protects us from feelings of pain and pleasure.

Arjuna is confused - do we need to attain a certain level of equanimity to perform actions with the right attitude, upon which we attain further knowledge? Does *Sri*: Krushna uphold knowledge or action as superior? *Sri*: Krushna's response is that one must perform actions with the right intellect, and that removes bondage, and helps develop mental equanimity.

Some people gather funds through persuasion and even force. We see this in political organizations. Whether that's good or bad depends on what the wealth is ultimately used for - the greater good or personal gain?

There was a great devotee named *Paraka:la*, *Thirumangai A:lwa:r*. He would steal from rich people and use that money to feed the poor and build magnificent temples and oversee their construction.

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However, isn't it wrong to steal? If wealth is redirected from immoral rich people who harm society and constantly work on aggrandizing their acquisitions, it is perfectly acceptable. *Thirumangai A:lwa:r* worked on planting trees, constructing *go:purams*, and making the temples magnificently beautiful. Once, he heard a lady say *Krushna: rpanamasthu* at a home he robbed. He immediately returned what he had stolen. When the lady narrated the strange incident to her husband, he was convinced that this had to be *Thirumangai A:lwa:r*. The couple went to offer the returned object and more as offerings to the *A:lwa:r*. From this incident, we understand that the intention behind an action holds precedence over the action itself.

The attitude behind eating dictates the effect the food has on us. A *jna:ni* eats to feed the *Parama:thma* within, while an ignorant person consumes for sustenance and growth. The former intake purifies us while the latter leads to the accumulation of sins.

Verse 50

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Sri: Krushna says in the third chapter, “*bhunuthe: the thvagham pa:pa: ye: pachanya:thmaka:rana:th*”, the work isn’t central but the intellect with which it’s done is. The attitude must be not self-serving and the effort must persist despite losses and hardships. Those who don’t have this attitude are indeed pitiable. *Sri*: Krushna thus emphasizes that *Arjuna* must fight the war irrespective of whether he will gain heaven or hell or the kingdom. This is also a rare opportunity.

buddhiyuktho: jaha:thi:ha ubhe: sukrutha dushkruthe: |
thasmad yo:ga:ya yujyasva yo:gah karmasu kausalam || 2.50

In this verse the lord asserts that one must forgo doership of the action and must not expect a result, positive or negative. Negative results refer to the absence of any good outcomes for a wholesome action. One must not anyway perform any wrong actions. This is called *kausalam*, wisdom.

Let’s understand what ‘*kausalam*’ means. There is a difference in the level of skill and expertise a person who is familiar with a piece of machinery brings to using it as compared to one who doesn’t. Both the skilled and unskilled operator might need to turn on the switch and follow the same procedure, but if something goes wrong, the skilled operator would know how to debug it based on its mechanism.

Jadabharatha and the e:ke:ndriya Stage

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We know about the basic functioning of the body - we know to eat with our mouths, see with our eyes, hear with our ears.



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When we face issues with our body we use medicines, aids, corrective glasses, and so on to deal with them. But do we know what controls these organs, if it's the heart, or mind, or some inner power? *sa:sthra* is a manual that tells us everything about the functioning of these bodies that were created by *Parama:thma*. The body has no intelligence while the *ji:va* that inhabits the body does. The *buddhi*, intellect makes suggestions to the *manas*, mind and makes it firmly believe in something. The mind controls *indriya:s*, senses which make the body work. In turn, the work makes the *ji:va* undergo experiences which create *samska:ras*, impressions which are stored as records. This makes the *ji:va* behave a certain way with the mind and intellect driving the actions. The *jna:na*, knowledge, for all of this to happen is given by the *ji:va*, soul. It's only when knowledge reaches the intellect that activity flows through a person. Knowing that something is good is not enough for one to take it, but one must feel, ' I MUST have that good thing!'

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The intellect makes the *a:thma* turn the mind towards an action, and this drives senses organs towards executing it. This creates *va:sana:re:nu*, subtle tendencies that accumulate for the *ji:va*. *va:sana:s*, tendencies are *ana:di*, beginningless. The body that a *ji:va* acquires

depends on *karma va:sana: renu*, the impressions of past tendencies. The *ji:va* is unaware of this, while *Parama:thma* makes this happen using raw material from *prakruthi*, nature. Thus, it is foolish to think ‘this is my body, I shall do whatever I please with it!’. We may own and use a car but must follow guidelines on its usage based on the carmaker. Using our body while adhering to guidelines set by *Parama:thma* creates happiness for us and others.

King Janaka: Detachment Amidst Rulership

Page 298 When tendencies from past actions become etched and recorded as impressions, they are hard to get rid of. This process has been going on for millions of years. We must diffuse or destroy the *karmas* or experience them. One may need to experience them for a very long time due to heap loads of it having been accumulated. However, having the right knowledge and attitude behind one’s actions helps burn past *karma* and frees one from it. **Sri:** Krushna gives us reassurance of this in this verse.

Hence, one who is *buddhi yukthah*, whose intellect is endowed with wisdom can achieve this. However, this is not easy. Extraordinary skill and firmness in knowledge are required to proceed down the path of *buddhi yo:ga*. Let’s examine further.

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Lord **Sri:** Krushna says, “*yogah karmasu kausalam*”. While performing our day-to-day duties, *yogaha* means remaining indifferent to the outcome, whether success or failure. The ability to face both success and failure with equanimity is called *kausalam*. Such steadiness of mind is not common; it can only be cultivated by those with firm resolve and faith.

Who are such people of resolve? First, they have a single-minded focus on their chosen goal. Once they set their mind on achieving it, they do not waver. For example, imagine someone who wishes to climb a hill. They begin walking toward the summit but soon their legs ache and fatigue sets in. Ordinary people would give up, saying it is too difficult or too tiring. For them, bodily comfort takes priority over the goal. This shows that their determination was never firm to begin with.

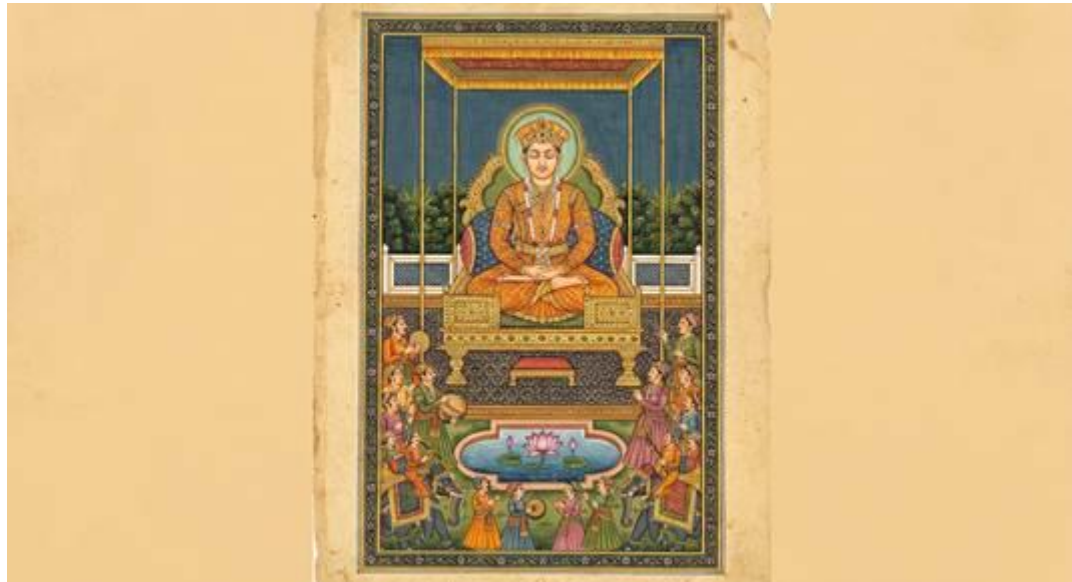
On the other hand, a person with true resolve will persist despite discomfort. They may pause to rest when the body tires, but they will rise again and continue climbing. For them, the body is a tool to be used, not a master to be obeyed. No matter the pain or exhaustion, they endure it, because their focus remains firmly fixed on reaching the top. Step by step, with perseverance, they advance until they stand at the summit.

The same principle applies to a student preparing for exams. If their goal is to secure the highest marks, they will push past bodily difficulties to study harder. When sleepiness overtakes them, they may reduce food intake or skip a meal to stay awake. If that fails, they may walk

around, listen to music, or find other ways to refresh themselves. Even if it means enduring hunger, fatigue, or sleepless nights, they persist because their ultimate aim is to master the subject and achieve top results.

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Despite physical discomfort, a dedicated student continues striving toward the goal, driven by an unwavering determination. In the same way, a scientist pours all his energy into discovery, disregarding physical hardships. Similarly, one who seeks freedom from *karmas* and the realization of the true nature of *a:thma* must set this as their goal. They learn to keep all other aspects of life within limits, ensuring nothing interferes with their pursuit. They command the body and senses instead of becoming enslaved by them. Only such discipline marks a true



‘virtuoso’— adept in the art of living and action.

Competency begins with choosing a goal. The next step is selecting the right means to achieve it. Finally, applying those means with consistency is also an act of competency. When this process is followed, success in attaining the goal becomes certain. This alignment of purpose, method, and practice is called *kausalam* - the mark of a competent mindset. In this state, the mind, body, and senses come under our control, guided by the strength of the intellect.

Thus, intellect plays the most crucial role in shaping human behavior. It is intellect and the actions arising from it, that defines a person's character. For instance, the goal of an ideal ruler is to safeguard the nation and serve the people. Such a leader, committed to his duty, willingly sacrifices personal comforts, wealth, and even attachments for the greater good. We see this exemplified in the life of *Sri: Ra:ma*. For the welfare of *Ayo:dhya*, *Ra:ma* accepted exile for fourteen years, solely to honor the word of his father, King *Dasaratha*. In doing so, he relinquished royal luxuries and embraced hardship for the sake of his people. *Ra:ma* exemplifies *kusala buddhi*—an intellect firmly rooted in a singular goal, the welfare of *Ayo:dhya*.

Hidden Strength Revealed in Urgent Need

Page 301 For the sake of his people, *Sri: Ra:ma* did not hesitate to give up comforts, including time with *Si:tha* and *Lakshmana*, whom He loved dearly. This is the hallmark of a true human being and a true ruler.

In the same way, when we set a goal and move toward it, anyone or anything that is an obstacle or distraction loses its priority. The greatness of a person is measured by the clarity of his goal and the commitment with which he pursues it. Animals, by nature, cannot set goals. When hungry, they eat whatever is available, and once satisfied, they simply return to their instincts. Humans, however, understand that life is not merely about eating; it is about achieving a higher purpose.

A wise person sees the body as an instrument to reach that purpose. Just as cars require different fuels - unleaded, leaded, or premium gas, the body, too, requires the right kind of nourishment. To maintain *sa:ththvik* qualities, one must consciously choose food that uplifts the body and mind, avoiding excess or indulgence. Only a *sa:ththvik* body and mind can support the journey toward self-realization.

If the goal is freedom from *ka:rmic* bondage, bliss, and realization of the self, then one must live by the right set of rules—rules for the body, rules for the mind, and, with knowledge, even higher rules for the wise. We must carefully decide what to eat, see, hear, smell, and touch, so that the body and senses remain *sa:ththvik* and aligned with our ultimate goal of self-realization.

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One must first decide what kind of thoughts are worth entertaining and allow only those thoughts to enter the mind. Choose to associate with people who nurture and support such thoughts, and let those who encourage you toward your goal remain close. Those who distract or obstruct your path should be kept at a distance. If circumstances require you to engage with them, interact only to the extent necessary and then step back. Even if such individuals are closely related to you, if they pose an obstacle to your goal, you must learn to distance yourself.

This principle applies equally to spiritual knowledge. If our goal is to grow spiritually, we must seek out those who can guide us along that path and listen carefully to their teachings. True competency lies in discerning what benefits the body, the senses, and the mind, and accepting those influences only to the extent needed. Such competency is what leads a person to equanimity, allowing them to remain balanced in both success and failure.

By contrast, one who has no clear goal easily becomes overjoyed with even a small success. A little comfort to the body excites them, a small pleasure for the mind delights them, and a momentary satisfaction of the senses overwhelms them. But when the body, mind, or senses are excessively swayed by fleeting pleasures, a kind of restlessness or irritation arises in them and one will not be able to reach the set goal. This is why *Lord Krushna* urges *Arjuna* to fix his resolve on a higher spiritual goal and use wisdom to act with equanimity, *yo:gah karmasu kausalam*. This raises the question: when, where, and by whom must equanimity be achieved? *Lord Krushna* answers, *buddhi yuktho: jaha:thi:ha*, it must be achieved by one with a firm resolve, here and now, in this very life and with this very body. Many people think that results belong only to future births and dismiss present effort. But *Krushna* clarifies: *iha jaha:thi:ha* - equanimity is to be attained in this world, in this body, in this lifetime, by remaining unaffected by both success and failure - *sukrutha dushkruthe: ubhe: jaha:thi*.

How can one reach such a state? Consider a farmer: if the crop is abundant, he rejoices; if floods destroy the crop, he is distressed. But the wise cultivate steadiness, accepting both outcomes with equanimity, seeing them as part of the larger journey toward the ultimate goal.

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How does this equanimity manifest? Returning to the example of the farmer: whether the harvest is abundant or completely lost, the farmer does not abandon his duty. If the crop is good, he prepares to cultivate again the next season. If the crop fails, he still returns to the field, hoping for a better yield next year. In both cases, his resolve to continue cultivating remains unchanged. This steady commitment, regardless of success or failure, is what we call true competency.

In the same way, the main purpose of human life is to use this body as a means to free ourselves from *ka:rmic* bondage. Why is this important? Because once we shed *ka:rmic* bondage, we come to realize our true self. And in realizing the self, we not only experience bliss within but also radiate joy outward, creating an environment that uplifts others. True joy is not just what we feel alone—it is the kind of joy that can be shared with those around us. When we live in the awareness of our true state, everything around us begins to align favorably, and sorrow no longer comes near us. Such a goal is therefore truly worthy of pursuit.

Once we set ourselves on the path of freeing from *ka:rmic* bondage, we discover that both the worldly and the spiritual realms begin to support us. This is why *Lord Krushna* teaches that we must never sacrifice the higher goal for temporary, mundane comforts. At the same

time, there is no need to reject or punish the body in order to reach the higher goal. The truth is, one can live in the midst of the worldly while still striving toward the spiritual. By balancing both, one moves steadily toward the ultimate realization.

Firm Methods for Restraining the Senses

Page 304Hence, *Lord Krushna* teaches that whoever establishes a firm resolve toward a higher goal and creates an environment that supports that pursuit is truly a wise person. Some may argue that it is difficult to remain equanimous without desiring the fruits of action. To them, *Krushna* says, if you cannot work without desire, then at least elevate your desire—do not settle for small gains, but aim for the highest possible outcome. Yet even this is a concession. The best path is always to work without expecting anything in return, for only then can true equanimity be attained.

There is a story of an ascetic who renounced worldly life in search of spiritual knowledge and realization. One day, the king of the land encountered the ascetic and, impressed by his renunciation, praised him: “You are truly great, for you have given up the comforts of the world.” To this, the sage replied that in fact the king was greater. Surprised, the king asked, “How can that be? I enjoy worldly comforts, while you have given them up. How can you say I am greater?”

The sage then explained: “The greatness of renunciation depends on the value of what is being renounced. I have given up only temporary worldly pleasures in exchange for eternal spiritual upliftment. But you, O king, have renounced the highest spiritual realization in exchange for fleeting worldly comforts. Therefore, your renunciation is greater than mine, for you have given up the most precious treasure of all.”

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The misguided king gave up the priceless treasure of salvation and the knowledge of the *ā:t̥hma* in exchange for fleeting worldly comforts. In truth, most of us fall into this same category. The *ā:t̥hma* is the most valuable reality, so valuable that its worth is beyond our comprehension. Yet we spend vast amounts of money and effort on the comforts of the body, forgetting that the body itself cannot function

without the *a:thma*. It is astonishing how oblivious we remain to the Self, while anxiously chasing after temporary bodily pleasures.



Sages, on the other hand, endure great penances in the forests, sacrificing bodily comforts to attain the permanent and blissful realization of the *a:thma*. But we do the opposite—we sacrifice the Lord Himself for trivial, worldly enjoyments. Even if God were to appear before us, most would ask not for Him but for wealth, titles, or other temporary gains. This shows how misplaced our desires truly are.

Therefore, we must turn our aspiration toward what is most valuable— Self Realisation leading to God Realisation. When God becomes our goal, and we perform our duties without expectation of reward, the results will naturally flow. This is the law of nature. On the other hand, if we cling to a specific outcome, we may or may not obtain it. Consider this example: if you approach a wealthy person and ask for only five dollars, he may give you exactly that—no more. But if you ask him to give whatever he wishes, he might grant you a thousand, or even a million. In the same way, if we seek only small, worldly comforts, we limit ourselves; but if we seek God, the source of all, we open ourselves to infinite blessings.

Verse 51

Hence, Lord Krishna urges all of us through Arjuna: “Do your work without expecting anything in return, and the best results will follow.”

karmajam buddhiyuktha: hi, phalam thyakthva: mani:shinaha |
janmabanddhavinirmuktha:ha, padam gachchanthyana:mayam || 2.51 ||

Such people attain the state of *ana:maya*—freedom from suffering. But who are these people, and what does this state truly mean?

The results of any effort can be of two types:

1. **Visible (*drushta-phalam*)** – the immediate benefit, felt or seen right away.
2. **Invisible (*adrushta-phalam*)** – the delayed or unseen benefit that unfolds later.

For example, when we sow a seed, we do not see an instant result. Only after time do the sprouts emerge. When we eat, the satisfaction is immediate—this is visible. But when we study, the fruits of knowledge are realized much later—this is invisible.

If our focus is only on *drushta-phalam* (short-term results), we sacrifice the *adrushta-phalam* (long-term results). On the other hand, when we set our sights on the *adrushta-phalam*, we ultimately gain both—the long-term and the short-term.

In essence, we must be willing to sacrifice short-term gains for long-term fulfillment. Just as one would not stop at collecting mere sand from the ocean shore, but instead venture deeper to find precious pearls, so too should we go beyond the immediate and strive for what is truly valuable.

Four Stages of Progressive Mind Control

Page 307Hence, a wise person does not cling to short-term or immediate benefits. They may feel sadness in failure and joy in success, but they do not become attached to either. Instead, they move beyond both, continuing steadfastly toward their higher goal. Only in this way can one free oneself from *ka:rmic* bondage, attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death, and avoid being reborn in a lower form. This state is called *ana:maya*.

padam gachhanthyana:mayam

- *gachhanthi* – They attain,
- *padam* — that state
- *ana:maya* – which is wholesome, auspicious and permanent .

This is the state toward which one must strive.

“Then what prevents us from attaining it?” When we are on the beach, the beauty of ordinary shells entices us to collect them, hoping to profit from them. This is called *mo:ha*— attraction. Attachment to inferior objects keeps us from striving toward the pearls, the superior goal. Therefore, this infatuation must be overcome.

The way to diminish infatuation is to cultivate familiarity with the superior object or goal. As we devote more attention to it and deepen our understanding, our attachment to inferior things naturally fades. Just as turning on a light dispels darkness without effort, increasing the brightness accelerates the disappearance of darkness, while dimming the light allows darkness to grow.

Similarly, the more we understand *a:thma* and *Parama:thma*, and the stronger our resolve to realize them, the faster we overcome *mo:ha*. Infatuation arises only from ignorance.

Lord Krushna encourages *Arjuna* to increase his attachment to *bhagavad vishayam*—the auspicious pastimes and divine qualities of the Lord. This attachment should mature into *vya:mo:ha*, a state of overwhelming love, where one cannot live without thoughts of the Lord. Naturally, as devotion to the Lord deepens, interest in mundane matters diminishes. No extra effort is needed—just as darkness disappears when the light is switched on, worldly distractions vanish as our focus on the divine intensifies.

Our esteemed *a:cha:rya*, *Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya*, exemplifies this beautifully. He had a profound attraction to gold—not just any gold, but a pair of golden objects that were fragrant and exquisitely shaped.

- “What gold is it?” – They resemble lotus petals.
- “What petals are they?” – They are the Divine Lotus Feet.

Verse 52

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“Whose divine lotus feet are they?” - They belong to *Achyutha*, the Lord who has vowed never to abandon His devotees. The word *Achyutha* signifies His unfailing promise to stand by His devotees at all times. His divine feet are compared to lotus petals—pure, soft, and radiant. To *Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya*, these sacred feet are priceless gold. The *acha:rya* became deeply devoted to this "gold," the divine lotus feet of the Lord.

*yo: nithyam Achyutha pada:mbuja yugmarukma
vya:mohathaha thadithara:ni thruna:ya me:ne: |
asmadguro:ho bhagavatho::sya dayaika sindho:ho
ra:ma:nujasya charanau saranam prapadye: ||*

"I surrender to the lotus feet of our *Guru*, *Ra:ma:nuja*, who is like an ocean of mercy. *Ra:ma:nuja* constantly meditates upon and is overwhelmingly devoted to the pair of golden lotus feet of Lord *Achyutha*. Because of this divine attachment, he renounced even the slightest interest in worldly, mundane objects, treating them as insignificant as blades of grass."

The verse describes how *Ra:ma:nuja* developed incessant love and longing for the Lord's divine feet across all times—past, present, and future—and in all places. This spiritual devotion completely replaced any attraction toward material pleasures.

This teaches us an important spiritual lesson: We humans usually get attracted to worldly, temporary things, such as wealth, possessions, and fleeting pleasures. As a result, we lose interest in realizing the Lord or understanding the true nature of the *a:thma* (soul). But *Ra:ma:nuja* demonstrates the right kind of attraction—one directed solely toward the Lord. One can cultivate such divine devotion by constantly meditating on the Lord's auspicious qualities—His compassion, beauty, strength, and grace. The more we remember Him, the more our mind turns away from mundane attractions.

This is beautifully explained in the verse:

*yada: the: mo:hakalilam buddhih vyathitarishyathi
thada: gantha:si nirve:dam sro:thavyasya sruthasya cha || 52 ||*

"O *Arjuna*! When your intellect crosses beyond the mire of delusion (*mo:hakalilam*), you will attain true detachment and develop disinterest in all that is heard and yet to be heard."

Imagine walking along a beach and finding shiny shells. At first, you think they are precious and spend hours collecting them, believing they will make you rich. Later, you discover that real pearls lie deep within the ocean, infinitely more valuable than the shells. At that moment, you regret the wasted time and effort spent on the shells. Similarly, our attachment to worldly pleasures is like clinging to shells, while devotion to the Lord is like discovering priceless pearls. When we realize this truth, our mind naturally turns away from the mundane and is irresistibly drawn to the divine.

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There is another well-known example involving a wrestler named *Dhanurda:sa*, who was deeply attached to his wife, especially captivated by the beauty of her eyes. One day, *Ra:ma:nuja* saw *Dhanurda:sa*, holding an umbrella over his wife as they made their way toward the *Sri: Rangana:ttha* Temple.

Curious, *Ra:ma:nuja* asked him, "What would you do if you were shown a pair of eyes even more beautiful than your wife's?" Without hesitation, *Dhanurda:sa* replied, "If I ever saw such eyes, I would gladly become their servant and devote myself completely to them."

Hearing this, *Ra:ma:nuja* blessed *Dhanurda:sa* with a divine vision of *Lord Rangana:ttha*'s celestial eyes, radiating incomparable beauty and compassion. The moment *Dhanurda:sa* beheld this vision, he was utterly overwhelmed. Never before had he seen such transcendent beauty. In that instant, his worldly attachment shattered, and he fell at *Ra:ma:nuja*'s feet, deeply repentant for having wasted his life pursuing mere mortal beauty. From then on, he dedicated himself entirely to serving *Lord Rangana:ttha*.

Similarly, *Lord Krishna* teaches that once a person truly realizes the nature of the *a:thma* and *Parama:thma*, they experience deep sorrow and regret for having spent their life chasing temporary, mundane pleasures.

Verse 53

Right Attitude While Experiencing Worldly Objects

With this realization, the person can now pursue that ultimate goal with complete conviction and unwavering focus. As a result, they develop equanimity towards worldly and mundane happenings. This equanimity ensures that whatever actions they perform no longer create *ka:rmic* bondage, gradually leading them towards self-realization. The ultimate fruit of this journey is bliss.



Lord Krushna addresses this in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, using the term “***sruthi viprathipanna:the***”, which carries a profound meaning beyond its everyday, colloquial usage. Krushna’s choice of words reminds us that we cannot fully grasp the subtle meanings of the *Gi:tha* simply by reading it on our own. The scripture must be studied under the guidance of *a:cha:ryas* who can reveal its true essence. One such word is “*sama:dhi*.”

In common understanding, *sama:dhi* is often interpreted as a state of emptiness or deep meditation where the mind is disconnected from worldly matters. However, **Sri:** Krushna uses the word in a very different way—as a synonym for mind itself.

He explains this in the verse:

sruthi viprathipanna:the yada: sttha:syathi nischala: |
sama:dha:vachala: buddhihi thada: yo:gamava:psyasi || 2.53

Here, Krushna says that when one's intellect remains steady and ceases to be allured, that is the moment when one truly attains yo:ga.

But how can *sama:dhi* be used as a synonym for the mind? To understand this, let us look at its etymology:

sam + a:+ dhi:yate → sama:dhi

dhi:yathe means “that which stays” or “that which is placed.”

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For instance, the sea is called *va:ridhi*. *va:ri* means “water,” and *dhi* means “that which stays.” Thus, *va:ridhi* refers to the place where water stays — the sea. In the same way, when we consider the term *sama:dhi*, it means that certain things remain or stay in the mind. What are those things?

The name of this chapter is *sa:nkhya yo:ga*. In it, **Sri:** Krushna explains the knowledge of the *a:thma - a:thma jna:nam*. *sa:nkhya* refers to this knowledge — but where should such knowledge be, and where should it stay?

It is important to be clear that this knowledge is not the same as the information we acquire from books, such as science, mathematics, or history. *sa:nkhya* or *jna:nam* is of a different nature. It is like sunlight in relation to the Sun. Just as sunlight naturally radiates from the Sun, *jna:nam* is intrinsic to the *a:thma*.

The *a:thma* is *anu:hu* — the smallest entity in the universe, indivisible beyond any limit. Consider a molecule. It can be divided into atoms, which in turn can be divided into nuclei. The nucleus can be divided further into protons, and then into quarks, and so on. Yet, the *a:thma* is so subtle that it cannot be further divided.

Though the *a:thma* is the smallest entity, its *jna:nam* can pervade the entire universe. Just as the light from a lamp spreads throughout a room, and if the walls are removed, continues to radiate infinitely outward though where the density decreases, we do not see the light. In the same way, the *jna:nam* of the *a:thma* spreads without limit.

The *a:thma* is called *dharmi*, and it has its own essential quality, called *dharma*. The *dharma* of the *a:thma* is to radiate or spread *jna:nam*. No matter the distance, the *a:thma* has this intrinsic ability, this *dharma*, to let its *jna:nam* shine forth and pervade.

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There are specific technical terms used to describe two distinct forms of *jna:nam*, knowledge. The *jna:nam* that pervades or spreads is called *dharmabhu:tha jna:nam*, whereas the *jna:nam* that remains localized is called *dharmi:bhu:tha jna:nam*.

To understand this, consider the example of a lamp. The flame itself stays fixed in one place—this represents the *dharmi*. The light that spreads outward from the flame represents the *dharma*. Although both the flame and the light are manifestations of the same energy, we give them two different names to distinguish their roles and behavior. The *dharmi* remains stable and unmoving, while the *dharma* extends and pervades its surroundings.

In the same way, the *a:thma* and its *jna:nam* function. The *dharmi:bhu:tha jna:nam*, which remains localized, is the *a:thma* itself or the *ji:va*. This is what one refers to when saying, “I,” “me,” “he,” “this,” or “that.” The *dharmabhu:tha jna:nam*, on the other hand, spreads throughout the body, allowing one to identify different parts of themselves. For instance, when someone touches their hand, they say, “This is my hand,” and when they touch their head, they say, “This is my head.” Regardless of how large a person or animal becomes, the *jna:nam* fully pervades his entire body. In this sense, all *ji:va:thmas* are fundamentally similar.

In the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, *Sri*: Krushna emphasizes the importance of attaining *yo:gam*. He explains that one must first combine one’s actions with *yo:gam*, and through this alignment, eventually become fully associated with *yo:gam* itself, ultimately achieving the highest state of *yo:gam*.

The Senses’ Forceful Power Over Mind

Page 313 In other words, the Lord is saying that one must perform their activities while being associated with *yo:gam*, and at the same time, *yo:gam* itself is attained through actions performed with equanimity. At first glance, this might seem like a classic “*chicken or egg*” problem: Do we first need *yo:gam* to act, or do we act to gain *yo:gam*?

However, there is no real contradiction here. *Lord* Krushna is using the term *yo:gam* in three different contexts, each with a distinct meaning:

1. **First *yo:gam* – The prerequisite:**

This is the initial state of balance and discipline that serves as the foundation for all actions.

2. **Second *yo:gam* – The practice:**

When activities are performed with this initial *yo:gam*, they gradually get backed by knowledge of *a:thma* and the *parma:thma*.

3. **Third *yo:gam* – The ultimate state:**

As a result of practicing the second *yo:gam* to continue performing actions, one ultimately attains the highest *yo:gam*—the state of bliss.

To fully understand this, we need some background on how actions, the mind, and *ka:rmic* records interact.

All the activities we have performed over countless lifetimes leave behind impressions, which accumulate as *ka:rmic* records in the subtle body. The mind acts as a central storehouse for these records, both good and bad.

This mind functions like a colored glass. Just as pure white light passing through a tinted glass takes on its color, the *jna:nam* of the *a:thma* is ‘coloured’ as it flows through the mind.

- If the mind holds negative *ka:rmic* records, the *jna:nam* takes on their influence, compelling the individual toward harmful or selfish actions.
- If the mind holds positive *ka:rmic* records, the *jna:nam* is shaped by these and encourages noble, beneficial actions.

However, every action—whether good or bad—creates new *ka:rmic* records, perpetuating the cycle.

The spiritual structure can be understood step by step:

1. At the core is the *a:thma*, the eternal self or *ji:va*.
2. The *a:thma* is in the form of *jna:nam* (knowledge or awareness).
3. Surrounding the *a:thma* is the *buddhi* (intellect), which acts as a guide, advising the *ji:va* on what should or should not be done.
4. Next is the mind (*manas*), which serves as the storehouse of *ka:rmic* records.
5. When the *a:thma* acts, its *jna:nam* flows outward through the *buddhi* and then through the mind.
 - As it passes through the mind, it picks up the coloring of these *ka:rmic* impressions, which influence the person's decisions and actions.

Thus, the mind becomes both the filter and driver of actions, shaped by past *karma* while simultaneously generating new *karma* through current choices.

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As *jna:nam* (knowledge or awareness) emerges, it interacts with the senses. Depending on the *ka:rmic records* stored in the mind, this *jna:nam* influences the senses and drives the body into action.

For instance, if there is a record in the mind related to hunger, the mind sends a message like, “Go, eat!” This impulse flows through *jna:nam*, reaches the senses, and then the senses propel the body to search for food. Finally, the body gathers the food and eats.

This shows that the root cause of our actions lies not in the body or the senses, but in the mind. Therefore, if we wish to transform ourselves, we must fix the mind, not just control the body or the senses. It is sufficient to purify the mind, while guiding the body and senses with discipline. In fact, the mind has the power to change the behavior of both the body and senses:

*mana eva manushya:na:m ka:ranam bandha mo:kshayo:ho
bandhana vishaya:saktham mukthyai nirvishayam smrutham*

“It is only the mind that is responsible for either binding us or liberating us.
When it is attached to worldly objects, it enslaves us;
when it is free from attachment, it leads to liberation.”

The mind operates based on past *ka:rmic* records. If we want to cultivate noble qualities, we must begin by purifying the mind.

How the Mind Functions

The mind persuades us to act by showing us potential benefits. It does this for both good and bad actions, often ignoring the wisdom of the *buddhi* (intellect). It may highlight the supposed pleasures of harmful actions while exaggerating the difficulties of righteous ones.

As we gradually reduce unwanted *ka:rmic* records stored in the mind, its behavior starts to shift in our favor. But this raises an important question:

- How can we reduce these *ka:rmic* records?
- Where are they stored?
- How can we access and cleanse the mind while preventing new records from forming?

On our own, we cannot directly locate or control the mind—it works in subtle and mysterious ways. However, *ve:dic* scriptures reveal the nature of the mind, its functions, and the means to purify it.

Surprisingly, the scriptures explain that the Lord has designed the human body as a tool for cleansing the mind. By engaging the body in proper actions, the mind is naturally purified over time.

Keeping this in view, the *ve:das* guide us with recommendations on what actions to perform and what actions to avoid.

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Based on the type of body one possesses, the *ve:das* prescribe specific actions to perform and certain actions to avoid. Prescribed *karmas* are righteous actions. When practiced diligently and correctly, these *karmas* gradually erase all previously stored *ka:rmic* records.



However, to truly benefit from these actions, one must have clarity about how to put them into practice. This clarity begins with knowing one's true nature.

Understanding Our True Nature

Who are we, really?

We - the *a:thma* - are not the body. The *a:thma* merely resides within the body, using it as an instrument.

- The body is made up of various elements and is therefore composite and perishable.
- The *a:thma*, on the other hand, is eternal and indivisible. It is not a combination of parts; it exists unchangingly.

The body grows, ages, and eventually deteriorates, while the *a:thma* neither grows nor decays. It always remains the same, unaffected by the changes in the body. Since the body is made of temporary components, it will ultimately disintegrate, whereas the *a:thma* is imperishable.

The Purpose of the Body

From this understanding, it becomes clear:

- The body will one day be destroyed, but the *a:thma* is eternal.
- Therefore, the *a:thma* must use the body as a tool to fulfill its higher purpose, rather than being enslaved by bodily desires.

In this world, temporary things are always sacrificed for permanent gains. Likewise, if your goal is to realize the *a:thma* and achieve liberation—even at the cost of bodily comfort or pleasures—you are called a *mumukshu*, a seeker who desires *mo:ksha*.

Role of *ve:dic* scriptures

ve:dic scriptures are sought by *mumukshus*—those who genuinely seek *mo:ksha*, release.

Others, who are not seeking release, do not turn to the scriptures, just as:

- A patient who wishes to be cured goes to a medical shop to purchase medicine.
- Similarly, a *mumukshu* approaches the *ve:das* to take the right actions that will cure the ‘disease’ of *ka:rmic* bondage.

Conversely, a patient who has no desire to recover will not visit a medical shop. In the same way, those who have no aspiration for liberation will naturally have no inclination toward *ve:dic* practices.

Surrendering All Senses to the Lord

Page 316 *a:thma* is the *adrushta phalam* (unseen, eternal gain). When one sets the realization of the *a:thma* as their goal, he gains both, that *adrushta phalam* and also *drushta phalam* (worldly, visible benefits). In other words, if our goal is to realize the *a:thma* and we put forth effort toward it, we will attain the *a:thma* along with the worldly gains that come naturally as byproducts.

Step 1: *de:ha–a:thma vive:ka jna:nam* (Awareness of Body and Soul Differentiation)

The first step on this journey is to develop the clear awareness that the body and *a:thma* are distinct.

- The body is temporary and perishable.
- The *a:thma* is eternal and unchanging.

With this understanding, one should use the body as a tool to pursue the higher goal of realizing the *a:thma*, even if there is discomfort or sacrifice along the way.

This awareness of the body–soul distinction is called the first *yo:gam*.

When one performs his ordained duties while constantly remembering this distinction, he is said to be *in yo:gam*.

Step 2: *buddhi kusalatha* (Unshaken Focus on the *a:thma*)

As a person consistently performs his prescribed *karmas* while keeping the *a:thma* as the goal, this awareness gradually becomes continuous and unbroken.

When the thought of the *a:thma* becomes unwavering and deeply rooted, it is called *buddhi kusalatha*—a state of steady, undisturbed focus. This is the second *yo:gam*.

yo:gaha karmasu kaushalam –

yo:ga is excellence in action. Without a staunch and determined goal to realize the *a:thma*, one cannot develop this uninterrupted contemplation of the soul.

Step 3: Realization of the *a:thma* through *sama:dhi*

When this unbroken awareness is firmly established, one begins to perform all activities with perfect equanimity, free from attachment to success or failure.

This leads to self-realization, the direct experience of the *a:thma* itself. This is the third *yo:gam*—the culmination of the path.

However, this process takes time. It requires patience, persistence, and steady practice.

How This Transformation Happens

As we perform our ordained duties as per the *ve:das*, two things happen simultaneously:

1. Old *ka:rmic* records that bind us are gradually erased.
2. The mind is then immersed in the divine fragrance propelling one towards self realisation.

Over time, as the mind becomes filled only with these purifying thoughts, it reaches a state of *sama:dhi*—a condition where the mind is completely absorbed in *a:thma jna:nam* (knowledge of *a:thma*).

This is the state that *Lord Krishna* urges *Arjuna* to attain:
a mind fully stabilized, free from distractions, and completely absorbed in the realization of the *a:thma*.

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When does one achieve that state and what is the experience like?

Of all the goals humans may pursue, the highest and most meaningful goal is to attain permanent bliss, a state free from all shortcomings and limitations. This supreme state can be achieved when self-realization arises.

One does not perceive the *a:thma* in the same way we perceive external objects through our senses—sight, touch, smell, taste, or hearing. The *a:thma* is realized only through the mind, not through sense perception.

The Life of a Self-Realized Person

Those who truly realize the *a:thma* do not necessarily renounce the world or retreat into the forest. Instead, they continue to live among people, engaging with worldly objects and relationships.

In fact, such individuals fulfill their responsibilities toward society even more efficiently because their actions are free from selfish motives.

- They perform their duties without attachment to worldly possessions or people.
- External distractions cannot disturb them, for their mind remains anchored in *samadhi*, a state of total equanimity of the intellect.

Sri: Krishna expounds on this in fifty-third verse. True realization happens within the mind, through unbroken awareness.

Purifying the Mind: Removing Old *ka:rmic* Records

To reach this state, one must purify the mind by gradually erasing old, binding *ka:rmic* records and replacing them with new, beneficial impressions. This process is similar to writing new data on a tape: as the new information is recorded, the old, unwanted data is

automatically overwritten and erased. The practical way to do this is to continuously perform actions as prescribed by the *ve:das* without expectation of personal outcomes. By doing so with discipline and sincerity, the mind gradually becomes free from past impurities and is steadily filled with the right impressions. This paves the way for self-realization and the experience of permanent bliss.

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“How long should we do this?” asks *Arjuna*.

Lord **Sri:** Krushna replies, “One has to continuously perform his duties for as long as he lives.” He further emphasizes, “You should not withdraw from action even if you expect nothing in return.”

Arjuna, like most of us, looks for reasons to avoid his responsibilities. He raises objections— he might go to hell, or why he should act if the results are not to be desired. In response, Lord **Sri:** Krushna clarifies that every action inevitably produces a result. If one acts with expectation, the result is limited to that expectation. But when one acts without attachment to outcomes, the same action leads to *mo:ksha* - freedom from *ka:rmic* bondage.

Krushna stresses that true action must be accompanied by right understanding, particularly the knowledge of the distinction between the body and the *a:thma*. This awareness must remain firmly in the mind at all times. Yet, such knowledge cannot be attained on one’s own. First, one must listen to scholars and *Gurus*. By listening repeatedly and with devotion, the knowledge becomes steady and eventually blossoms into devotion.

Lust and Anger: Their Hidden Location

Page 319 This love that now blooms, eventually replaces the love for mundane worldly objects. Since this love arises through constant listening, it remains firm and steady.

This state is called ***sruthi viprathipanna:*** – *sruthi* means “from listening,” *vi* means “deeply,” and *prathipanna:* means “that which stays firm in the mind.” If one can keep this knowledge steady in the mind (*yada: sttha:syathi nischala:*), it is already a great achievement, for it is not easy. Even the slightest thought about worldly things can drag the mind away, making *a:thma jna:nam* difficult to hold onto.

It is like a child sent to fetch a book from the library. On the way, the child meets his friends, gets absorbed in play, and eventually returns home without the book, forgetting the original chore. Our minds behave in the same way: whatever we love most will draw us toward it.

Since the child's affection was with his friends, he completely forgot the task of bringing the book. Similarly, unless love for the Supreme is constantly nurtured, the mind easily wanders back to worldly attachments.

That is why one must listen repeatedly, in many ways and from many people, until the knowledge becomes deeply steady in the mind.

Yet, Lord **Sri**: Krushna does not stop there. It is not enough for the knowledge to simply become steady, *nischala*; it must mature further into a state of unshakable firmness, *achala*.

What is the difference between these two? Consider the flame of an oil lamp. It remains steady, *nischala*, so long as no wind blows. But if you cover it with a glass chimney, the flame stays unflickering even in the midst of strong winds—that is *achala*.

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Another analogy for *nischala* and *achala* knowledge is water in a glass. Water remains unmoving in the glass and does not spill, only as long as nothing disturbs it—that is *nischala*. But if the water is frozen into ice, you can even play ball with the glass and nothing happens to the frozen water—that is *achala*. Thus, there is a significant difference between *nischala* and *achala*: *nischala* is the steady state that lasts

only until something disturbs it, whereas *achala* is the unshaken state that remains steady despite disturbances.



Lord Krushna says that one must practice until one's knowledge matures into the final state of *achala*, where *a:thma jna:nam* remains unshaken regardless of external influences. To reach this state, one must continuously listen to scholars and *a:cha:ryas*. Along the way, there are intermediate stages that may feel like the final goal, but they are not. For example, there are states such as *pura:na vaira:gyam*, *prasu:thi vaira:gyam*, and *masa:na vaira:gyam*. *pura:na vaira:gyam* is when one feels detached during an *a:cha:rya*'s discourse but, once it ends, he quickly falls back into worldly attachments. Similarly, in *prasu:thi vaira:gyam* and *masa:na vaira:gya*, detachment arises only temporarily - during childbirth or while performing the last rites for the dead, but soon fades away.

So when can we say that a person has truly reached the state of *achala*? It is when *a:thma jna:nam* remains steady even while engaging with the mundane world, and even in the face of circumstances that could easily disturb it. To cultivate this, one must build a protective fence around his budding knowledge. Just as a tender plant needs a fence to protect it from animals and harsh elements, our initial knowledge requires protection and nurturing until it grows strong enough to withstand disturbances on its own.

Speaking of the steps to reach the state of *achala*, Lord Krushna earlier began with *vyavasa:ya:thmika: buddhi*—the firm resolve that *a:thma jna:na* is the pursuit truly worth achieving in this world. Here, He reaffirms that teaching. One must constantly contemplate the qualities of the *a:thma*. However, unless one's *ka:rmic* records diminish, the mind will not naturally turn toward such contemplation. These *ka:rmic* impressions are reduced only when one performs righteous actions as prescribed in the *ve:das*. Thus, faith in the *ve:das* is essential.

Along this path, one must also firmly grasp that *a:thma* is distinct from the body. This realization begins to take shape primarily by listening to the discourses of *a:cha:ryas*. As a result, one may feel guilt and despair for having wasted life in worldly pursuits. Paradoxically, this despair accelerates detachment from mundane things, making space for the recognition of one's true nature. Since this knowledge is supreme, it itself becomes a protective fence around the seeker.

Such knowledge, born of right actions and clarity, is called *prajna* (*pra + jna*), meaning “the highest knowledge.” This knowledge remains steady even amidst external disturbances. When *prajna* fully pervades the mind, that state of mind is called *sama:dhi*. *sama:dhi* means a mind completely filled with perfect knowledge, not the mistaken notion of “emptying the mind” or “thinking about nothing.” A mind in unwavering persistence, grounded in true knowledge, is called *sama:dhi*. In such a state, protective strength arises naturally, and external factors, though present, lose their power to disturb.

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We must build a protective fence around the mind strong enough to withstand any onslaught, just as a political leader safeguards himself with bulletproof glass around his vehicle. In our spiritual journey, there will always be naysayers—people who criticize or mock us, especially when we engage in noble acts like chanting the Lord's name or visiting a temple. They may tease us, saying such practices are unnecessary or outdated. At first, we may brush off their words, but with repeated criticism, we risk slowly believing them.

This is much like the story from the *Panchathanthra*, where three thieves encountered a *bra:hmin* carrying a goat. Each thief, approaching separately, convinced him that what he carried was not a goat but a dog. Hearing this repeatedly, the *bra:hmin* eventually believed it to be true, abandoned the goat, and the thieves stole it. Unlike that *bra:hmin*, one must strengthen his *a:thma jna:nam* (knowledge of the self) so firmly that no amount of outside persuasion can shake it. Only then will external circumstances fail to disturb one's inner stability. Such unshaken, steady wisdom is called *stthithaprajna*.

Just as a well-built house can withstand strong winds, heavy rain, or even snow, allowing its residents to live securely, a seeker with a strong foundation in self-knowledge can face criticism and opposition without being swayed. For the spiritually inclined, attempts to drag them away

from the higher path will always exist. But if they can resist such efforts and continue their journey undisturbed, they are called *stthithaprajna*.

Such a person possesses *prajna-pra:sa:dam*, the grace of wisdom. To reach this state, one must keep listening, reflecting, and reinforcing that knowledge until it becomes an unbreakable protective shield, ultimately leading to the state of *stthithaprajna*.

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Wearing the armor of *prajna-pra:sa:dam*, one must begin taking steps toward the goal of self-realization. With this in mind, Lord **Sri: Krushna** urged *Arjuna* to follow the path of self-realization. *Arjuna* agreed, but he remained uncertain—*when* would he actually reach that goal?

Krushna assured him with the words *thada: yo:gam ava:psyasi*—“then you will achieve it.” Still, *Arjuna* was not convinced. He wondered how long it would take, and what the exact path would look like.

To reach the state of *stthithaprajna* (steady wisdom), one must lose infatuation with worldly pleasures. But letting go of such attachments requires the performance of *karma* (dutiful action). And duty is rarely pleasant—it often feels like a chore.

Consider this example: To get a good job, one needs a certificate. To get the certificate, one must pass an exam. To pass the exam, one must study diligently. At each step, effort and discipline are required. Faced with this, many people are tempted to take shortcuts, perhaps even buy the certificate instead of working for it. *Arjuna*, too, was tempted by such reasoning. He thought: if self-realization comes through steady, undisturbed knowledge, why go through the hardship of *karma*?

His logic went like this: If disturbances of the mind are removed, knowledge will naturally remain steady. And if knowledge is steady, then self-realization will come easily. So, why not avoid the noisy, chaotic world altogether and retreat into the forest, where there are no disturbances? Wouldn't that be the faster path?

Thus, *Arjuna* considered asking **Sri: Krushna** whether renouncing action and retiring to the forest would be a better way to achieve self-realization.

Verse 54

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Arjuna first wondered, “Where does a *stthithaprajna* reside?” He thought that if such a person lived in the forest, he too could simply go there. But the truth is deeper.

vane:shu do:sha: prabhavanthi ra:gina:m gruhe:shu panche:ndriya nigrahashtapaha |
akuthsithe: karmani yaha pravarthathe: nivrutthara:gasya gruham thapo:vanam ||

If the mind is impure, even the forest cannot protect one from worldly attachments—the person will simply recreate family life there. For example, Sage *Viswa:mithra* renounced his kingdom and went to the forest for penance, yet his mind wavered when he encountered *Me:naka*. On the other hand, King *Janaka* remained in his palace, ruled his kingdom, and still attained self-realization. This shows that it is not the place but the mind that determines spiritual progress.

With this understanding, *Arjuna* asked Lord **Sri:** Krishna not about *where* a *stthithaprajna* lives, but rather what the disposition of such a person is, and how to recognize him.

Arjuna uva:cha

stthithaprajna ka: bha:sha: sama:dhisthasya ke:sava |
stthithadhi:hi kim prabha:she:tha kima:si:tha vraje:tha kim || 2.54 ||

Here *Arjuna* put forth four key questions to gain deeper insight into the nature of a *stthithaprajna*:

1. ***stthithaprajnasya ka: bha:sha:*** – What are the characteristics to identify and describe a *stthithaprajna*?
2. ***sama:dhisthasya ke:sava: kim prabha:she:tha*** – One who has attained a steady, absorbed mind you spoke of, O Krishna—how does he talk?
3. ***kima:si:tha:*** – How does he sit?
4. ***vraje:tha kim:*** – How does he walk?

In short, *Arjuna* sought to know the mental, physical, and verbal expressions of a *stthithaprajna* —so that he could understand how to recognize such a realized person in the world.

Verse 55

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How can a teacher know if their words are truly entering the minds of students? One way is through questions. A student who asks questions shows that he is thinking, reflecting, and digesting the subject taught.



A *Guru* once described a cow: gentle by nature, with four legs, two horns, a tail, and one that gives nourishing milk. Later, two students who had heard this lesson saw a black animal with the same features. One insisted it was a cow, the other said it was a buffalo. The first student was puzzled, for the description seemed to match perfectly. He returned to the teacher, who explained that the dewlap is the true distinguishing feature of a cow. The second student, who never questioned, carried away only words. The first, who questioned and reflected, received deeper understanding.

In the same way, *Arjuna*'s questions in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* showed that *Krushna*'s teachings were taking root in his mind. When *Arjuna* inquired about how a *stthithaprajna* (one of steady wisdom) conducts himself in body, speech, and mind, *Krushna* was delighted. Just as a child grows by practicing the guidance of a parent, a disciple matures by applying the teacher's instruction.

Teaching can proceed in two ways: first showing the means and then the goal, or first showing the goal and then the means. *Krushna* often presented the fruit first, to inspire aspiration. At the same time, He also wanted to temper *Arjuna*'s pride. *Arjuna* thought that victory over *Bhi:shma* and *Dro:na* rested on his strength alone. To humble him, *Krushna* revealed the state of *stthithaprajna*, the lofty goal beyond *Arjuna*'s current grasp, before explaining the path to reach it.

He first showed *Arjuna* the nature of the mature and final stage of a *stthithaprajna*, how one of steady wisdom will be.

prajaha:thi yada: ka:ma:n sarva:n pa:rttha! mano:gatha:n |
a:thmanyeva:thmana: thrupthaha stthitha prajasthado:chyathe: || [2.55]

Who is called a *stthithaprajna*? One who has completely gets rid of all *ka:rmic* records (*ruchi*) from their mind, thereby abandons all desires that arise from the *ka:rmic* records and in addition they erase the deep rooted traces of all *ka:rmic* impressions (*va:sanas*) responsible for unconscious activities as well.

Moreover, just getting rid of the *ka:rmic* records and deep rooted impressions is not enough. They have to replace the mental infatuations for worldly things with an affection towards *a:thma* or *parma:thma*. When one re-directs their mind that is ensconced in worldly things towards *a:thma* or *parma:thma* only then they are said to have reached the state of *stthithaprajna*.

Also, while letting go of the *ka:rmic* records, Lord **Sri**: *Krushna* qualified the way one should let go.

prajaha:thi yada: ka:ma:n sarva:n pa:rttha! mano:gatha:n - All the worldly objects (that appeal to senses with touch, smell, etc) that create desire in us. *prajaha:thi* - *prakarshe:na jaha:thi* - completely letting go. *Ka:ma:n* - letting go of all desires. *sarva:n prajaha:thi*
a:thmanyeva:thmana: thrustaha - having possessed a pure mind, he desires only the *a:thma* or *Parama:thma*. He has absolutely no desire for anything at all.

When all *samska:ra:s* (*ka:rmic* records along with deep rooted impressions) do not exist in the mind then the only thing left in the mind is the love and desire for the *a:thma* or *Parama:thma*. Such a person is called *a:thma: ra:ma*. For the *a:thma: ra:ma*, all the thoughts and desires not related to *a:thma* or *Parama:thma* disappear completely just as a dark room dissipates the darkness entirely when a lamp is brought

inside the room. However, when the lamp is removed, the darkness returns. Similarly, as long as the *a:thma jna:nam* stays, the desires will not return.

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The challenge then is to keep the self-knowledge - *a:thma jna:nam*, steady as it comes and goes away without our control. It is like a sudden power cut that throws us back into darkness, or like *Vikrama:rka*'s throne, where virtue endures only as long as one sits upon it. Knowledge naturally diminishes desires, yet the wandering mind makes it hard to maintain.

Krushna teaches that one must form firm resolve, fix the mind steadily on the goal, and gradually let go of unwanted thoughts. When this focus becomes unwavering, one is fit for self-realization. A *stthithaprajna* is one who has *prajna* (Self-knowledge) that is *stthitha* (firmly established) and will not waver.

Arjuna asked about the stages of development and how steadiness appears in body, speech, and mind. To inspire him and to lower *Arjuna*'s ego, Krushna describes the stages backwards, starting with the perfect state, then showing the steps to reach it. Like those who take on challenging careers after seeing the benefits, or students who endure long, expensive studies for future rewards, knowing what can be achieved makes the effort feel worthwhile.

The four verses, beginning with *prajaha:thi* and ending with *yada: samharathe*, map these stages - from the perfected state back to the initial effort. By showing the ultimate fruit first, Krushna awakens desire and then guides the seeker through the necessary steps to attain it, mirroring the fourfold process of *yo:ga* philosophy in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

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Just as the *yo:ga sa:sthra* describes the four steps towards self-realization, Lord **Sri**: Krushna takes the same approach to discuss the four steps. He is talking about the steps in the reverse order with the final stage first:

1. The first step (or the final stage from bottom) is the *paripu:rna vasi:ka:ra-dasa*, the stage of complete control
2. Second step (or the third from bottom) is the *e:ke:ndriya-dasa*, the stage of single-mindedness, and finally
3. The third step (or the second from bottom) is the *yathama:na-dasa*, the stage of effort
4. Fourth step (or the first from bottom) is *vyathire:ka-dasa*, the stage of aversion

Describing *paripu:rna vasi:ka:ra-dasa*, Krushna explained that a person who has reached this ripe stage, a *stthithaprajna*, no longer finds happiness in ordinary objects. Eating, drinking, seeing a scene, or touching something beautiful may bring pleasure to others, but for one of steady wisdom, true contentment arises only from associating with *a:thma* or self. They are not at all concerned about the well-being of their physical body or even the condition in which the body is present. In fact that is the first thing one must achieve, that is not to worry about the comfort of one's physical state.

Take for instance, how some people observe *e:ka:dasi*. *ve:dic* scripture says that on an *e:ka:dasi* day, one must observe fasting and spend the day thinking about and reading the divine past times of the Lord. Yet some, thinking only of abstaining, feel weak and end up eating heavier “snacks” than usual, convincing themselves they are fasting. They spend all day on *eka:dasi* planning for the dishes to be prepared on the *dwa:dasi*, the next day when we are supposed to break fast. This is not the true way to spend *e:ka:dasi*. True fasting, then, is not mere restraint of the body, but freedom of the mind from desire.

When the mind is absorbed in love for God, the taste for other foods and pleasures fades naturally, not through effort, but by itself. If the mind is fully engaged, even food loses its appeal. Just as conversation flows effortlessly when a cherished friend visits and time seems to vanish. The usual signals like hunger or passing hours go unnoticed and the mind remains immersed in joy. Other pleasures no longer demand attention, leaving the mind complete and undistracted.

If a glass is filled with thick ghee, any water poured in will overflow. Likewise, when the mind is full of love for the desired object, other desires cannot settle and simply flow away.

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A person who has reached the mature stage of steady, unperturbed knowledge of Self, the *stthithaprajna*, finds joy only in contemplating the Self. That person might be in the midst of worldly objects of desire, yet he has no attachment or recollection of them. As the verse says, *prajaha:thi yada: ka:ma:n*, he completely gives up all desires and the cravings that the objects entice. This is the state of perfect wisdom and control, the *vasi:kara avastha*.

For example, people vow to give up a cherished food when they visit devotional places like *ka:si*. Although they give up physically, such as not eating mango fruit, the mind may still be hooked onto it. For instance, if they notice someone eating a mango fruit, they react inwardly, thinking, “Why are you taking that? Look at this instead.” Such thoughts reveal that the mind has not truly let go. True renunciation is not about giving up the object physically, but about freeing the mind from attachment. Similarly, being in a temple has little value if the mind dwells at home. Physical presence is not what matters. It is the mind that dwells in the worldly things is dangerous. There is a saying that “It

is ok for us to be in the midst of worldly objects, however, it is not good for the worldly objects to be in us". Hence, it is the mind that is in the unperturbed, steady state of a:thma jna:nam takes us to the *stthithaprajna* stage.

Lord **Sri**: Krushna is giving us an example of three such extraordinary souls who reached the final stage of *stthithaprajna*. They are *Prahla:da*, **Sri**: *Sukade:va*, and *Nammal:wa:r*. Their lives reveal what it means to be fully absorbed in God and exemplify the state of a *stthithaprajna*.

Prahla:da is considered the foremost devotee, surpassing even his *Guru Na:rada*. In traditional lists of supreme devotees, "*Prahla:da*, *Na:rada*, *Para:sara*," the disciple's name appears first, before his *Guru*'s. This reflects that by the grace of his *Guru*, *Prahla:da* attained a wisdom that surpassed *Na:rada*'s. *Na:ra:yana* was firmly established in his heart, and he perceived nothing in the world but *Na:ra:yana*. Though surrounded by royal luxuries, playthings, and other children, his eyes and mind recognized only the divine.

Angered by his unwavering devotion, his father tried to harm him. *Prahla:da* endured poison, fire, snakes, being thrown from mountains, trampling by elephants, and attacks from armed guards, yet nothing could affect him. The guards, moved with pity, asked why he drew his father's anger. *Prahla:da* replied that *Vishnu* existed everywhere, in them, in their hands, in their swords, and in himself, so what harm could come to one who is everywhere. Despite all surroundings, he remained content only with *Na:ra:yana*, unaware of food, sleep, or other needs. In this steadfast devotion and unwavering focus, he exemplified the perfection of a *stthithaprajna*.

Sri: Krushna talks about the second extraordinary soul who reached the final stage of *stthithaprajna* is **Sri**: *Sukade:va*. He is the son of *ve:da Vya:sa Bhagava:n*. *ve:da Vya:sa Bhagava:n* is the *Ba:dara:ya:na maharshi* who had the foremost knowledge of *thatthva* and who divided *ve:das* and systematized them for next generations to learn and to propagate. Only after dividing *ve:das*, he received the moniker as *ve:da Vya:sa*. His birth name was *Krushnadvai:pa:yana* and he graced humanity with eighteen *pura:na:s*, two *ithi:sa:s* and much literature related to human history. **Sri**: *Suka* came as his son.

Pages 334 - 336 translation

Sri: *Sukade:va*, the son of *ve:davy:asa*, was born as a sixteen-year-old youth and immediately began walking away, clothed only in divine consciousness.

yam pravrajanta manupe:tamape:takrutyam dvaipa:yano virahaka:tar a:juhava |
puthrethi thanmayathaya taravo abhinedustam sarvabhu:thahridayam munima:natho:smi |

The sixteenyear old boy has no hold on the worldly things, has no human companion, no awareness of his mundane surroundings, however, he has a strong resolve that only God is his companion and he was witnessing God in everything while enjoying the bliss from divine auspicious qualities of the Lord. *ve:davy:asa* ran after him, crying, “son, son!” But **Sri: Suka** remained oblivious of his father.

Sri: Suka’s complete faith in God made him witness the Lord in every inch of his surroundings. **Sri: Suka** recognized that the Lord who is in his heart, is also everywhere. He also ascertained that the Lord who is everywhere is also situated in his heart. He became completely content from enjoying the presence of God and **Sri: Suka** did not get stuck with the mundane colors, forms and fragrances of this world. Although **Sri: Suka** sees the colors and forms, smells the fragrances, he thinks them as they are the forms of the Lord. On the contrary, we would look at the same colors, forms and fragrance and would enjoy them instead of attributing them to the Lord.

As **Sri: Suka** continued his journey with *ve:davy:asa* following behind, they passed a pond where celestial women were bathing, unclothed and extraordinarily beautiful. The young *Suka*, walking ahead, did not react, seeing them as he would see trees or birds, entirely absorbed in the divine. When *ve:davy:asa* appeared, the women felt shy and covered themselves. When asked why they felt no shame before *Suka*, they explained that **Sri: Suka** had a child-like vision who could not judge between male, female, trees, mountains, other creatures, etc while he saw everything equally as forms of the Lord. On the other hand, *ve:davya:sa* along with the women had the life experiences to recognize distinctions across male, female, etc., and hence felt conscience about their bodies.

Sri: Suka exemplified the *vasi:ka:ra avastha*, the stage of perfect control, with a mind free from worldly impressions and filled solely with the Supreme Self. He was a *stthithaprajna* in every sense.

Pages 337 - 338 translation

Sri: Namma:Iwa:r, also known as **Sattako:pa**, is another great soul who achieved the same state of *stthithaprajna*.

The irony of our mind is that if we were asked not to think about something, then the mind dwells on it even more. Not only just dwelling, the mind becomes infatuated about it. The more one tries to push a thought away, the more it lingers, and the desire for it intensifies. A *Guru* once warned a disciple that if he wanted his *manthra* to be fruitful, he must avoid thinking about monkeys. The disciple was puzzled, but as soon as he sat to meditate, he found the image of a monkey constantly appearing in his thoughts. Simply being told not to think of it made it impossible to ignore. This is the state of the ordinary folk whose minds constantly dwell in the mundane material things. The more we try to avoid the thought of worldly pleasures, the harder it becomes to avoid them because of our passion towards them. Devotees who achieved the state of *stthithaprajna* also have the same passion, however, instead of worldly pleasures, they have a deep attachment towards the Lord. Their hearts are completely filled with God making it impossible for them to stop thinking about the auspicious qualities of the Lord.

Just to test how people become oblivious of God, *Namma:Iwa:r* once tried to stop thinking about *Lord Na:ra:yana*. He left his village, thinking that outside the village no one would speak of Him. Even then, he worried that someone might come and mention God, so he hid in a dilapidated house. Yet a traveler arrived, placing a heavy load on the very wall behind which he hid, and uttered the Lord's divine name, "*Na:ra:yana*". Just the utterance of the name brought ecstasy to his heart and eyes making *Namma:Iwa:r* lament that he becomes completely helpless upon hearing the Lord's name. *Namma:Iwa:r*'s heart and mind are completely absorbed in the auspicious qualities of Lord that no material objects or pleasures can give him the same content.

Namma:Iwa:r lived for thirty-two years, spending the first sixteen completely absorbed in *Lord Na:ra:yana*'s auspicious qualities and enjoying the bliss from having the vision of the Lord. He spent the next sixteen singing devotional songs as he came out of the meditative state. When disciples worried about his not eating, he explained that God's auspicious qualities nourished him. Krushna's form was his nourishing food, His virtues the water that sustained his very life, and His divine pastimes the delightful delicacies that gave him immense joy. Everything was Krushna to him. Free from worldly desires, hunger, or thirst, *Namma:Iwa:r*'s heart was brimming with God's past times, demonstrating the intensity of devotion and the *stthithaprajna* state.

Krushna taught *Arjuna* : "*a:thmany e:va:thmana: thrupthaha stthitha prajnas thado:chyathe*."

This means that when the mind becomes fully satisfied and established in the Self through constant remembrance of the Divine, one is called a *stthithaprajna*. In the *vasi:kara avastha*, the stage of perfect control, all worldly impressions, even the subtlest, are burnt by the Lord's divine names that act as fire. Just as the acid cleans a clogged water pipe freeing it from the hardest stains, so does the Lord's divine names clean the mind of all *ka:rmic* impressions making the heart free from attachments of the mundane worldly pleasures. The mind is then left with the divine knowledge and remains undisturbed by any worldly influence.

Verse 56

Pages 339 - 341 translation

An illustrious poet *Ka:lidasa*, in *Abhijna:na Sa:kunthalam*, describes the hermitages of sages in the celestial realms. They live surrounded by luxury such as gem-studded seats, fragrant waters, and objects that most people desire like jewels and perfumes, yet they are completely unattached and their minds are fully absorbed in the Supreme Self. Like a diligent student who eats without noticing the taste while fully focused on studies, the sages are constantly immersed in remembrance of the Self, aiming for Self-realization.

Krushna explains to *Arjuna* that the initial *yo:ga*, that is to perform activities as prescribed in *ve:das* while keeping in mind the dual knowledge of *a:thma-body*, leads to the state of *stthithaprajna*. The state of *stthithaprajna* is also called *yo:ga* since the action taken while in that state results in self-realization. *Arjuna* was overwhelmed then expressed that this seemed very difficult to achieve and asked if there were any simpler steps. Krushna now talks about the stage before the final stage of *vasi:kara* with the verse:

duhkhe:shv anudvigna mana:ha sukhe:shu vigatha spruhaha |
vi:thara:ga bhayakro:dhaha stthithadhi:r munir uchyathe: || 2.56

In this stage, called *e:ke:ndriya avastha* (single-mindedness), the seeker meditates constantly and his mind and intellect are steady. This is the penultimate stage before reaching the final state of *stthithaprajna*. In the final stage of *stthithaprajna*, the mind becomes fully established in the Self and the seeker is completely oblivious of the worldly things around them. In the *e:ke:ndriya* stage, unlike the final stage, the seeker is aware of the worldly things around them. However, the seeker is being relieved from fear, anger, attachment, aversion, etc., that arise from the worldly objects. Even when faced with sorrow or happiness, he has the awareness of them without any mental disturbance, keeping his mind fully focused on the Self.

Attachment to the body is the root of fear and anger. Fear arises when we think something might harm the body, and anger follows if we feel someone is responsible. Envy and malice come from attachment to others. These emotions grow from small attachment, like a bud growing into a fruit. Sages overcome this because they value the Self more than the body. They perform austerities, living in rain, cold, and hunger, to strengthen their connection to the Self. Snakes, lions, or other dangers pass harmlessly because the sages do not fear. Without fear, anger does not arise. Pleasure and pain no longer disturb them. Ordinary people react strongly, but the *stthithaprajna* remains calm and steady, letting the body handle what comes while the mind stays firm and undisturbed by worldly objects or sensations.

Verse 57

Pages 342 - 344

Our history tells the story of *Jadabharatha* who reached the stage of *e:ke:ndriya*. In the *e:ke:ndriya* stage, the seeker has not reached self-realization, instead they are working towards attaining self-realization. In this state, the seeker has no interest in worldly comforts. They do not get angry if they feel something bad happens to them, nor are they elated if they expect worldly comforts to reach them

The reason such individuals remain detached from worldly things is that their attachment lies solely with the Self. Their ultimate goal is self-realization. *Jadabharatha* was one such enlightened being who attained that supreme state. It is said that the land we now call India was originally known as *Bha:rath*, derived from his name.

e:ke:ndriya was the eldest son of Emperor *Vrushabha* during the *sva:yambhuva manvanthara*. In one of his past lives, he had relinquished his kingdom to his son and retired to the forest to pursue God-realization. One day, he rescued a fawn that was about to drown after its mother had died, and out of compassion, began caring for it. Over time, his affection for the fawn grew so deep that he became completely attached to it, gradually forgetting his spiritual purpose. On his deathbed, his mind was preoccupied with the safety of the fawn rather than thoughts of God.

The *ve:das* declare that one becomes what one thinks of at the moment of death. As a result, *Jadabharatha* was reborn as a deer. However, because he had always chanted the *Sri: Vishnu Sahasrana:mam* and was a devoted *yo:gi*, he retained the memory of his past life even in that animal form. Realizing his mistake, he spent his life as a deer in repentance, fasting severely and remaining detached from worldly things.

In his next birth, he was reborn as a human and named *Bharatha*, later known as *Jadabharatha*. From birth, he was completely absorbed in the Self, indifferent to his body and surroundings. He ate or wore clothes only when offered and otherwise remained motionless and detached, like a log of wood—ever established in the realization of the Divine. His parents named him *Bharatha* and since he used to behave as a vagrant without the consciousness of the body, ignorant people around him used to call him *jada*, a bum. As a result, he eventually came to be known as *Jadabharatha*.

Jadabharatha's profound wisdom is vividly illustrated in several historical accounts. On one occasion, King *Rahu:gana* was traveling to attend Sage *Kapila's* discourse on *ve:da:ntha*, when one of his palanquin bearers was injured. The soldiers, seeking a replacement, forced *Jadabharatha*, who was utterly detached from bodily consciousness, to carry the palanquin. Though his body moved, his mind remained absorbed in the Self.

Jadabharatha had a tall, strong build and his steps did not sync with other bearers, causing the palanquin to sway. Irritated by the uneven motion, the proud king mocked and scolded him. *Jadabharatha*, calm and unshaken, gently questioned the king about the true nature of the "I." He explained that carrying the palanquin was merely a sequence of supports, from the earth to the feet, from the feet to the body, from the body to the pole, and that the real "I" is pure consciousness, not the body that acts.

Realizing the depth of this truth, King *Rahu:gana* immediately recognized *Jadabharatha*'s spiritual greatness and fell at his feet in reverence. Yet *Jadabharatha* remained serene and unaffected, neither disturbed by insult nor elated by praise. Though aware of the body's physical effort and the king's shifting attitude, his mind stayed firmly rooted in the pursuit of Self-realization.

There is another instance exemplifying *Jadabharatha*'s *e:ke:ndriya* state. He was taken to be sacrificed to Goddess *Ka:lika*. Armed men surrounded him, making loud noises, but he remained completely undisturbed. Seeing this, *Ka:lika De:vi*, fearing calamity if such a saint were harmed, appeared and drove away his captors.

These events illustrate the *e:ke:ndriya avastha* (stage of single-mindedness), the penultimate stage before *stthithaprajna*. In this state, fear, anger, attachment, and aversion disappear. A person sees happiness and unhappiness, experiences them, yet attributes them to the body keeping the mind serene and undisturbed. *Arjuna* is overwhelmed by this stage as well and shows a face conveying if there was a state that he could pursue first.

Krushna then explains to *Arjuna* that to reach self-realization, there is a preceding stage called *vyathire:ka avastha* (stage of indifference), third stage from the top. In this stage, a person experiences and enjoys things but does not praise or condemn them. Agitation may arise internally, but it is not expressed outwardly.

yas sarvathra:nabhisne:haha thath thath pra:pya subha:subham |
na:bhi:nandathi na dve:shti thasya prajna: prathishthtitha: || 2.57

A person naturally develops interest in whatever they believe is beneficial to them. As this interest deepens, their attention toward unrelated things naturally diminishes. Consequently, they no longer give much importance to those unrelated matters, even if they cause discomfort. Their focus remains on protecting and nurturing only what they value, while disregarding what lies outside their interest.

A wise person directs their interest solely toward Self-realization. They remain unconcerned with anything unrelated to the Self, whether physical or mental. More importantly, they ensure that the mind is not disturbed by external influences. Lord **Sri:** Krushna emphasizes that maintaining an undisturbed mind is of utmost importance.

This is seen in *dharmara:ja*. In exile, *Draupadi*, *Arjuna*, and *Vira:t*, all coaxed and criticised him to fight and win back the kingdom. Despite being criticized, he remained composed as *dharmara:ja* had no interest in winning back the kingdom, instead his mind was steadfast in upholding the *dharma*. He was attached to *dharma*, not the kingdom. Under Lord **Sri:** Krushna's guidance, he accepted praise and criticism equally, unmoved in body and mind.

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During heavy rain, the exterior of a traveller's vehicle gets drenched and splattered with debris, but he stays dry and undisturbed inside. Attention remains on reaching the destination, not on what sticks to the car. Similarly, someone focused on the Self is not shaken by praise, criticism, or difficulties.

Sri: Ra:machandra shows this detachment. When his father first promised him the kingdom, he stayed composed. Later, when *Kaike:yi* asked for his exile instead, he accepted it without complaint, saying only that it was all right and that exile could even be a blessing. He reflected that normally elders bear burdens so the young may live happily, yet *Kaike:yi* had entrusted *Bharatha* with the responsibility of the kingdom. He recognized the depth of her love, noting how people had long said she loved him more than his mother, *Kausalya*, and how that truth had now been proven. His mind, firmly centered on *dharma*, was not disturbed by these changes in circumstance.

Another example is *Kure:sha*, a disciple of *Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya* and a wealthy landlord near *Ka:nchipuram*. He once felt a strong desire to go to *Sri:rangam* and take refuge with the *Guru*. He gave away all his wealth, even his house, and set out on foot with his wife, *A:nda:l*.

As they walked through the forest one evening, *Anda:l* confessed her fear. *Kure:sha* reminded her that they had no possessions to lose, so there was nothing to fear. She then admitted she had secretly carried a small silver glass he used for milk, and was afraid it might be stolen. *Kure:sha* calmly asked her to show it to him, then threw it away, saying, "Now what is there to fear?" They continued and reached *Sri:rangam* safely.

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In the *vyathire:ka avastha* stage, desirable and undesirable objects may appear. One discriminates between what is good or bad, and understands that certain experiences bring happiness or sorrow. Yet, the mind remains largely undisturbed. Unlike the earlier stages, where one may not even perceive happiness or sorrow, here the mind notices them but does not allow itself to be agitated. The individual may still praise or dislike what occurs but does not act from personal desire or aversion.

For instance, when someone brings an apple, the receiver may praise it, not for the apple itself, but from concern that the giver might withhold it next time. Similarly, one might scold someone so they do not repeat a harmful act. In both cases, the mind experiences desire or dislike, but there is no compulsion of the body or effort to obtain or avoid the object. One simply experiences what comes, praises or dislikes it as it arises, and lets it be. This illustrates the principle, "*na:bhinandathi na dve:shti thasya prajna: prathishtitha:*".

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Janaka, the king of *Mithila* and a knower of *brahman*, exemplified this state. Though he ruled a kingdom and dealt with both favorable and unfavorable people, he acted without attachment, praise, or anger.

Once during a lesson, his *Guru* made distant hermitages and even his entire kingdom appear to be on fire. While other disciples panicked, *Janaka* remained unshaken. He said, “If the kingdom burns, what does it matter to me, *swa:mi*? My possessions are with me. That city belongs to the body, not to me. My possessions remain with me.” He knew what had to be done but had no personal attachment.

This *vyathire:ka avastha* is essential for *e:ke:ndriya avastha*. Unless praise and hatred are reduced, the mind remains restless, and *a:thma-rathi*, delight in the Self cannot arise. *Krushna* explains that attachment gives rise to fear, fear can lead to anger and the desire for revenge. In the *vyathire:ka avastha*, when practicing indifference to worldly experiences, then the worldly attachments dissipate keeping the mind undisturbed. Then, a person is said to have attained the *e:ke:ndriya avastha*, the stage of single-mindedness, of a *stthithaprajna*. *Arjuna* felt that even the *vyathire:ka avastha* was out of reach to him.

Sri: *Krushna* then says that before *vyathire:ka avastha*, one must go through *yathama:na avastha*, the stage of striving, which prepares the mind for detachment and inner steadiness.

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Lord *Sri*: *Krushna* explains the stages of spiritual practice to *Arjuna* in sequence. He first describes how one can attain steady wisdom, then goes on to show what such a person, a *stthithaprajna*, is like. A *stthithaprajna* is one whose mind is firmly established in true knowledge and who seeks lasting happiness in the *Parama:thma*, the Supreme Soul. For in truth, all happiness comes only from the *Parama:thma*, yet the mind, long bound to worldly pleasures, has to struggle to turn toward Him.

Habits hold the mind strongly. One accustomed to the smell of fish cannot enjoy roses, and the lover of roses cannot endure fish. Likewise, though God is verily true joy, the mind cannot turn to Him until free from old cravings. This turning comes only through gradual practice, by which the mind grows steady, attachment to worldly pleasures fades, and the taste for God deepens. Step by step, each effort builds on the last until the seeker attains divine happiness.

The path is difficult, and detaching from old habits is no simple task. Seeing *Arjuna*’s struggle, *Krushna* compassionately explains the path in stages. Page 350

When you develop a taste for something, you may praise or dislike the person providing it. Gradually learning not to react this way, even when the object is absent, cultivates detachment. Over time, you neither cling to favorable things nor resist unfavorable ones.



Without fear or aversion, situations can be faced calmly, and the mind remains steady even amid pleasure, continuing its duties unaffected. This balance develops gradually.

As steadiness grows, constant contemplation of God or the Self can lead to Self-realization, which results in *stthithaprajna avastha*. Before this, one must learn not to excessively praise or criticize, a process requiring careful mental control.

Control is difficult because the senses are drawn to objects. A sweet or favorite fruit can tempt delay in restraint, weakening discipline. To reduce attachment and aversion, the senses must first be guided. Initially, they resist, like someone accustomed to indulgence who feels deprived when a meal is missed or doubts they can continue a long journey without food. Yet this perception is shaped by habit. Even when strength seems lacking, the mind adapts, and circumstances often reveal hidden reserves that allow progress.

Take the example of a traveler who has gone for days without food. Exhausted from the journey, he reaches the shade of a tree and collapses, convinced that he cannot take another step. A companion urges him, "Come, let us go a little farther." But he replies, "I cannot. I simply do not have the strength," and lies there, unable even to lift his arms or legs.

Suddenly, a wolf or a bear begins to descend from the tree nearby. In that instant, would he continue lying there, insisting that he has no strength? Certainly not. Neither he nor anyone else knows where the strength comes from, but he springs to his feet and runs for his life. The strength was always present within him; it had merely remained dormant. Having convinced himself that he had no strength, he had unconsciously prevented it from expressing itself. When the need to preserve his life arose, that hidden strength immediately manifested, enabling him to escape.

Similarly, when one develops delight in the Self and recognizes bodily pleasures as obstacles, he begins to withdraw from them. Initial resistance and tears give way to gradual restraint, accepting limits.

Difficulty often arises when the senses encounter objects. A mirror catches the eye, a song or dance attracts attention, even if not truly desired. This applies to all five senses - sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste, whenever the body can perceive an object. Over time, as the senses are exhausted or lose their hold, objects cease to tempt, and restraint becomes easier. This deliberate control of the senses, even when capable of perception, is called *sa:dhana*, practice.

Verse 58

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When *Viswa:mithra* went to the forest for penance, *Me:naka* appeared, drawing his attention. Realizing his distraction, he tried to turn away, only to face new temptations. When the senses pull one back due to habit, they must be restrained, yet the mind may still wander. Guiding it requires choosing a focus. God is the goal, one visualizes His form, hears His words, and cultivates practices centered on Him.

Through such practices, *Viswa:mithra* attained a state where even *Rambha's* attempts to disturb his penance could not break his peace, marking the first stage. The senses must be controlled and kept away from objects. Initially resistant, they gradually grow accustomed to restraint. **Sri:** Krushna describes this first stage:

yada: samharathe: cha:yam ku:rmo:nga:ni:va sarvasaha |
indriya:ni:ndriya:rtthe:bhyaha thasya prajna: prathishtitha: || 2.58

Just as a tortoise withdraws its limbs when sensing danger and extends them when safe, one must act with the senses. When objects obstruct knowledge or Self-realization, restraining the senses marks the start of proper practice. This is *yathama:na avastha*. Mastering this stage allows gradual progress toward *vyathire:ka avastha*. Practice is never easy. Everyone hopes for results without much effort, and *Arjuna* is no different. Yet, to achieve good or excellent results, effort is inevitable.

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Many aspire to self-realization or to more superior experience, God-realization. Yet few commit fully to the spiritual practices required as they have no penchant for putting in the effort. While some may claim success, in reality, very few demonstrate the consistent practice that *Sri*: Krushna describes in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

Sri: Krushna says: "*indriya:ni:ndriya:rtthe:bhyaha*", the senses must be withdrawn from objects they are accustomed to. Just as a goat reaches for leaves no matter how much it has already eaten, our senses naturally gravitate toward familiar objects of pleasure unless they are gently disciplined. A goat can be trained by first showing it the leaves and, as it reaches for them, giving it a light tap on the mouth. Repeating this process over time causes the goat to associate the leaves with that unpleasant consequence. Eventually, the mere sight of the leaves is enough for it to turn away. In the same way, the senses must be trained gradually. The process begins by restraining them from their habitual objects of attachment and then providing only what is genuinely necessary for their proper functioning, rather than indulging every desire that arises.

Restraining senses from the familiar pleasures is a spiritual practice. However, complete denial is ineffective. The tongue cannot be forced to abandon its accustomed tastes entirely. In such a case, *rushis* give another practice. Instead of completely restricting, food is taken as a gift from God for sustaining the body, aligning the senses gradually with higher purpose. Through such practice, desires are redirected, cultivating favorable inclinations toward spiritual goals.

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When gradual training of the senses fails, a firmer approach may be needed. Farmers muzzle calves accustomed to constant feeding to protect their health. The *Upanishads* caution that if senses are left unchecked, like horses without reins, they run wild and block progress. You must guide them carefully toward the desired goal.

Lord **Sri**: Krushna says, "*yada: samharathe: anga:ni:va sarvasaha*" By withdrawing from sense objects, taking only what is necessary and avoiding the rest, the mind begins proper reflection. If we restrict the senses despite retaliation, then the senses slowly lose the attachment towards the worldly pleasures and objects..

Two devotees of *Pa:nduranga*, a husband and wife, faced this challenge. The husband, fearing his wife would become attached to gold and forget God, buried some in a pit. When she found it, she questioned the need to “cover dirt with dirt”, referring to the gold as dirt. Though he saw gold and tried to hide it, she perceived it as mere dirt through spiritual insight.

Cultivating such awareness requires time. To see every kind of food as an offering to God, to hear every sound as proclaiming His presence, and to perceive every fragrance as the fragrance of His divine feet - such perception can be cultivated only through long and patient spiritual practice. Even with restraint, impressions remain in three states: awakened, suppressed, or dormant. Ordinary people’s impressions are constantly awakened by the senses, reinforcing attachment to objects and the pleasure they provide. When they see a worldly object, they tend to recollect the pleasure it gives.

Verse 59

When an object is absent, familiarity and mental impressions weaken, but encountering it may still stir desire or memories of past enjoyment. If absence is prolonged, impressions can become dormant, a state called *suptha:vasttha*.



Impressions do not vanish simply by removing the object. A weakened impression may prompt one to seek it, while a dormant one can be suddenly awakened, like a startled deer. Lord **Sri**: Krushna advises guiding impressions toward what should be known, keeping them dormant whenever possible.

vishya: vinivarthanthe: nira:ha:rasya de:hinaha |
rasavarjam raso::pyasya param drushtva: nivarthathe: || 2.59

'*rasavarjam*', the impressions of taste remain within, even though '*vishaya vinivarthanthe:*', the objects of those tastes have gone away. Someone who loves mangoes may abstain for years, yet the taste and fragrance linger, and dreams or sights can awaken desire, which eventually can make the person go after mangoes. It is a mistake to think merely removing objects eliminates impressions. To eliminate the impression as well, **Sri**: Krushna says, "*raso: pyasya param drushtva: nivarthathe:*", the taste diminishes only when a higher, more appealing experience is perceived. For instance, if you are addicted to palm jaggery then just keeping palm jaggery away is not enough to overcome the addiction. In addition to keeping it away, you need to experience the taste of much superior sugarcane jaggery. Only then will you get rid of the addiction completely, along with the deep rooted impressions.

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The story of *Thimmarusu* serves as a reminder. He used to show that a line can be made to appear smaller simply by drawing a longer one beside it. Similarly, to remove attachment to worldly objects, the mind must be presented with a higher, more fulfilling object. Just as *mysore ma:k*, *jalebi*, or *gula:b ja:mun* overshadow the taste for palm jaggery, the mind gradually forgets inferior pleasures when introduced to the higher joy of the Self.

Simply avoiding worldly objects only suppresses desire temporarily. *samskara:s*, *ka:rmic* impressions, may weaken or become dormant, but attachment fades fully only when the higher object is experienced. The most superior and permanent experiences come from *a:thma* or *parma:thma*. Hence, presenting the inner Self and God is essential, for worldly desires diminish only when the higher taste is revealed. The sequence matters. The mind cannot naturally turn to the Self until the higher taste is shown. Lord Krushna provides the means, and understanding these allows one to follow the path.

The *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, reflecting *ve:da:ntha* philosophy, emphasizes controlling the mind and focusing on the permanent, the Supreme . A *sthithaprajna* directs the mind toward the eternal rather than transient objects, gradually attaining true understanding.

Arjuna asks how a *sthithaprajna* behaves, what he does, and how he is recognized.

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If the goal is eternal bliss, not all pleasures seem favorable, and practice is never immediately blissful. *a:thma:nandam*, joy of the Self, is attainable, but it requires practice. Since the senses are long accustomed to worldly objects, they cannot be made to abandon them abruptly. Training involves interacting with familiar objects while maintaining awareness and control, gradually teaching the mind and senses to experience them without attachment.

The mind, which governs from within, must be carefully trained. Just as a bank employee handles money without an iota of feeling that the money he is handling belongs to him., Similarly, one must use the senses for their intended purpose, that is to serve God. The body and senses are tools given by God for specific tasks, not for misuse or indulgence.

Na:ra:yana as the Supreme Truth

Page 358 God gave us the senses to be used for specific purposes and should be used appropriately. The eyes are meant to see, and the tongue to taste and speak, but they must be used with awareness, not misused or completely ignored. Senses and their functions should

always remain active and in case one decides not to use them at all, then God will give a birth that may not need that sense. For instance, if one decides to constantly keep his eyes closed, in the pretense of meditation, then God will give them a birth with blindness. However, it is up to us to use the sense appropriately.

A knife manufacturer makes the knife with the intention to remove unwanted things like seeds from a fruit or weeds from crops, etc. A doctor uses a knife to remove damaged tissue and heal an organ, while farmers harvest grain with sickles to provide food. In both cases, the act is not bad, the intention and how it is done determine its value.

Likewise, no object or sense is inherently bad. All are good, including the mind. What matters is how we use our intellect and make choices.

In the initial stage, *yathama:na:vastha*, the seeker aims for imperishable knowledge. Yet worldly objects, with their tastes, smells, and forms, remain tempting and pull the senses. The seeker must learn whether to engage with them or to renounce them.

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Just as the physical body needs food, each sense has its own requirements for nourishment, taste for the *rasane:ndriya*, form for the *chakshurindriya*, listening for the *sro:thre:ndriya*, touch for the *thvagindriya*, and fragrance for the *ghra:ne:ndriya*, while the *antharindriya*, the mind, feeds on thought. These nourishments are meant to be given in the right way, only what nourishes and supports the body and mind, so the senses fulfill their purpose rather than being misused or wasted. Because the senses naturally seek their respective needs, they require guidance at first. The practice begins by gently redirecting them when they stray, gradually training them to align with the mind's purpose. We practice this to the point when the senses are directed to the right goal without a conscious effort. This training is like policemen marching in perfect step through repeated practice, or putting a fence around a young sapling until it grows strong.

In the initial striving stage, *yathama:na avastha*, worldly objects may obstruct meditation. The seeker occasionally pulls away but inevitably returns, and with each return, awareness grows. In the second stage, the urge to indulge may arise but remains internal and unspoken, controlled within the mind. By the third stage, the mind is largely under control. Even when worldly objects affect the body, he pays little attention and can prevent any movement or excitement in the mind.

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After reaching the fourth stage, the mind is free from attachments with worldly objects and the person stays oblivious of the objects despite interacting with them.. Experiencing worldly objects is not wrong. What matters is the mind's attitude towards them. Lord *Sri*: Krushna teaches how to achieve this through the stages of steady wisdom, which every human must strive to attain.



Raising a plant needs a fence for protection and proper nourishment for growth. Likewise, training the body, senses, and mind requires two spiritual disciplines - shielding them from distractions and nourishing them with what keeps the mind and senses on the chosen spiritual path..

Sri: Krushna instructs “*vishaya: vinivarthanthe: nira:ha:rasya de:hinaha rasavarjam*”, meaning, keep the senses away from the mundane worldly objects and provide them selective nourishment so the mind contemplates what is beneficial rather than indulging in desire. He further teaches “*raso::pyasya param drushtva: nivarthathe.*” emphasizing two practices - first, distance yourself from worldly objects, and second, provide the necessary nourishment.

Lord *Sri*: Krushna explains how to give the senses nourishment through four stages, the stages of steady wisdom. In the highest stage, sense objects may be present without the mind noticing them. In the previous stage, they are recognized but do not disturb the mind. The stage before that brings inner agitation that is controlled. In the initial stage, agitation may be expressed outwardly, yet there is awareness of

the mistake and a resolve to correct it. Since senses are not fully obedient at this stage, **Sri:** Krushna first describes their ferocity in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* before showing how to bring them under control.

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Krushna raises the question of whether a person who resolves to control the senses on his own can truly succeed. In response, *Arjuna* asks if it would not be possible by sitting in meditation with firm resolve. Yet however firmly one sits, the senses remain what they are. If there is a loud sound, the ear cannot stop itself from hearing. Once the ear hears, the eye turns to see what it is.

Namma:Iwa:r, a prominent *a:Iwa:r* of South India, neither ate nor cried from birth. His parents, believing there was no life in him, left him under a tamarind tree near a temple. Yet he remained there for sixteen years, growing with radiance, without speech or movement.

One day, a sage returning from the north noticed that the guiding star in the sky vanished as he entered *Namma:Iwa:r*'s village. He wondered what was special about the village, and upon looking, saw a blue-hued form radiating under a tree. Sensing that the star's guidance signified divine power, he felt compelled to speak, but when he greeted *Namma:Iwa:r*, there was no response. Deciding to test him, the sage climbed a nearby tree and dropped a stone. At the sound, *Namma:Iwa:r* opened his eyes. The sage, realising that his hearing and sight were active, asked him a question, and *Namma:Iwa:r* responded, revealing the *Prabandham*, to the world.

Although *Namma:Iwa:r* had been immersed in inner contemplation, an external sound drew his hearing and a sight engaged his vision, bringing his meditation outward. In this case it manifested as divine expression, and the world received it with love. But it also shows how effortlessly the senses and the mind turn toward external objects, even when one is firmly resolved to control them.

Verse 60

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Two devotees of *Pa:nduranga* set out from a village to visit the temple. One was not very devout, and the other was a great devotee. Upon reaching the town, the less devout one went to the market, and the other went to the temple to see the deity. The devotee at the temple thought about his friend in the market, what he was seeing, buying, and the joy he was experiencing, while the one in the market thought of his friend at the temple, imagining the darshan and festival joy. The less devoted one who kept thinking of the temple later attained

liberation, while the devotee at the temple thinking of the market did not. This shows the cruelty of the mind and how the senses move toward objects on their own.

The story of *Viśva:mithra* illustrates this further. Though he performed penance aiming to conquer everything, he eventually succumbed to his senses.

Va:Imi:ki explains how *Ra:vana*'s wife reacted upon his death. She wept, saying "*indriya:ni pura:jithva jitham thribhuvanam thvaya:*" - though he had once conquered his senses and, through them, the three worlds, he was mistaken in thinking he could fully control them. He had suppressed them well and conquered the worlds only as long as they obeyed him. But the senses quietly harbored a desire for revenge, and when *Si:tha* was abducted, they seized the opportunity to rebel, causing his downfall. *Ra:ma* and the monkeys were merely instruments; it was his own uncontrolled senses that became his enemy.

Can we control the senses merely by our own effort? Krushna answers:

yathatho:hy api kaunthe:ya! purushasya vipaschithaha |
indriya:ni prama:tthi:ni haranthi prasabham manaha || 2.60

Even a highly discerning person, well-versed in scriptures, teaching and speaking on many topics, can have their mind violently carried away by the senses. No one can fully escape their influence. The senses act like stubborn children, forcibly seizing the mind and keeping it with them.

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Just as children insist on something and cry until the mother gives in, the senses pull the mind toward objects, repeatedly demanding what they want. Even a mind determined to control them often ends up yielding to their insistence.

"indriya:ni prama:tthi:ni" - These senses have the power to churn and crush the mind. *"haranthi prasabham manaha"* - They forcibly drag the mind away and will not listen. Conquering the senses is the first and most difficult task. Until the senses are mastered, the mind cannot be controlled, *ka:rmic* impressions persist, and Self-knowledge cannot be attained. Without Self-knowledge, the Self cannot be realized. Control over the senses is therefore essential not only for Self-realization but also for achieving any worldly goal. Great sages warn that attachment to objects can mislead even the wise, and the senses can easily overpower them.

The Gi:tha as Guide for Moral Dilemmas

Page 364 Ancient sages tell of a disciple who altered his *Guru*'s lesson. The *Guru* had written, "The senses drag away even a wise person," and cautioned the boy to be careful. The disciple, thinking he knew better than his *Guru* and that the warning did not apply to him, changed the lesson to "They do not drag away a learned person."

To teach him humility, the *Guru* left the disciple alone and entrusted a young girl to his care. Confident in his self-control, the disciple boasted and tried to monitor the girl, but gradually became curious and drawn toward her. When he entered the room, he discovered the girl had vanished and the *Guru*, disguised with *yo:gic* powers, was there instead, humbling the disciple who had thought himself capable of great self-control.

Lord **Sri**: Krushna explains that the senses are very dangerous and cannot be fully controlled by oneself. They drive our bodily actions, and we cannot reach our goal without mastering them. Victory over them requires focus on the ultimate goal and following the guidance provided in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

He says, "*na hi kaschith kshanam api ja:tu tishtathi akarma kruth*" – no one can remain actionless even for a moment. The body, senses, and mind all need activity, and we must provide them with proper work.

Since everyone seeks happiness, the body and senses must be provided what they need without hindering that goal. They can be restrained or directed. For example, if something is unnecessary for the body, you can control it and make it stay in one place. Similarly, if you decide not to see something, you can close your eyes firmly. Such control is possible, but only to a certain extent, and it requires effort.

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Even if the senses and body are controlled, the mind remains restless, and whatever is forbidden often occupies it the most.



A *Guru* once told his disciple that if he wanted to achieve spiritual perfection, he should not think of a monkey while chanting the *mantra*. From that moment, the disciple could only remember the monkey. Whatever is forbidden or deemed inappropriate, the mind naturally tries to contemplate. Therefore, the mind must be given something to contemplate, and the senses must be given something to do. If they are properly guided, they behave in their proper order, each pursuing the objects offered to them.

A revered Elder once noticed that a woman who occasionally attended his discourse had not come for many days. He asked why, and she explained that household work kept her so busy that she had little time, though she had great devotion. The Elder suggested that if she truly desired to listen, she could hire someone to help. She replied that no one could manage so much work. The *Guru* used his *yo:gic* power to create a small, ghost-like being, which he gave to her with the instruction to keep it constantly occupied. The being could not remain idle for even a moment. Initially, she gave it simple tasks like washing dishes, cooking rice, painting walls, and watering plants. It completed all these tasks instantly. Soon, there was nothing left to do, and the ghost began to bother her, demanding more work. Distressed, she returned to the *Guru* and asked to be freed from it. The *Guru* explained that the ghost needed work and suggested a solution. She could assign it the simple task of climbing up and down a pole repeatedly. Once given this work, the ghost no longer bothered her, and she was able to complete her own tasks.

The mind is like that ghost. It requires constant work, and if left idle, it will corrupt us. By providing it proper tasks, it can be guided without going astray.

Just as small children go only to those they are accustomed to, avoiding strangers even if offered treats, the mind seeks what it is familiar with. It is important to accustom it to good things from the beginning, so it will naturally remember them. If children are taught from early on to chew betelnut, drink coffee, or play cards, they may grow into gamblers or addicts. If they are guided to help others, learn good things, read meaningful verses, and speak well, they will develop strong character recognized by society. Children are not inherently bad; the fault lies in elders who fail to provide the right environment. Similarly, the mind is not inherently flawed; the mistake is in not giving it, appropriately, what it needs.

When the mind is properly accustomed to divine matters, it cannot forget God, even if one tries. As seen with *Namma:Iwa:r*, he wished to forget God, yet God remained in his thoughts, showing that the mind always remembers what it is accustomed to.

Lord **Sri**: Krushna explains that trying to conquer the senses by oneself, is like attempting to pull someone from a well by jumping in yourself. If you fail, both are in danger. Similarly, a person trying to guide a corrupt friend back to the right path may gradually fall into the friend's bad habits and become enslaved to them, forgetting his original purpose.

Krushna reminds *Arjuna* that he cannot control the senses entirely on his own and should seek the guidance of someone experienced in the practice. *Arjuna* expresses concern about finding such a person, how long they might stay, how long they will provide guidance, and what the cost might be. Observing this hesitation, He adds that if a virtuous, capable companion willingly offers to take responsibility and show the benefits, *Arjuna* can confidently rely on that person and focus on his own path.

Verse 61

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When *Arjuna* asked if anyone like that had ever existed, Krushna affirmed that such a person did exist and in fact, He Himself was that guide. He says,

tha:ni sarva:ni samyamya yuktha a:si:tha mathparaha |
vase:hi yasye:ndriya:ni thasya prajna: prathishttitha: || 2.61

advising *Arjuna* to turn his body, senses, and mind towards Him and let them function under His control.

When *Arjuna* asks why he should place his senses under Krushna's control, Krushna explains that as the cause of all, the embodiment of beauty, and the abode of auspiciousness *subha:shraya*, He can purify the mind, remove past impressions of negativities, and fill it with good thoughts.

All beings in the world fall into three types - those with a *karma bha:vana*, engaged in worldly activity, like most people; those with a *Brahma bha:vana*, free from worldly attachments, like the *sanaka* sages; and those with both *ubhaya bha:vana*, experiencing both states, like *de:vathas*, such as *chathurmukha brahma*. Liberation comes from meditating on the One who is beyond these states.

Krushna explained that He alone was of that kind and advised *Arjuna* to fix his mind on Him, comparing it to igniting dry wood with a spark, , which would burn away accumulated *ka:rmic* impressions and purify the mind and senses. He said that by placing the responsibility upon Him, the senses and mind would obey and be guided towards the desired goal.

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The second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is considered the essence of the entire Krushna and fundamentals of *ve:das*. It compiles the wisdom of the *upanishads*. Our elders often say that understanding this chapter is equivalent to understanding the whole *Gi:tha*. The core message is mastery over the body, senses, and mind.

Everyone wants to keep the body safe and the mind pure, yet without proper understanding people sometimes invite harm upon themselves. One must think good thoughts with the mind, experience good things with the senses, and keep the body healthily active . If these instruments obey, nothing more remains to be achieved; if left uncontrolled, they can cause great harm. Everything in this material world is in constant flux. However, we must strive to remain steady and unchanged. To attain this, Krushna explains how to control the mind, senses, and body, describing the benefits of doing so and the harm of failing to control them. Those who succeed in control, attain eternal bliss, while those who do not transform their name and form. Even attempting control allows one to advance gradually, step by step.

Verse 62

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In the second chapter, **Sri:** Krushna shows the immense power of the senses and the mind. If they are well controlled, one gains everything, but if not, one merely changes his name and form. **Sri:** Krushna cautions that the senses are too powerful to be subdued by one's own effort; they must be entrusted to His care, only then will they remain steady, as *prakruthi* is perilous.

The senses are like a fierce dog, impossible to control by force alone. If one tries to restrain the dog directly, it may bite and cause harm. The dog responds only to its master's control.

When your body, senses, and mind pull you toward desire and make you forget your true self, Krushna says to remember Him alone. Place them under His care and follow His instruction, "*yuktha a:si:tha mathparaha*"

Krushna also warns of the downfall of relying solely on self-effort.

dhya:yatho: vishaya:n pumsaha sanga:s the:shu:paja:yathe: |
sanga:th sanja:yathe: ka:maha ka:ma:th kro:dho::bhi:ja:yathe: || 2.62

Even if you close your eyes, ears, and mouth, the mind remains free and begins to wander. Whatever is forbidden or restrained, it still reaches for, guiding the senses and often surpassing their power, since it is the leader of the five senses.

dhya:yatho: vishaya:n pumsaha - a thought focused on sense pleasure creates attachment, *sang*, which then grows into desire, *kama*;
sanga:s the:shu:paja:yathe: - mental connection forms with the object; *sanga:th sanja:yathe: ka:maha* - desire arises; *ka:ma:th*
kro:dho::bhi:ja:yathe: - and anger is born when that desire is obstructed.

The mind forms habits based on what it dwells on. If focused on God, the same mind can develop intense divine love, as seen in the *go:pis*, who constantly remembered **Sri:** Krushna despite all obstacles. When the mind dwells on worldly matters, attachment can turn into desire, insisting on obtaining what it seeks, and if such desires remain unfulfilled or inappropriate, it tends to blame others, giving rise to *krodha*, anger.

During their time in the forest, **Lakshmana** constantly reflected on his service to *Ra:ma* and seemed eager for others to recognize his devotion and regard him as selfless. When *Ra:machandra* went after the deer, **Lakshmana** remained behind to guard *Si:tha*. When *Si:tha* urged him to check on *Ra:ma*, he initially refused, but her harsh words provoked him to anger, and he cursed her before leaving. Soon after, *Ra:vana* abducted *Si:tha*.

When *Lakshmana* reached *Ra:ma* and was asked why he looked troubled, he explained that he had lost control after *Si:tha's* harsh words and left because he couldn't endure her curses. *Ra:ma* reminded him that a true servant would have endured *Si:tha's* words as a mother endures the curses of a feverish child out of pity. Anger, born of desire, had made *Lakshmana* a servant of rage rather than of duty.

Anger, born of attachment and unfulfilled expectations, leads to misdeeds, a progression, Krushna explains in the second chapter to reveal the consequences of uncontrolled anger.

Verse 63

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Bhagavad Gi:tha is a great blessing conferred to mankind. This scripture tells us what's worth obtaining and how to go about it. In this context, *Sri:* Krushna talks about the power of the body, senses, and mind. In the third chapter, He speaks about the destructive qualities such as lust and anger which are deemed unwholesome. But we aren't sure how to rid ourselves of those qualities, both of which are unperceivable. We do not know where they are located. *Sri:* Krushna says, "*indriya:ni mano buddhih yasyadhishta:nam*", they are in the senses, mind and intellect. The visible eyes are tools for the sense of sight, the nose for the sense of smell, the skin for touch, the tongue for taste, and the ears for hearing. These senses are driven by the mind, which in turn is directed by the intellect. All three are beyond perception yet they are under the grip of anger and desire. The way to make them independent of these defects is through meditation. We only recollect what we're exposed to frequently. We have been over-exposed to materialistic and worldly things so those constantly surface in our memories. Students these days have a better chance of remembering scenes from movies rather than books. That's why having open book tests is not such a bad idea - the student is at least forced to know which topic to look for where in the book! This would prevent him from spending all his time on movies and sports.

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The nature of the material world is transient and ever changing. Thus, the feelings of attachment and aversion that material objects evoke in us are also in constant flux. What seems desirable at the moment, seems to be a worthy goal that one hankers after, may cease to be so tomorrow. *sangath sanja:yathe: ka:maha*, from constant association a raging desire, *ka:ma*, is born. When the object of desire is not obtained, this evokes *kro:dha*, anger. Anger is not inherently bad, it is necessary to be channeled appropriately and against wrong doers. Through *thapas*, desire needs to be directed to divinity and not towards worldly objects. Uncontrolled anger and desire makes us no different from animals.

Pages 375 & 376 translation

It is human to have desire and anger. *Parama:thma* wouldn't have created these qualities if they were bad. But they need to be used correctly.

kro:dha:th bha:vathi sammo:haha sammoha:th smruthi vibhramaha |
smruthi bhramsa:th buddhina:so: bhuddhi:na:sa:th pranasyathi || 2.63

When anger increases, so does *mo:ha*, ignorance. *sammo:ha* is the tendency to wrongly associate two unrelated things as one, being unable to discriminate. An electronic instrument has an outer structure or chassis and it is loaded with software. These are two different things. Similarly, a being has a body and *a:thma*. Mistaking them to be one and the same is *sammo:ha*.

Desire drives one to satisfy senses. Obstacles in doing so lead to anger. In reality, *a:thma* only requires *Parama:thma*, not any of the things the senses crave which primarily serve only the body. Instead of taking loss in one's stride, one plans and schemes to seek revenge against or overthrow anyone that gets in the way of sensory satisfaction. Thus, one loses sight of his goal - *a:thma sa:ksha:thka:ram*, self realisation.

King *Janaka* had said, *mitthila:ya:m pradagdha:ya:m na me: kinchith pradahyathe:*, even if the kingdom of *Mitthila* is burning to ashes, nothing of mine is destroyed. However, some others like *Ra:vana* and *Hiranyakasipu* didn't share the same sentiment. Their intellect should have been fixed on *a:thma* but they figured they would first deal with the perceived enemy - Lord *Ra:ma* or Lord *Hari*. Such thinking of, 'let *a:thma sa:ksha:thka:ram* be! I will get to it after I hatch a plan on how to eliminate my enemy' dilutes the mind's focus and scatters it in several directions. He no longer possesses *vyavasa:thmika buddhi*, single-pointed intellect.

The root of *pranasyathi* is *nas*, to be made visible. 'pra' is a prefix that places emphasis. '*pranasyathi*' doesn't mean one gets destroyed but means that one loses sight of his goal. One who wrongly believes that senses can be controlled on one's own, is susceptible to this. **Sri:** **Krushna** asks us to direct our senses towards Him. Thus, He protects us from the onslaught of senses. Without His help, we have no hope of gaining victory over the senses.

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Constant remembrance of, meditation upon, and effort towards our goal ensures that we achieve it. Our *a:thma* has *Parama:thma* on one side and the world on the other. For achieving either, we require *Parama:thma*'s grace, help and guidance. Worldly achievement requires His blessing because *Parama:thma* ultimately steers everything. However, worldly experiences are transient in nature and vary with time. The one benefitting from them, the body, also changes. If we seek to attain *Parama:thma*, he molds nature and circumstances to be

amenable to this end. Our elders advise that since we require *Parama:thma*'s grace and assistance for either outcome, why not seek the one which is eternal?

Sri: Krushna promises to steer the person who directs his senses towards the Lord. *Arjuna* wonders then why people don't do this? **Sri:** Krushna replies that it is out of habit and past attachments and aversions that stops one from doing this. The moment one directs his senses towards *Parama:thma*, He steers him towards experiences that are permanent in nature.

Verse 64

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ra:gadve:sha viyukthais thu vishaya:n indriyais charan |
a:thmavasyair vidhe:ya:thma: prasa:dam adhi:gachchhathi || 2.64

One who controls the mind, and is free from likes and dislikes, even while using the objects of the senses, attains God.

prasa:dam in this verse refers to mental purity. *adhi gachchhathi* means to attain, not just to overcome, but to transcend and go beyond. *a:thma* is the prime protagonist behind the mind and senses. The mind is the commander-in-chief of the senses. As long as the mind is strengthened and brought in our control, the senses fall in line. When the commander-in-chief rebels, so does the entire armed forces, and the king faces a downfall. But, how can the senses which have been accustomed to functioning in a certain way, ever be made to come out of that pattern?

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You can't lure a person who loves food away from a banquet spread to attend to tasks or work. He is going to want to eat first and will likely nap later. The senses need to be satisfied systematically and in a precise proportion, not randomly in an unchecked manner. There are two ways. *ra:gadve:sha vimukthaisthu vishaya:n indriyais charan*, by freeing oneself of attachment and aversion, one can control his senses. **Sri:** Krushna asks us to keep the mind devoid of concepts of "I crave that" and "I hate that". "*charan*" means either to eat or to go. "*go:charathi*" means the cow grazes or the cow roams. *vishaya:n charan* means to experience objects or reject them. A patient, whose goal is good health, takes a bitter concoction to feel better and does not reject it. He has an attraction towards some things that are detrimental to his health yet stays away from them, does not try to experience them.

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A student who hopes to ace an exam, due the next day, is so focused on cramming for it that he eats only when forced. He is least worried about how the food tastes since his focus is elsewhere. This is an example of how one can achieve two seemingly contradictory things - experiencing something while spurning it, which is what '*charan*' stands for. The *upanishads* teach the same thing. One must feed the senses not how much or whatever they ask for but what we know is appropriate. Good must be recognized and nurtured while bad must be



controlled.

Whoever encourages good, should be heeded and supported. Those who encourage evil, should be kept away. *Ra:vana:sura* and *Duryo:dhana* are considered evil because their arrogance prevented them from heeding good advice. When abducted by *Ra:vana*, *Si:tha* had advised him to befriend *Ra:ma*.

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Si:tha explained to *Ra:vana* that he did not need to perform any great act to receive Rama's grace. He need not fall at His feet, offer prayers, or plead for mercy. Even merely offering a friendly word, without any dramatic gestures would win Lord *Ra:ma* over. *Ra:vana* acknowledged that he knew Rama well and also knew that his actions were wrong. Yet, he said, "*e:shame: sahajo: do:shaha*", this is my innate defect, and "*svabha:vo durathrikramaha*", stubborn nature. He refused to change, saying, "Even if I die, I will not give this up."

This reveals a profound truth: even when a person understands that something is wrong and harmful, deep-rooted tendencies can continue to pull him toward it. The reason is that worldly pleasures are "*a:pa:tha madhuram*" - they appear sweet and attractive at first, but their deeper nature is different. Like a sword coated with honey, they draw one in with their sweetness while ultimately causing harm. It is said that somewhere in Africa there is a plant with beautiful flowers and a captivating fragrance. When a creature is drawn toward it, the plant captures it, absorbs its essence, and discards what remains. In the same way, worldly pleasures appear attractive on the outside, but once a person is drawn toward them, they gradually consume his peace and well-being. Though people may understand this, their familiarity and attachment to such pleasures make them continue to seek them.

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It's advisable to emulate our elders and ancestors in how we experience and interact with the world around us. People like *Ra:vana:sura* and *Duryo:dhana* failed to do so despite several people beseeching them. Therefore, they were deemed to be despicable by those around them. *Duryo:dhana* claimed, "*ja:na:mi dharmam na cha me: pravruththihi ja:na:myadharmam na cha me: nivruththihi*", I know what needs to be done and I know what needs to be given up yet I don't do it. As human beings, we must not succumb to our weaknesses and must become skilled at rejecting what is harmful and learn to restrain the senses. By repeatedly preventing the senses from turning toward undesirable objects, the mind gradually comes under our control. Anything that's experienced beyond a limit or not in a proper way turns out to be bad for us. Food, for example, eating beyond a limit or consuming recklessly leads to ill health.

There is a verse is *I:sa:vasyo:panishad* -

isa:va:syam idagum sarvam yathkincha jagathya:m jagath |
the:na thyakthe:na bhunji:ttha:ha ma: grutthah kasya sviddhanam ||

the:na thyakthe:na bhunji:ttha:ha - enjoy it with a spirit of renunciation, is the message here. In other words, whatever exists and transforms in this universe, *experience it all*, but do so with the understanding that it belongs to the Divine, and with a spirit of detachment.

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Everything belongs to *Parama:thma*, the ultimate controller. Everything functions according to His will and for His purpose. Understanding that we too are guided by Him, we should accept whatever experiences He provides as His gifts. The right attitude is: "This is not mine; it belongs to Him. Since *Parama:thma* has given it to me, I accept it as His grace." To think, "I will take this for myself and enjoy it as my own," is a mistake.

One example is that of a good employee who sets aside personal interests and remains mindful that he represents the organization in all his work. As long as he acts for the organization rather than for himself, he earns its trust and stands to gain greater responsibility and advancement. Likewise, one should give up the sense of personal ownership and act for *Parama:thma*, to whom one truly belongs.

Bali chakravarthy, however, was not content with what had been allotted to him. Driven by greed, he defeated *Indra* and seized his kingdom as well. This pained *Parama:thma*, who wished to restore what rightfully belonged to *Indra*. Yet, unlike *Ra:vana:sura* or *Hiranyakasipu*, *Bali* possessed the noble virtue of generosity. Rather than punish him, the Lord approached him in the guise of a humble *Bra:hmin* boy seeking alms.

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The Lord taught *Bali* a lesson that everything the king held onto as 'mine', actually belonged under His foot. Even the higher worlds that the king strived towards when he made generous donations, belonged under the foot of *Parama:thma*. After having taught this lesson, the Lord returned *Indra's* share to him and granted a great realm of subterranean worlds to *Bali*. Thus, the Lord wants us to nurture and enjoy what's allotted to us. It's important not to go chasing excess and just do what's necessary while not engaging in the mental attachments and aversions that our activities give rise to. Thus, the mind can be brought under one's control. The mind is not being denied experiences but given what's necessary and good for it in a disciplined manner.

Verse 65

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As the mind sees that its genuine needs are fulfilled, it gradually learns to follow one's guidance rather than its own impulses. In this way, the mind comes under control, and only such a person attains true inner peace. Krushna then explains how this peace frees one from sorrow.



Though no one desires suffering, it inevitably comes. Blinded by ignorance, we fail to distinguish what should be pursued from what should be avoided and bring unnecessary sorrow upon ourselves. This is why *Ya:muna:cha:rya* prayed for the Lord's grace thus: "*bahudha: santhatha duhkharshini bhavadurdine patthahskhalitham ma:mavalokaya:chyutha*" - "O *Achyutha*, in this gloomy world where sorrow falls like incessant rain, I have lost my way; cast Your compassionate glance upon me."

Krushna then explains how this peace frees one from sorrow.

prasa:de: sarva duhkha:na:m ha:ni rasy o:paja:yathe: |
prasanna che:thaso:hy a:su buddhi:h paryavathishtathi ||2.65

When the mind becomes serene and pure, all sorrow comes to an end. Krushna is not speaking merely of relief from ordinary suffering, but of freedom from every form of sorrow, including the bondage of *karma* itself.

Verse 66

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To attain a pure and peaceful mind, one must first cultivate a clear goal and train the mind to be content with what is genuinely necessary. When the mind discovers that its legitimate needs are met, it gradually learns to obey rather than constantly demand more.

This principle is illustrated through a story about *Thenali Ramakrishna*. To eliminate a growing rat problem, the king gave every household a cat. Since the cats needed milk, each family was also given a cow. They were then allotted grazing land and the means to cultivate it so the cows could be properly fed. The king's mission was clear: within six months, the rat population was to be drastically reduced while both the cows and the cats were kept healthy.

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Instead, people fed the cats generously with milk, leaving them too content to hunt. The cats slept peacefully while the rats multiplied. *Thenali Ramakrishna* noticed this and adopted a treatment of aversion therapy for the cat in his house, feeding it with hot and spicy milk. This burnt and injured the cat's mouth. His cat came to be afraid of milk and learned to seek its meals by killing the rats, thus fulfilling its purpose. Everyone else's cats didn't have motivation to kill rats for their sustenance since they were already being well fed with milk.

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Only in *Thenali Ramakrishna's* house did the cats fulfill their purpose. The rats became their food, leaving the house free of rodents. The cats grew healthy by hunting, the cows remained healthy, and the children in the family had ample milk to drink. Thus, everyone benefited - the family, the cats, and the kingdom's objective was accomplished.

The lesson is that one should certainly provide nourishment, but only the nourishment appropriate to each being. If we give one creature what properly belongs to another and prevent it from seeking its natural source of sustenance, we create greater problems instead of solving them.

Likewise, the senses should not be denied what they genuinely need, nor should they be indulged without restraint. They must be trained to accept only what is necessary. If every desire is satisfied indiscriminately, the senses will never come under control. But when they are properly disciplined, the mind becomes serene, and the senses gradually become obedient.

Just as a well-managed household functions according to a thoughtful plan, spiritual life also requires a clear purpose. The highest goal is *a:thma sa:ksha:thka:ram*, soul-realization. When this becomes one's guiding objective, the mind is naturally directed toward it, becomes pure and tranquil, and the senses gradually come under control. Such serenity frees one from sorrow.

Krushna therefore declares:

*na:sthi buddhi:r ayukthasya na cha:yukthasya bha:vana: |
na cha:bha:vayathas sa:nthihi asa:nthasya kuthas sukham ? || 2.66*

Without *yo:ga*, there can be no steady understanding; without steady contemplation, there can be no peace; and without peace, there can be no lasting happiness. Here, *yo:ga* refers to the equanimity of mind that keeps one firmly established in one's spiritual goal.

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One who possesses equanimity of mind doesn't get perturbed by sadness or happiness and takes experiences to be of the body, not of himself. One who has a firm focus on *a:thma* ensures that circumstances allow for the continuous remembrance of the *a:thma* and thus controls his senses while moving towards that goal. Hence, he gains steady intellect and a pure mind and is filled with happiness. Such a person is known to be *stthithaprajna*. Such a person is firm in his knowledge of *Parama:thma* being the driving force behind his very existence. His steady and firm intellect remains as his protection and fortress.

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Everyone perceives himself to be independent and desires that state but **sa:sthras** have clearly stated that our true state is one of dependence on *Parama:thma*. The *ji:va* is but a servant of *Parama:thma*. One who remembers this with firm steadiness is a *stthithaprajna*. Anxiety of perceived losses, or resultant sadness do not affect such a person. Any criticism or praise falls right off him as he attributes them to the body and not to his true Self. He feels no anxiety to preserve anything material since he doesn't identify with it.

Prahla:da is a shining example of one who possesses equanimity of mind. He didn't perceive snakes, fire, or poison as adverse to his safety nor did he have any inclination to preserve and favor his own bodily comfort.

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Thus one who has equanimity is never sad.

na:sthi buddhi:r ayukthasya na cha:yukthasya bha:vana: |
na cha:bha:vayathas sa:ntihi asa:ntasya kuthas sukham ? || 2.66

The mind never gets excited - which is typically a symptom of *rajas*. Continuous remembrance of what ought to be remembered makes one equanimous towards everything. Just like a blockage in a gutter can be removed by the flow of fast moving water, one must remove *rajas* and *thamas*, not just suppress them and allow them to settle deep within, in a latent form. *Va:Imi:ki* once told his disciple *Bharadva:ja* about the flowing river, “*akardamam idam thi:rttham sanmanushya mano: yattha:*”, this water is spotless like the mind of a good person. A good person perceives everything to be good in the world since nothing inspires feelings of aversion or attachment in him. Just like we can see to the bottom of clear water, the emotions of such a person remain pure and fresh.

Verse 67

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The first step is to have a goal and the second step is to practice controlling the senses and not letting them go astray. **Sri:** Krushna outlines in this verse -

indriya:na:m hi charatha:m yan mano::nu viddhi:yathe: |
thadasya harathi prajna:m va:yurnavam iva:mbha:si || 2.67

If the mind keeps recounting sense experiences, then we lose control over it. It is instead controlled by the senses. Even if one has knowledge of *Parama:thma* and has done *mananam*, contemplation over Him, such a person loses all of this hard-earned insight if his mind is occupied by experiences of the senses. It's not wrong for the senses to experience things, but one mustn't allow the feelings resultant from those experiences, grip the mind. One must practice with discipline reining in his senses from running after experiences of sense objects . The mind can be amongst materialistic objects and experiences but must never let them grip it.

Verse 68

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The senses must be controlled by the mind and the intellect must make it firm. Thus the process of becoming *stthithaprajna* has been expounded on by **Sri: Krushna**. Man can think of several things and get affected by mental weaknesses and defects like attachment and aversion. Only man is capable of such things, animals are not. These emotions make him think unclearly and not act appropriately. It's of supreme importance to have a firm intellect and pure mind. Only then would one's inner intentions shine through and translate to right action. Such a person's worldview is devoid of cravings or aversions. *dharmara:ja* was asked to find bad people in the world but he couldn't find even a single one due to his inner purity. The world is like a mirror that reflects back the state of our minds to us. If we view it with hate, it reflects hate. Attaining purity and equanimity of mind is a state called "*prasa:dam*". *Arjuna* asks how one gets it and **Sri: Krushna** responds that it is by fixing the mind on Him and control of the senses -

thasma:d yasya maha:ba:ho:ni nigruhi:tha:ni sarvasaha |
indriya:ni:ndriya:rtthe:bhya:ha thasya prajna: prathishttitha: || 2.68

However, controlling the senses is very difficult. They don't obey when indulged too often and they rebel when starved.

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We have heard about the story of King *Yaya:thi* in *Bha:gavatham*. He craved sense enjoyment even when he grew old. When he asked his sons to spare him years of their lives each one of them, except for the youngest one, refused. He cursed all the elder sons and accepted the youngest son's years of life to regain his youth. He was still unsatisfied.

"na ja:thu ka:mah ka:ma:na:m upabhoge:na sa:myathi", desires never get satisfied as we feed them with experiences. *"havisha Krushnavarthme:va bhu:ya e:va::bhivartthathe:"*, the fire of desire only becomes more raging as we feed it with desires. We cannot say, 'Oh, let me experience everything today and from tomorrow I will control myself'. As we gradually expose our senses to enjoyments, they crave more. We need to control our senses and not let them go astray.

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All five senses have equal power; none is higher or lower. Whether tasting, touching, seeing, hearing, or smelling, each can equally lead to downfall. So as **Krushna** says, the idea that one sense can do wrong while another cannot is false. .

Just as a toothless person still craves crunchy food and finds new ways to enjoy it instead of giving it up, the senses too keep seeking pleasure. **Sri:** Krushna doesn't ask us to renounce them but to restrain them gradually. This is called *bhoga-sankocha* - moderation in enjoyment, not *bhoga-thyaga* - complete renunciation.

ve:da:ntha teaches that sudden suppression makes one ineffective; control must grow step by step, like reducing body fat slowly for good health. The senses, like oxen pulling a cart tempted by roadside crops, must be gently guided. If they disobey, they can be restricted just enough to prevent harm. That steady discipline is true control.

Verse 69

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Control the senses by closing their 'doors' or by staying alert and gently restraining them, allowing only limited indulgence. Never let them act freely.

People ask, "Why not see everything, since God is in all?" Krushna answers, "You may see only when you know how; otherwise, it leads to harm."

One who practices such restraint gains steady wisdom. With time, the senses learn to withdraw naturally, and the mind becomes unaffected by attractions. As control deepens, one stops reacting outwardly, then learns to quieten even inner agitation.

At this stage, the mind stays unmoved though objects are near. The seeker perceives truth clearly, without personal craving. This is *sama:dhi*—the state of perfect balance.

There are two forms — one of stillness without outer action, and another where inner awareness remains steady even while acting. The first arises in meditation; the second, when that clarity continues in daily life.

True meditation is when inner awareness remains clear both within and without, leading to purity and serenity. Krushna calls such a person a *yo:gi*—one free from desire and aversion, like Sage **Suka**.

As Krushna says, “When all beings sleep, the disciplined one is awake; when all are awake, he rests.” This is the peace and wonder of a true *yo:gi*.

ya: nisa: sarvabhu:tha:nam thasyam: jagartha samyami: |
yasyam ja:grathi bhu:tha:ni sa: nisa: pasyatho: mune:he || 2.69

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We see day and night every day, but for a *yo:gi*, the system is different. What is night for ordinary people is day for the *yo:gi*, and what is day for us is night for him. We sleep at night and act during the day, while the *yo:gi* seems to do the reverse.

“Does that make *yo:gis* like demons who roam at night?” people wonder. But “night” here has a deeper meaning. Two things define it: first, objects exist but are unseen because there is no light; second, the senses, tired from daytime activity, withdraw and rest. Thus, in darkness and with resting senses, nothing is perceived — that is night. Day, on the other hand, is when light spreads and things become visible.

For the soul endowed with true knowledge, real “day” is when divine truth shines clearly, and “night” is when that awareness is absent. For the *yo:gi* God-consciousness is ever bright; for others, it is darkened by ignorance.

Krushna says, “Restrain all the senses and fix your mind on Me, for one whose senses are under control finds Me within.” The senses cannot be mastered by relying on them; they obey only when directed toward the Divine.

Thus, for the *yo:gi*, knowledge of God is the only true light. Ordinary knowledge appears and fades, but his awareness of the Supreme never ceases. He constantly feels the Divine presence and sees everything as part of that vast cosmic body of the Lord. Because of that vision, he is always in the radiance of day — the light of divine realization.

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Even when we try to sit in worship, God does not appear to us. Thus, divine knowledge remains like night to us. But for one with equanimity, steady reflection, and true understanding—who has realized the Self—everything appears divine. For him, knowledge of God is eternal daylight, though for us it is night.

We sleep in that “night,” unaware of the Divine, while the *yo:gi* stays awake, alert in constant vision of God. For us, “day” means the pursuit of sensory pleasures—what to get, how to get it, how to enjoy it. In this, we are fully awake and skilled. But for the *yo:gi*, such worldly pleasures hold no attraction; his taste for them has vanished, replaced by the sweetness of divine awareness.

When one’s interest grows in the Divine, interest in worldly things naturally fades. Thus, we are awake to the material world, but the *yo:gi* is awake to the spiritual. What is visible to us is invisible to him; what is clear to him, we do not see.

The *yo:gi* lives constantly in the presence of God, serving Him inwardly, content and surrendered, accepting everything as divine will. He stays far from selfishness, attachment, anger, fear, and hatred—all forms of darkness in which we remain asleep. In that darkness, we dream of worldly life, while the *yo:gi* rests untouched by it.

He is awake in divine awareness where we sleep, and asleep to worldly attractions where we are awake. Such a one, pure in mind and master of his senses, is called a *samyami*—one who has perfectly restrained and controlled his mind.

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Ka:rthavi:rya:rjuna was a great and powerful ruler, said to have a thousand arms and such strength that he could play in the waters holding *Ra:vana* himself in his grasp. Yet he was also an ideal king—firm in justice and discipline. In his kingdom, there was no room for injustice or immorality.

Through his *yo:gic* power, he instantly appeared wherever anyone even began to think wrongly, even behind closed doors. With bow in hand, he would appear before them and warn, “Be careful! Watch your thoughts!” If someone tried to indulge in something wrong, he would manifest there, saying the same. His subjects were so well trained that even an unworthy thought made their hearts tremble. This was his way of governing—training the people to stay on the right path, just as he had complete control over his own senses. Such mastery made him a *samyami*, one of perfect self-control.

Like *Ka:rthavi:rya:rjuna* trained his people, we too must train our minds and senses. When the mind begins a wrong thought, it should immediately warn itself, “Careful!” When tempted by something inappropriate—food, drink, or desire—we must pause and restrain ourselves.

If a sweet appears before you, you must not take it unless it is offered to you. Taking what is not rightfully yours, even out of curiosity or habit, is still wrong. Many people, though good by nature, pick up such habits from childhood—grabbing things, opening others' belongings, or taking small items secretly.

Just as villagers' children snatch fruit from a vendor's cart out of habit, our senses too act impulsively unless trained. Whenever your senses move toward such actions, you must be able to say firmly, "Stop! Be alert!"—the way *Ka:ṛthavi:rya:rjuna* disciplined his people. This is a special kind of self-training, essential for true control of the mind and senses.

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To reach the moon or the polar regions, one cannot simply decide and go. Special preparation and training are required. Wearing a suit is not enough, one must learn how to function in those extreme conditions.

For example, astronauts train by being placed in deep water tanks about twenty-four feet high. Wearing special gear, they are pushed into the tank where they can neither stand nor control their limbs. Gradually, they learn to float and move despite the lack of control. With continuous training, they can later function easily even in space, where there is virtually no air or gravity.

In the same way, *Arjuna*, our senses too need such disciplined training. Without it, we cannot enter the inner space of self-mastery. One who gains it is called a *samyami* — one with perfect restraint.

As the *Gi:tha* says, "*What is night for all beings is day for the man of self-control.*" For most people, awareness of the Divine is like night — unseen and unknown. But for the *yo:gi*, it is always bright; he remains awake in that light. The pleasures and attractions that keep others awake are, to him, night — unseen and powerless to disturb.

Sri: Suka gives a striking example: even when surrounded by beautiful women, he remained unaffected. Though things existed around him, the sense of "this is for my enjoyment" was absent. His vision was fixed on the Self. Constant contemplation transformed his mind to be free from passion and aversion and backed by wisdom. Such a person becomes fit for Self-realization — a true *stthithaprajna*, one of steady wisdom.

After describing this, Krushna offers the ocean as a beautiful metaphor. *Va:ḷmi:ki*, too, compares Lord *Ra:ma*'s depth to the ocean's calm. *Ra:ma* knew everyone in his kingdom, their nature, habits, and needs, yet kept it all within himself, never displaying it outwardly.

The ocean, though vast and full of jewels, creatures, and treasures, never overflows or boasts, “Look what I have!” It remains steady and silent. Likewise, the man of wisdom holds countless experiences within but stays composed, unaffected, and calm.

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The ocean never says, “Don’t take anything from me—get out.” Those who can blend with it are allowed to stay within; those who cannot are gently carried by the waves to the shore, never forced to remain.

A fish that moves freely in the water, content with the sea itself, is welcomed — whether small or a mighty whale. But a twig or blade of grass that cannot adjust is quietly lifted by the waves and placed on the shore. The ocean says, without anger or force, “You stay on your path, I’ll stay on mine.”

It makes no distinction, everything is equal to it. Yet it provides space for what can live in harmony, and releases what cannot.

Certain plants grow deep in the sea; they adapt to its nature, so the ocean lets them flourish. Countless gallons of water evaporate each moment under the sun’s heat — yet the sea never laments, “Oh, I’m losing so much water.” Even as hundreds of rivers flow into it endlessly, it never says, “I’m too full—please stop.”

Rivers, big and small, bring clear water, muddy water, even polluted water, but the ocean never complains, “You’re spoiling me.” It neither rejects nor resists.

It accepts what comes, releases what goes, and displays neither with pride nor concealment. Whatever one seeks from it, it offers in proportion to one’s effort. That is the nature of the ocean — vast, patient, and ever-balanced.

Verse 70

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God set a clear boundary for the ocean: “Remain within your shore.” No matter how fierce the winds or high the waves, when they reach the shore they lose their force and quietly retreat. The sea never resists what comes, never hides or rejects anything — it simply remains steady.

This, says Krushna to *Arjuna*, is a profound truth we must understand. That is why He uses the ocean as an example:

*a:pu:ryama:nam achala prathishttam samudram a:pah pravisanthi yadvath |
thadvath ka:ma: yam pravisanthi sarve: sa sa:nthim a:pnothi na ka:maka:mi: || 2.70*

Only such a person attains true peace. Who is that? One who is *not a slave to desire*.

A man of desire chases one thing after another — one wish arises, he rushes to fulfill it; another appears, he abandons the first and runs after the next. His mind is always restless, his understanding clouded. Such a person is called a *ka:ma-ka:mi:*— one who desires desires. Peace never visits him, only agitation grows, because worldly pleasures always breed more craving.

Then should we stop enjoying things? No. The *Gi:tha* does not ask us to reject objects, but to remove the craving that binds us to them. What must be given up is not the object, but the mental attachment to it.

Physical acts matter less; the inner thought is what truly counts.

Among the *a:Iwa:rs*, *Go:da De:vi* explains this beautifully. She says Krushna killed *Kamsa* not merely because he did evil. *Kamsa* had done wrong long before, yet God spared him. Even after Krushna's birth, for twelve to fourteen years He did nothing to him. Why then did He slay *Kamsa* at that particular time? Because at last, *Kamsa's thought*, his *inner intent*, turned fully against the Divine.

That evil resolve itself was his downfall.

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*oruththi magana:y ppirandu, o:riravil
oruththi magana:y oliththu valara,
ththarikkila:na:giththa:n thi:ngu ninainda,
karuththai ppizhaippiththu kanjan vayiththil
neruppenra ninra neduma:le:! unnai
aruththiththu vando:m parai tharudiya:gil,
thiru ththakka selvamum se:vagamum ya:m pa:di,
varuththamum thi:rndu magizhinde:lo:r em,ba:va:y !*

“O Lord of infinite compassion, how deep is Your love for us!” says *Go:da De:vi*. “You give everyone what they desire — good or bad alike. When one seeks evil, You grant the fruit of that; when one seeks good, You bless them with it.”

Kamsa’s downfall began not with his actions or words, but with his *thoughts*. If someone merely speaks harshly of God, He does not mind. “Poor man, he must be in pain,” He thinks and lets it go. Even if one acts rashly in anger or ignorance, God forgives, just as a mother forgives her fevered child who strikes her in delirium.

Krushna Himself showed this compassion when *Indra* rained stones upon *Go:kula*. Instead of punishing him, Krushna simply lifted *Go:vardhana* Hill, thinking, “Let him calm down.” But when evil takes root in the mind and one’s inner intent turns fully toward harm, the Lord intervenes — not out of anger, but to correct that corrupted thought. That is why *Kamsa* was finally destroyed. His mind had fixed itself on the single thought, “Kill Krushna” He lived and breathed that obsession of destruction, until it consumed him. The Lord simply fulfilled the very idea he had chosen.

Whatever one constantly thinks upon, that becomes one’s destiny.

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When someone repeatedly wishes for his own destruction, the Lord may allow him to face the consequences of his actions. The Lord has a unique quality: when He intends to protect someone, He considers only their words and outward actions. But when punishment becomes necessary, He looks beyond appearances and examines the deepest layers of one’s heart. Only when all traces of goodness have disappeared does He act. Even then, He does so with compassion and sorrow. as *Va:Imi:ki* calls it *sanja:tha ba:shpah paravi:rahantha:* — shedding tears while executing justice.

The deeper lesson is that the mind is the most important factor. Actions performed without inner corruption do not bind a person in the same way as actions driven by harmful intentions. Therefore, the mind must not become controlled by desires. Desires may arise, but the mind should remain steady.

One who keeps the mind anchored in self-knowledge, unmoved by what comes or goes, achieves inner peace — *sa sa:ntim a:pno:thi na ka:maka:mi:*. Krushna concludes the second chapter with this lesson — the mind must hold the eternal within, letting the impermanent pass without attachment.

From the world and nature, every lesson can be learned, as the ocean teaches stillness and equanimity.

Verse 71

Pages 405 - 406 translation

Once, the wives of **Sri: Krushna** undertook a sacred vow to fulfill their heartfelt desire to be closer to Him. At its completion, they were instructed to offer sumptuous food to the worthy and were told that Sage *Durva:sa*, residing across the river, should be served.

With the food carefully prepared, they set out with devotion, but when they reached the river, it was overflowing and was impassable. They returned in distress and sought Krushna's guidance. He advised them to declare, " **Sri: Krushna** is a lifelong *brahmacha:ri*, celibate, " assuring them that the river would make way. Trusting his words, they repeated them, and to their astonishment, the river immediately subsided, allowing them to cross with ease.

They approached *Durva:sa* and humbly offered him the food. The sage received it with reverence, offering it to the *Parama:thma* dwelling within, and ate it all in that spirit. The queens then washed their vessels and prepared to return, but once again the river was in full flood. Forgetting the earlier words, they approached *Durva:sa* for guidance. With compassion, he instructed them to say, "*Durva:sa*, the one who always fasts, asks you to make way." The wives went to the river, repeated his words, and once again the waters parted, allowing them to cross safely.

As they returned, doubts arose in their minds. How could Krushna, surrounded by so many wives, be called a lifelong *brahmacha:ri*? How could *Durva:sa*, who had consumed so much food, be described as eternally fasting? They approached *Na:rada* to seek clarity.

Na:rada explained that one who eats for personal pleasure is truly eating, and such eating is bound by sin. But when food is offered with the understanding that the *Parama:thma* within is the true enjoyer, the act becomes worship, known as *antharya:mi a:ra:dhana*. In this sense, *Durva:sa*, who ate only as an offering to the indwelling Lord, was an eternal *upava:si*, one who fasts. Quoting the divine words "*aham vaisva:naro bhu:thva:*," *Na:rada* explained that it is the Lord Himself who becomes the digestive fire and transforms food into energy.

Na:rada explained that Krushna is indeed a lifelong celibate, for he never regards anyone as an object of sensual pleasure. The *Parama:thma* resides in all beings—men, women, animals, birds, trees, and all creation. Krushna being ever-present and transcendent, does not enter anyone anew. His presence has always existed within all, and the only reason it is recognized through physical relationships is for the sake of perception. His bond with the queens was not one of worldly attachment but a reflection of the eternal presence of the Lord within them.

Na:rada concluded that *Krushna*, always established in the *ve:da* and untouched by flaws, is an eternal *brahmacha:ri*. This explains why, when his words were invoked, the river obeyed, and why *Durva:sa*'s words had the same effect.

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A person's actions may engage with objects, but inwardly his mind remains steady and desireless. One who maintains this inner detachment, keeping desires at a distance even while interacting with the world, gradually diminishes the craving to acquire and possess, and becomes desireless.

viha:ya ka:ma:n yas sarva:n puma:ms charathi nispruhaha |
nirmamo: nirahamka:raha sa sa:nthim adhi:gachhathi || 2.71

When a person acts with diminished focus on objects and sensory experiences, the craving to acquire them naturally reduces. He is neither elated when he receives something nor disappointed when he does not, taking whatever comes without attachment or preference. Like a student absorbed in study who eats without concern for taste, he engages with life without clinging.

One who experiences things without desire gradually reduces attachment to worldly pleasures. As attachment fades, possessiveness and the sense of "I am the enjoyer," disappears. To achieve this, craving must be restrained, attachment to objects loosened, and the senses brought under control.

Verse 72

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The senses cannot be controlled by one's own effort alone. When they are entrusted to *Krushna*, they are guided only towards what is necessary. As desires lessen, possessiveness fades, and with it, the ego of being the enjoyer also diminishes. When ego decreases, impurity disappears, and the mind becomes pure. In that purity, Lord's grace is bestowed, self realization and peace follow.

Attachment makes absent objects appear real in imagination, but a peaceful mind perceives the "I" within clearly. Without searching externally, such a person attains insight, for the scriptures declare that the Lord is grasped by a pure mind.

Krushna emphasizes that experiencing the Lord depends on the purity of the mind, achieved by controlling the senses. Only then does wisdom remain steady, and one becomes a *stthithaprajna*.

He says:

e:sha: bra:mhi: sthithih pa:rttha! nainam prapya vimuhyathi |
sthithva:: sya:m anthaka:le::pi bra:mha nirva:na mruchchathi || 2.72

When actions are performed with equanimity of mind, it leads to Self-realization, which leads to the state which is called *bra:mhi: sthithih*, God realization. One who abides in this state never again falls into delusion, for just as darkness disappears in the presence of light, ignorance and impurity cannot remain where there is God realization. Even if *sthithva:: sya:m anthaka:le::pi* - a person comes to this state only at the very end of life, *bra:mha nirva:na mruchchathi* - he will still attain the eternal bliss of liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

If remembrance at the final moment can bring this state, how much greater is the benefit when practice begins earlier, while the body, mind, and senses are still steady. Even in old age this remembrance leads to the same state, but starting sooner makes this life happier and meaningful.

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In the second chapter, *sa:nkhya yo:ga*, *Sri:* Krushna presents the essence of the *Gi:tha*, teaching the knowledge of the self. He distinguishes body from soul, teaches what actions should be performed, what knowledge must guide them, and how that knowledge is gained. He explains the obstacles on this path and shows that only reliance on Him can remove them. By following this path, self-realization progresses systematically, as illustrated to *Arjuna* through analogies. In the third chapter, Krushna explains how action can be qualified for purity .

The *Bhagavad Gi:tha* was revealed to guide humanity. Humans are the most intelligent of all beings, but this very gift often drives them to seek possession, control, and dominance over others. Those with greater intelligence and power dominate, while others fall behind. In this struggle, humans have gained seeming mastery over creation but lost their own peace, burdened by unrest and worry.

Humans need to realize that the pursuit of control and possession is harmful. Those who have overcome these desires are best suited to teach this knowledge. The sages of ancient times, who renounced worldly pleasures and pursued realisation of the self through long penance, attained this wisdom and passed it on to future generations. These enlightened teachers are called *rushis*.

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The teachings of the great *rushis* are called the *sa:sthras*. They considered it their *dharma* to share how they attained knowledge, the benefits it brought, the purpose of human life, how others might acquire the same wisdom, and the results of its practice. Guided by the principle that the happiness of others is their own, they preserved this knowledge for future generations.

The *Sri:mad Bhagavad Gi:tha*, blessed by Lord *Sri: Krushna*, distills these teachings for all humanity, offering guidance according to each person's capacity and inclination, regardless of country, class, race, or individual differences. As the second chapter explains, the *Gi:tha* is like a river of knowledge. Those qualified and inclined who immerse themselves even once will have their doubts cleared and can progress steadily toward their goals.

Impurities in the mind arise as desires. Just as dirt clings to the body, these desires cling to the mind. When blocked or unfulfilled, they lead to anger, which can grow into jealousy, envy, and eventually retaliatory actions, causing suffering to oneself and harm to others.

A single bath in the waters of the *Gi:tha* frees one from the dirt of worldly existence — *sakruth gi:tha:mbhasi sna:nam samsa:ra malamo:chanam*. Even a single immersion purifies the mind, removes doubts, and guides one toward clarity and self-realization.

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samsa:ra is the ego that believes one is supreme and that no one can surpass them. The more this ego diminishes, the wiser and more excellent a person becomes; the more it grows, the less wisdom they possess. Ego must be removed like dust. Just as dust is washed away by water, mental impurities can be cleansed by the knowledge, 'water' of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. This purification allows *sa:ththvik* knowledge to shine, the mind to obey, and correct thoughts to guide us, helping us progress toward our life goals. As the elders advise, one should continually contemplate the *Gi:tha*.

The *Gi:tha* comprises eighteen chapters, divided into three *shatkas*, collections of six chapters. The first, *a:thma shatka*, teaches the knowledge of the Self; the second, *Brahma shatka*, reveals knowledge of the Divine Supreme guiding us; and the third, *pu:rva se:sha*, clarifies the first two *shatkas* for practical understanding.

All knowledge-seekers desire eternal bliss, called Brahma in Sanskrit, meaning “great.” This greatness is not only in size or qualities but also in its ability to elevate the seeker to its own stature. Ordinary worldly objects may be grand, but they rarely uplift us. It is said, ‘*bruhati brumhayathi ithi brahma*’. That One is Supreme who elevates all to his stature.

The word “*brahma*” is used in many contexts, such as the cosmic egg, grand ideas, the body, the soul, and the four-headed first being of creation. To differentiate God, the Supreme One, we use the term *Parabrahma*. Every wise person should aspire to attain this *Parabrahma*, the ultimate goal of knowledge.

Desire for the ultimate goal alone, is not enough. One must also understand how to fulfill it and adopt the right means, called *hitha*, beneficial action. One should also know oneself.

This involves *thatthvajna:nam*, knowledge of reality, *hithajna:nam*, knowledge of what is beneficial, and *purusha:rthajna:nam*, knowledge of the goals of human life. Mastery of these three, *thatthva*, *hitha* and *purusha:rtha*, defines a properly lived life. As the elders say, “*jna:nathrayam upa:de:yam e:thadanyath na kinchana*”, these three kinds of knowledge are all that should be taught.

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The ultimate purpose of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* and the way it was revealed is comprehensively presented in the second chapter. When *Arjuna* sought guidance on what would be beneficial for him, **Sri:** Krushna explained what knowledge is necessary, how it can be understood, and the means to achieve it. He also briefly described *Arjuna*’s inherent nature, which is gradually elaborated upon in the subsequent chapters, leading toward the *Gi:tha*’s ultimate message .

The *Gi:tha* is seen as an ocean of knowledge, and even a little understanding brings great benefit. Every human seeks *Parabrahma*, ultimate, eternal bliss. This bliss cannot be sought in mere objects. It is in ultimate, eternal, supreme knowledge.

Humans are naturally drawn to a companion who is wiser, more powerful, and nurturing, one who guides, provides, and enhances what they already possess. Such a being inspires love and devotion.

The *Bhagavad Gi:tha* presents the Supreme Guide, *Parabrahma*, who sustains and directs all beings. This *Parabrahma* brings guidance, bestows great joy, and serves as a steadfast companion, and is known as *Na:ra:yana*, where *na:ra* signifies that which never perishes.

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Objects such as trees, fruits, walls, and mansions change form, but their raw material remains unchanged. If the raw material is soil, the soil stays constant, though its forms, names, and purposes vary. All such materials are called *na:ra*, that which never perishes.

The *ve:das* say that every *na:ra* has a support, *ayana*. This support is within, all around or above. For example, a bird's life sustains its flight, while water may be supported by a pot. A car is supported by its engine inside, and a bulb by its fixture above. Even planets that seem to move unsupported have an unseen support. Thus, all things, whether living or non-living, rest on some support. The dependent object is called *a:dheyam*.

The *sa:sthras* explain that there is a supreme principle that serves as both inner and outer support, conscious and sustaining, generous and ever-present. Because it upholds all *na:ra*, it is called *Na:ra:yana*. Our elders describe *Na:ra:yana* as supreme bliss, pervading everything, residing within us, granting desires, and removing difficulties.

This principle revealed in the *sa:sthras* is presented by the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. The *Gi:tha* teaches that true bliss, or *Parabrahma*, cannot be attained through objects or senses but only from the supporter and sustainer within. The *sa:sthras* exist to reveal such truths that lie beyond perception and inference. Thus, the *Gi:tha* is a unique *sa:sthra*, guiding ordinary people, the wise, and the truly wise, offering each what they can grasp, from simple understanding to profound realization.

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In the eleventh century, the revered sage *Yamuna: Munulu*, *Guru of Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya*, explained the essence of the *Gi:tha* as “*na:rayana:h param Brahma gi:tash:asthre sami:rithaha*”. This means that *Na:ra:yana* is the *Parabrahma*, as revealed in the *Gi:tha s:asthra*.

s:asthra means that which ordains, guiding what we must know as our goal and the means to attain it. The *Gi:tha sa:sthra*, ‘sung’ by the Lord, clearly declares that *Na:ra:yana* is the *Parabrahma*, the source and bestower of supreme bliss.

“*svadharma jna:na vaira:gya sa:dhya bhakthye:kagocharaha*”, this divine principle of *Na:ra:yana* is known only through *bhakthye:kagochara:*, pure, selfless love. Love takes different forms: *va:thsalya*, affection for children; *a:kali*, hunger for food; *ka:ma*, desire between men and women of age; *gauravam*, respect for elders; *a:da:ram*, compassion for the poor. When directed to God, it is called *bhakthi*. *bhakthi*, as pure love, seeks no self-interest but only His joy. Thus *Na:ra:yana*, the all-pervading *Parama:thma*, is attained through *bhakthi* alone.

How does love arise? *Yamuna: Munulu* explains that love develops through a natural process. It cannot be created by wish alone. Just as a tree grows from a seed when provided with proper care, water, sunlight, and support, devotion arises when the conditions for it are nurtured. This, he says, is the essence of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

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To gain a good education, one needs teachers who can impart knowledge, books to enhance it, time to dedicate, desire to study, effort, and a focused mind. Similarly, divine love arises through a systematic process; mere penance or wishing for it is not enough. Love naturally directs concentration toward its object. For example, someone who loves food will see only *laddoos*, *jalebis*, curries, or pickles, no matter where they sit or what they do. Likewise, someone who loves God will naturally concentrate on God.

When concentration arises, desire for other things diminishes. If the desire for food is strong, even study, play, or rest becomes secondary. Similarly, a student deeply devoted to learning may ignore food, play, or other distractions. Whatever we love and concentrate on, anything different loses appeal, and attachment to other things decreases.

This decrease in desire is called *vira:gam*, dispassion, or *vaira:gyam*, detachment. If passion arises for one object, passion for others naturally diminishes. When devotion to God becomes central, dispassion for all else grows. *vaira:gyam* arises when one recognizes that the ultimate object is God alone and all else is secondary. For example, if one desires only apples, other fruits like guavas no longer tempt them. Similarly, focused love and concentration on God create detachment from all other objects..

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vaira:gyam arises when one realizes that the desired object alone holds true satisfaction, and everything else is secondary. This internal understanding, called *jna:nam*, naturally leads to dispassion toward what is not desired.

When devotion arises for God, dispassion follows for all else. To reach this point, one must gain *jna:nam* by understanding what is God and what is not. From this understanding, devotion grows, and disinterest in other things naturally develops. Observing, learning, and experiencing the world help refine this process.

At the beginning, guidance is essential. Instruction, practice, and careful observation cultivate taste, concentration, and devotion. Love for the chosen object strengthens and becomes focused, while attachment to other things fades. This process applies both to worldly objects and to God. Through this experience, taste intensifies, concentration deepens, and the mind naturally moves toward the object of devotion.

The happiness we seek is true happiness, the attainment of a principle greater than ourselves, known as *na:ra:yanathaththvam*. Devotion toward this principle initiates focused love and dispassion toward everything else.

Yamuna: Munulu explains this in a verse:

“*svadharma jna:na vaira:gya sa:dhya bhaktye:kagocharaha
na:ra: yana Parabrahma gi:ta sa:sthre sami:rithaha*”

svadharma, jna:nam, vaira:gyam, and sa:dhya bhakthi together form the path to *Na:ra: yana*.

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This body is given to us to perform certain actions. Each body can do only certain kinds of work, not all kinds. Some tasks come naturally, others are difficult. The work suited to each body is called *svadharma*.

Every person is born with responsibilities. These are not acquired but arise naturally, just as family relationships do. We did not acquire our bonds with siblings, uncles, aunts, or grandparents; they came with birth. With these bonds come responsibilities. From birth, duties are placed on our shoulders, and we must fulfill them.

The *sa:sthras* explain what these duties are. Acting according to them is *dharma*, and one who follows is called a *dha:rmika*. Duties differ from person to person, based on status and aptitude. These assigned tasks are *svadharma*.

When one performs their *svadharma* properly, knowledge arises. Walking the familiar path is easy and beneficial, while acting outside one's field is difficult for both self and others. A person skilled in computers, for example, works well with computer tasks but would struggle in the kitchen. In the same way, one advances smoothly by working in harmony with their nature and experience.

By practicing *svadharma*, the impurities of the mind such as desires, anger, and anxieties gradually fade. These impurities arise from long-standing attachments and aversions, which create desires and anger. These in turn provoke the senses, leading the body into action, sometimes for good and sometimes for harm.

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Some qualities are inherent in nature. They are called *rajas*, *thamas*, and *saththvam*. When *rajas* and *thamas* dominate, *ka:rmic* impressions arise in a person, leading to attachment and aversion, desires and anger. These in turn impel the senses, and the senses drive the body into action. Because of this, one may do good at times and harm at others.

If *rajas* and *thamas* are controlled at the root, everything else becomes steady. Attachments, desires, anger, sensory impulses, and bodily actions all become disciplined. It is important to know how to control *rajas* and *thamas*. But even without full knowledge, if one carefully does the work suited to one's body as taught in the *sa:sthras*, these forces will not disturb. The *sa:sthras* show both what to do and how to do it. This is *svadharma*.

By practicing *svadharma*, the mind becomes calm and one discovers the true self. With this knowledge comes clarity about life's purpose and the path to reach it. Knowledge gives direction, helps one see what is suitable and what is not, and leads toward happiness.

svadharma brings understanding, which grows into *vaira:gyam*, or detachment from what is harmful and attraction to what is good. From this arises pure love, through which one attains *Na:ra:yana*, the highest bliss. This is the essence of the *Gi:tha*. But knowledge alone is not enough. True knowledge must lead to action. Without action, knowledge does not serve its purpose. This principle is the core of *Gi:tha*.

Even if one has good surroundings, they will not improve without the desire to grow. But if they truly want to improve, pray for guidance, and decide to change, they will surely be blessed with progress.

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Every person encounters conflicts in life. One may wonder whether to act or not, whether to do something this way or that way, whether to act now or later, and may question if something is good or bad. It is natural that sometimes people mistake bad for good or good for bad.

In such situations, it is helpful to have someone who can provide guidance, for finding the right guidance can bring clarity and liberation. *Arjuna*, for example, experienced such a dilemma on the battlefield. He was unsure whether to fight. He worried about the loss of his relatives and thought that avoiding the fight might be better. He also considered that if he alone suffered by fighting, that might be acceptable.

Krushna explained that waging a righteous war was necessary for the welfare of the world and addressed *Arjuna*'s doubts by instructing him to act. *Arjuna* acknowledged his surrender with the words, "*sishyasthe: ham sa:dhi ma:m thva:m prapannam*," meaning "I am your disciple, fully surrendered to you, please guide me". Krushna then gave him the direction he needed.

Although Krushna had been with the *Pa:ndavas* for a long time, they had not faced a situation requiring such moral guidance before. When *Arjuna* faced his dilemma, he sought guidance, and Krushna reassured him that he need not be concerned about sin or merit, for Krushna himself would take responsibility.

Krushna also advised in the last chapter of *Gi:tha*,

sarva dharma:n parithyajya ma:m e:kam saranam vraja |
aham thva: sarva pa:pe:bhyo: mo:kshayishya:mi ma: suchaha || 18.66

Abandon all material *dharma*s and surrender entirely to Me. I will liberate you from all sins and remove grief.

Such critical dilemmas are likely to arise in anyone's life at some point. The question of what to do naturally emerges. Even if Krushna is not physically present as He was for *Arjuna*, there is no reason to doubt His presence. He is omnipresent, which is why he is called *Na:ra:yana*, the ultimate blissful truth. One may not see him or fully understand Him because of their limited knowledge and abilities, but He is always present.

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We are blessed with the *Sri:mad Bhagavad Gi:tha* so that we can understand and experience the divine message. There is no need to worry that Krushna is not physically present. Whenever a moral dilemma arises, one can turn to the *Gi:tha*, reflect on *Na:ra:yana*, and seek guidance from its teachings.

The *Gi:tha* provides instruction that shows the path to follow. Guidance can also be sought from elders to understand whether a particular path is correct or not. Until the right moment comes to learn from elders, the *Gi:tha* serves as a reliable companion.

Our elders believed that the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is not merely words on paper, but a direct source of knowledge and a direct message of God. When approached with this understanding, it shows the right path. History shows that great souls and elders who dedicated their lives to higher ideals fully trusted the *Gi:tha* and perfected their lives.

The first chapter of the *Gi:tha* introduces its teachings, and our revered *Yamuna: muni* summarized its essence in a short verse:

astha:na sne:ha ka:runya dharma:dharmadhiya:kulam |
pa:rtham prapannamuddisya sa:sthra:vatharanam krutham ||

This verse explains why Krushna taught the *Gi:tha* with clear and definitive statements. By presenting it in this way, it became a scripture, the *Gi:tha sa:sthram*. He brought it into existence out of compassion, for the sake of all people, whether they were eligible or not.

The *Bhagavad Gi:tha* was revealed at a time when *Arjuna* faced deep distress. His worry was not physical, but intellectual and moral. He was unsure what was right or wrong, whether to act or refrain, and whether an action was good or bad.

The phrase “*astha:na sne:ha ka:runya dharma:dharmadhiya:kulam*” reflects this inner struggle. *Arjuna*’s duty was to restrain those who do evil and correct those who make mistakes. Just as it is a doctor’s duty to administer medicine to a patient, it is the duty of a wise person to stop wrongdoing. Yet *Arjuna* faced conflict, worrying whether even a righteous act of war might be unrighteous.

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“*astha:na sne:ha ka:runya*” - compassion and pity arose in *Arjuna*’s heart. This compassion came from natural affection, as one does not wish to harm those they care for. Even if someone is acting wrongly, affection can make us hesitate. Like a skilled doctor who may hesitate when operating on a family member, personal attachment can interfere with doing the right thing. *Arjuna* experienced a similar feeling toward those on the battlefield, even for those acting wrongly.

Fortunately, in this state of disturbed intellect, *Pa:rtha (Arjuna)* became a *prapanna*, surrendering himself, taking refuge at the feet of the Lord, and seeking guidance to know what was truly good. Addressing this *prapanna*, the supremely compassionate Lord revealed the *Gi:tha*. Recognizing that *Arjuna*’s intellect was disturbed, the Lord provided instruction as a remedy, aiming to dispel his confusion.

We also face similar disturbances in today’s world. No matter how diligently we do our work, a troubled mind can spoil the results and prevent the realization of deserved outcomes. What we truly need is not physical strength, material wealth, or luxury, but inner wisdom and clear intellect. A content mind allows one to accept circumstances, whereas a disturbed intellect leads to turmoil, striving, and dissatisfaction.

When a person faces dilemmas regarding *dharmam* and *adharmam*, the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, as the embodiment of **Sri:** Krushna and his teachings, serves as a supreme guide. It provides the necessary wisdom to navigate such situations. In the first chapter, Krushna observes *Arjuna*’s state and prepares to provide guidance. After *Arjuna* surrenders, Krushna’s guidance begins in the second chapter:

nithya:thma:sangakarme:hagochara: sankhyo:gadhi:hi |
dvithi:ye: stthithadhi:laksha proktha: thanmo:has:anthaye: ||

Arjuna was afflicted by delusion and ignorance, which needed to be alleviated. Knowledge that leads to action had to be rekindled and stabilized within him. One whose knowledge remains steady is called a *stthithaprajna*. *Krushna* explained to *Arjuna* in the second chapter what a *stthithaprajna* is, how he acts, thinks, and speaks, and how he maintains balance in life.

Before teaching action, *Krushna* explained the difference between the body and the soul. The body changes as it grows from childhood to youth to old age and eventually perishes, while the soul remains eternal. Understanding this is important for knowing what work should be done. Work should focus on the soul, *asangakarma*, seeking the eternal. While performing bodily actions, we may feel temporary pleasure or pain, but these must be endured because they are part of the goal. Just as a player may face injuries or fatigue to achieve a medal, one must endure challenges while seeking the eternal.

When we realize that the soul is eternal and possesses true knowledge, and that seeking it brings real joy, hardships can be endured more easily. *Krushna* taught that actions should be done without attachment to their results. Then one gains knowledge about the nature of the soul, and one's actions of the body are done with knowledge of *karma*. This distinction between knowledge of the soul and knowledge of right action forms the essence of the second chapter. The chapter also explains the challenges that arise while seeking this knowledge, how they come about, ways to overcome them, how to steadily progress, and how to experience joy through the process.

Yet, the third chapter surprisingly begins with *Arjuna* raising a doubt. We see how beautifully Lord *Krushna* answers it!

o:m thatsath ithi sri:mad bhagavadgitha:su upanishathsu Brahma vidya:ya:m yo:gasa:sthre: sri: Krushna:rjuna samva:de: Sa:nkhya
yo:go na:ma dvitiyo:dhya:yaha

|| *Jai Srimanna:ra:yana !* ||

