

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

GI:THA:MRUTHAM

Sweet Nectar of *Sri:mad Bhagavad Gi:tha*

Chapter 3 - *karma yo:gaha*

Translation of HH Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji's Telugu
Commentary



Notation



Telugu	Hindi	English	Telugu	Hindi	English
అ	अ	a	ట	ट	ta
ఆ	आ	a:	त	त	tta
ఇ	इ	i	त्त	त्त	tta
ఈ	ई	i:	द	द	da
ఉ	उ	u	द्ध	द्ध	dda
ఊ	ऊ	u:	न	न	na
ఋ	ऋ	ru	ण	ण	na
ౠ	ॠ	ru:	त	त	tha
అల్	अलु	lu	त्त	त्त	ththa
అల్	अलु	lu:	थ	थ	ttha
ఎ		e	द	द	da
ఏ	ए	e:	द्ध	द्ध	dda
ఐ	ऐ	ai	ध	ध	dha
ఒ		o	न	न	na
ఓ	ओ	o:	प	प	pa
ఔ	औ	au/ow	फ	फ	pha
అం	अं	am	ब	ब	ba
అః	अः	aha	भ	भ	bha
క	क	ka	म	म	ma
ఖ	ख	kha	य	य	ya
గ	ग	ga	र	र	ra
ఘ	घ	gha	ल	ल	la
ంగ	ङ	nga	व	व	va
చ	च	cha	श	श	sa
చ్చ	छ	chcha	ष	ष	sha
ఱ	छ	chha	स	स	sa
జ	ज	ja	ह	ह	ha
జ్జ	झ	jha	ळ	ळ	la
ని	ञ	ini	क्ष	क्ष	ksha
			ज्ज		Jna

- This letter comes only in the middle of the word
- • This letter comes in the beginning/middle of the word

➡ Pronunciation of both these letters is almost similar



Introduction

God is infinitely compassionate. His love for us surpasses that of countless mothers and fathers combined, and it knows no bounds. Though He has the power to control all, He chooses to remain unseen, allowing us the freedom to think, feel, and even err. God does not take offense when we doubt Him, question Him, or deny His existence, for He understands our limitations and knows that, in truth, our very existence and sustenance depend on Him.

Some people question the existence of God because He does not intervene to stop wrongdoing. Non-believers argue that if God truly existed, He would halt evildoers in their tracks with the threat of severe punishment. Since He does not, they erroneously conclude that He must not exist. But such reasoning is flawed, for a God who controls through fear and force would be neither loving nor merciful. Just as a loving mother repeatedly pleads with her wayward child to mend his/her behavior but never inflicts cruel or irreversible punishment, so too does God correct us with patience, not



wrath. In case God keeps the accounts of our wrong-doings and forces us to experience the ramification as they appear, then no one will ever survive in this world.

Similarly, a dedicated teacher patiently repeats and reviews lessons until the students truly understand and improve. Such a teacher would never merely finish the lecture as a formality and leave the students to struggle on their own. If students ask questions—no matter how simple, irrelevant, or even foolish they may seem—a true teacher accepts them with patience and understanding. He not only provides answers but also guides the students on how to ask the right questions. Such is the nature of a good teacher.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* is the original ***jagada:charya***—the Supreme Teacher of the entire universe. As the greatest *Guru*, He embodies the highest qualities of patience and compassion. Therefore, when a student like *Arjuna* asks questions that are irrelevant, inappropriate, or even born of doubt or arrogance, Sri: *Krushna* does not become angry or abandon him. Instead, the Lord, out of His infinite mercy, continues to teach the supreme knowledge through various



means until *Arjuna* fully understands. Sri: *Krushna* would be happy even if a single student learns from Him and shares with the world. This quality of divine patience is evident right at the beginning of the third chapter of the ***Bhagavad Gi:tha***.

The name of the third chapter is ***karma yo:ga***. ***karma*** refers to the actions we perform through our senses, and ***yo:ga***, the means or path to attain a higher goal. Thus, ***karma yo:ga*** teaches how to perform our actions in a way that uplifts us spiritually and leads us toward eternal bliss.

Each chapter of the ***Bhagavad Gi:tha*** is named after its central theme. In this chapter, Lord Sri: *Krushna* explains how to act, how much to act, when to act, how to remain steadfast in our actions, and the necessity to act. Hence, this chapter is aptly called ***karma yo:ga***.

True and everlasting bliss arises only from realizing God. To realize God, we must first understand who we truly are. This begins with the awareness that we are not the body, instead we are the ***A:thma***. Self-realization is the foundation for God-



realization. Yet self-realization is possible only when one transcends attachment and aversion toward worldly things. These emotions subside when the qualities of ***satthva*** and ***Rajas*** are harmonized and brought under control. Such regulation can be achieved only through disciplined action. Therefore, everyone must first learn the right way to perform their actions.

When actions are performed properly, mental weaknesses diminish, and control over the senses gradually increases. As the senses come under control, the mind becomes steadfast , and ***jna:na*** (knowledge of self) begins to flourish. With growing knowledge, we attain self-realization, clarity of purpose, and the motivation to act rightly in pursuit of that divine goal.

When the senses are controlled, they start to follow our intent instead of dragging us according to their impulses. If we allow ourselves to be led by the senses, we will never reach our destination, for each sense pulls us in a different direction—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and touch all leading toward their own desires.



Hence, to bring our senses under control, we must reform them. For that, we should learn to perform our daily activities in such a way that the senses gradually become disciplined.

In the 18th chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains how one should act according to the guidance of the *Ve:das*. He reminds us that we are unaware of the *ka:rmic* impressions we have accumulated from countless past births. Many of these *ka:rmic* records may not be favorable to us; therefore, they need to be cleared. To remove these undesirable impressions and replace them with noble ones, Sri: *Krushna* instructs us to perform actions that are prescribed by the *Ve:das*. The *Ve:das* proclaim — *dharme:na pa:pam apanudathi*— “By following righteous conduct, one naturally removes sin.”

This raises a question: how can we know what constitutes righteous conduct, and who determines what are good practices?

In that same chapter, Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that every person strives for *siddhi*—success, perfection, or



fulfillment—in whatever they do. *Arjuna* then asks whether humans can truly attain **siddhi** in one's lifetime, and if so, how it can be achieved. Sri: *Krushna* assures him, **siddhim vindathi ma:navaha**, meaning that a human being can indeed attain perfection. How is this achieved? He continues, **thamabhyarchya siddhim vindathi ma:navaha**, teaching that perfection comes by recognizing the One who governs all, transforming every action into His worship, and performing one's ordained duties as an offering of service to Him. By doing so, one surely attains perfection.

But what does worship, or **abhyarchana**, mean? Does it require carrying flowers, incense, lamps, camphor, coconuts, and fruits everywhere we go to perform worship? No. Sri: *Krushna* clarifies, **svakarmana: thamabhyarchya**, meaning that one attains perfection by performing one's own prescribed duty as worship unto Him. Whatever your role or profession may be, carry it out as an offering to the Lord. If you are a doctor, treat your patients as an act of service to Him. If you are a police officer, perform your responsibilities with sincerity as His worship. Whether you are a farmer,



homemaker, or teacher, whatever your occupation may be, dedicate your work to Him.

This naturally leads to another question: Who is this Him, the One we should worship?

There are many ideologies and scriptures that describe God. Although numerous paths and teachings attempt to define the Divine, Sri Sri: *Krushna* provides an authority for comprehending the One. He answers beautifully: ***yathah pravrutih bhu:tha:na:m ye:na sarvamidam thatham - tham abhyarchya - bhu:tha:na:m***. All living beings in the universe, sentient and non-sentient alike, originate from a source. The One who is the cause of their existence and embodiment, who permeates the entire visible universe and upholds it, is the One to be worshipped. The *Ve:das* refer to this all-pervading, all-sustaining Being—the One who supports, protects, and governs everything from *within* as well as from outside—as ***Na:ra:yana***. In the 18th chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* invokes ***Na:ra:yana***, emphasizing that we must acknowledge and



perform all our duties for the sake of the Supreme Being who permeates both the visible and invisible realms of existence. One should sincerely feel that all activities are performed as a service to Him.

It is only fitting that we serve the One who constantly supports, protects, and nurtures us. It is our responsibility to acknowledge and serve the One who provides and sustains our existence. We need to serve as a token of gratitude toward the One who overlooks our mistakes, cares for us in all situations, and guards us from dangers.

More importantly, there is no need to invent new or exclusive actions to serve Him. We can continue our regular activities, performing them in the spirit of worship. When we eat, instead of merely satisfying hunger, we can offer it as ***naive:dya*** to the Lord. When we cook, the act of cooking itself can become an offering of service. By performing our prescribed duties as offerings to Him, Sri Sri: *Krushna* assures us that we attain perfection—***siddhim vindathi ma:navaha***. Such action, performed in the spirit of divine service, is what He calls ***dharma***.



Thus, spiritual progress unfolds in five stages:

Stage one: cultivating good practices by establishing virtuous habits and discipline.

Stage two: eliminating weaknesses by overcoming defects and impurities.

Stage three: subsiding *ka:rmic* records by neutralizing the effects of past actions.

Stage four: cultivating *jna:nam* by developing divine knowledge and understanding.

Stage five: growing love by nurturing devotion and affection for the Lord.

Through this progression, one attains true knowledge of God and, upon realizing Him, experiences divine bliss. Thus, Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes that knowledge and practice are inseparable complements, working together as two sides of the same coin in the pursuit of realization. *Arjuna*, however, misunderstood knowledge and practice as two separate paths, and therefore began the third chapter seeking clarity.



Arjuna's misconception

Right at the beginning of the third chapter, *Arjuna* asks a question. We would be taken by surprise at how naive *Arjuna's* question seems — a question that could easily have provoked Lord Sri: *Krushna's* displeasure.

Arjuna uva:cha |

*jya:yasi: che:th karman as the: matha:
buddhirjana:rdhana* |



*thath kim karma ni gho:re: ma:m niyo:jayasi
ke:sava || 3.1 ||*

*vya:misre:na iva va:kye:na buddhim
mohayasi:va me: |*

*thad e:kam vada nischithya ye:na sre:yo:ham
a:pnuya:m || 3.2 ||*

Arjuna says, “O Sri: *Krushna*! In the second chapter, You advised me to perform my duties, but You also praised *jna:na* (spiritual knowledge) as superior. Your statements about action and knowledge seem ambiguous and are leaving me confused. It feels like You are making a big issue out of something small — though I’m unsure whether the fault lies with me or with You.”

Although *Arjuna* could not suppress his irritation when posing this question, he restrained himself from directly accusing Sri Sri: *Krushna*. He was fully aware that Sri: *Krushna* had once beheaded *Sisupa:la* and others; hence, *Arjuna* dared not cross the line into outright disrespect.



At heart, *Arjuna*'s desire was to withdraw from the battle and return home. This tendency to give up one's duties is known as ***nivrutthi*** — the path of withdrawal and detachment. Sri *Krushna*, however, insists that *Arjuna* must fight. This represents ***pravrutthi*** — the path of action, where one must engage the senses fully in performing one's responsibilities. To successfully wage the war, *Arjuna* must engage his senses - legs, eyes, ears, and mind in perfect coordination.

Sri *Krushna* had also taught earlier that through awareness and right understanding, one attains self-realization. Yet, when we involve our senses in constant activity, our awareness tends to scatter in different directions, making concentration difficult. Hence, the path of ***pravrutthi*** can seem to hinder inner focus, while ***nivrutthi*** — renouncing worldly actions — appears to foster it. This withdrawal from action, leading to contemplation on the ***a:thma*** (Self), is what *Arjuna* misconstrued as true ***jna:nam***.

With this mindset, *Arjuna* questioned Sri *Krushna* — not out of arrogance, but out of confusion — much like a patient who



questions a doctor, wondering whether another medicine might be better, despite the doctor's deeper understanding of what truly heals.

Moreover, such a bewildered person even claims that his opinion is rooted in the *Ve:da*, whether or not that is truly the case. Similarly, *Arjuna*, right from the beginning, decided not to fight and dropped his bow and arrows, collapsing onto the chariot floor. Despite Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s clear instruction to fight, *Arjuna* felt it was better to renounce the battle altogether and focus solely on *jna:na*, or spiritual knowledge. Hence his question, *‘jya:yasi: che:th karman as the: matha: buddhirjana:rdhana, buddhihi - jya:yasi: - karmanaha - the: - matha: - che:th’*—“If knowledge is superior to action, O *Jana:rdana*, then why do You urge me toward this dreadful action?”

In the second chapter, *Arjuna* learned from Sri: *Krushna* that *buddhi* refers to the knowledge of the *a:thma*, and that one should maintain unwavering focus on the Self. When such knowledge becomes firm and steady, it is called *sthitha-*



prajna. *Arjuna* remembered only this portion of the teaching, conveniently setting aside the broader context. Therefore he questions Sri: *Krushna*: “Since You said that *jna:na* is superior, why are You now asking me to engage in action?”

Arjuna is cleverly using a single reference from the second chapter to justify his reluctance to fight. While speaking about *karma* and *jna:na* earlier, Sri Sri: *Krushna* had said: “***du:re:na hyavaram karma buddhiyo:ga:th dhananjaya***”—*karma* performed without proper understanding is indeed inferior to action grounded in knowledge. If one performs actions without the right orientation, it becomes difficult to attain self-realization.

For example, when learning to drive a car, one must at least know the basics—how to open the hood, where to put gas, how to change oil, etc—before getting behind the wheel. On the other hand, if the person knows only how to start, steer, and accelerate a car, then as long as the vehicle continues to run smoothly, there may be no problem. But the moment the car stops or something goes wrong, that person will have no



idea how to handle the situation. In contrast, if someone buys a car after learning how to diagnose issues and make basic repairs, then no matter what happens on the road, they will still be able to reach their destination.

Similarly, there is a profound difference between someone who performs their duties with *a:thma jna:na* and someone who acts without it. A person who engages in action with the awareness of the Self will inevitably move toward self-realization, because they can recognize distractions as they arise and correct themselves. But one who acts without *a:thma jna:na* is easily swayed by worldly attractions and will struggle endlessly, never arriving at the destination of self-realization.

For example, when we go shopping with a clear purpose, we avoid distractions and return home with exactly what we intended to buy. But a person who shops without any goal is drawn in every direction—medical stores, clothing shops, electronics showrooms—and after wandering around for hours, may end up returning home with nothing, having wasted both time and energy.



This is precisely what Sri Krushana wanted *Arjuna* to grasp when He said, “***du:re:na hyavaram karma.***” When one has a clear goal, distractions lose their power. But when action is performed without purpose, without inner clarity, it becomes extremely difficult to progress toward self-realization.

The reason Sri: *Krushna* said ‘buddiyo:ga:th’ is that ***when one begins one’s actions with the right understanding of the Self, those actions themselves become a means to reach the ultimate destination.*** However, *Arjuna* misinterpreted this teaching. He assumed that knowledge of the Self is superior in isolation, that knowledge alone is important, and that action is therefore inferior and should be abandoned. As a result, he concluded that renunciation of action and remaining only in *jna:na* was the correct path.

Although Sri: *Krushna*’s guidance was clear, *Arjuna* grasped only one fragment of it—the idea that *karma* is inferior to *jna:na*—and ignored everything Sri: *Krushna* had explained before and after the words ‘*buddiyo:ga:th.*’ *Arjuna* overlooked



the context and then questioned why Sri: *Krushna* was instructing him to perform something he believed to be inferior. To *Arjuna*, it appeared unfair and contradictory.

Arjuna assumed that engaging the senses in activity is *karma*, withdrawing the senses is *jna:na*, that *a:thma* is realized only through *jna:na*, and that *karma* obstructs self-realization. On top of this confusion, he even accused Sri: *Krushna* of playing with terminology—what is *karma*, what is *jna:na*, which should be followed, and which should be given up. Ultimately, however, *Arjuna* recognized his misunderstanding and sought Sri: *Krushna*'s clarification with sincerity.

Despite being sincere, *Arjuna* still accuses Sri: *Krushna*, saying, “Sri: *Krushna*, You have no personal purpose to fulfill, nor do You need my help to accomplish anything. You do not depend on me to eliminate the wrongdoers. Then why are You confusing me?” In response, Sri: *Krushna*, with infinite grace and compassion, began explaining the teachings drawn from the *Ve:da*. Sri: *Krushna* was pleased that at least one person—*Arjuna*—was ready to listen, and through him, He could transmit *ve:dic* knowledge to the world.



In his question, *Arjuna* addressed Sri: *Krushna* with two specific names: “***matha: buddhirjana:rdana, ma:am niyo:jayasi ke:sava.***” *Arjuna* deliberately chose ‘Jana:rdana’ and ‘Ke:sava,’ each carrying a particular meaning.

Jana:rdana refers to the One who corrects those who err and puts them back on the right path. By using this name, *Arjuna* was acknowledging Sri: *Krushna* as his *Guru* and humbly requesting Him to guide him, as he recognized that he had strayed. “***skha:lithye: sa:sitha:ram***”—one of the essential duties of a *Guru* is to discipline and correct the disciple when they deviate. A true *Guru* does not hesitate to guide a wayward student, even if the correction may be difficult for the disciple to accept. We see a similar quality in parents who lovingly correct their children without worrying whether the child will appreciate or resent it at that moment.

By addressing Sri: *Krushna* as ***Jana:rdana***, *Arjuna* acknowledges Him as the supreme *Guru* and the most exalted *A:cha:rya*. Likewise, the name ***Ke:sava*** signifies that Sri: *Krushna* is the ultimate cause of the universe, including



brahma and Rudra, and therefore He would never cause harm to anyone.

Arjuna invokes the name ‘Ke:sava’ with the understanding: **Ke—Sa—Va—Ka** refers to Brahma, **I:sa** refers to Rudra, and both originate from the divine body of Sri: *Krushna*. This truth is declared by Rudra himself in the Sri:mad *Bha:gavatham* and the *Srimanmaha:bha:ratham*:

thrayah ke:sava ithya:di sruthau
dharmaikamu:lake: |
ko:brahme:thi sama:khyathah i:so:ham
sarvade:hina:m ||

ava:nthara:msa sambhu:thau thasma:th ke:sava
na:mava:n |
ithi harivamse: vya:sa munina: pariki:rthana:th
||

Rudra speaks these words in the *Kaila:sa-ya:thra-varnana* chapter, when Sri: *Krushna* visits *Kaila:sa*. He says: “*Ka is the name of Chathurmukha Bramha, who is*



responsible for creation, and I:sa is my name, responsible for dissolution. Both of us have emerged from Your divine form. Since Ka and I:sa belong to You, Your name is Ke:sava.” Sage Ve:davya:sa recounts this declaration by Rudra to reveal Sri: Krushna’s supremacy.

Thus, *Arjuna* is saying:
“*O Ka:sava, since You are the source of all and will never cause harm to anyone—least of all to Your devotee—please guide me without ambiguity and lead me on the right path.*”

In response to *Arjuna’s* question, the instruction provided by Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* becomes the third chapter of *Bhagavad Gi:tha* called *karma yo:ga*.

Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna’s* response

Sri Bhagava:n uva:cha |



***lo:ke:smin dvividha: nishtta: pura: pro:ktha:
maya:nagha: |***

***jna:nayo:ge:na sa:nkhya:na:m karmayo:ge:na
yo:gina:m ||***

Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s profound love for *Arjuna* becomes evident when He addresses him as ***anagha***, 'the blemishless one.' Though He is the Supreme Lord, His words carry neither carelessness nor condescension. This quality is known as ***sousi:lya***, one of *Bhagava:n*'s countless auspicious qualities.

sousi:lya is the trait of a truly great person who mingles freely and affectionately with those far inferior in position, knowledge, or capability—just as milk and water blend seamlessly. Such a person never feels even the slightest sense of superiority in their heart. Sri Sri: *Krushna* embodies this quality perfectly, engaging with *Arjuna* as an equal. Along with ***sousi:lya***, He also possesses ***saualabhya***, making Him joyfully accept the role of *Arjuna*'s charioteer. ***Sahanam***—Sri: *Krushna*'s capacity to tolerate and understand—allows



Him to endure even *Arjuna's* occasional sarcasm with complete compassion.

Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* undertakes the sacred task of imparting timeless teachings to the world through *Arjuna*. He reassures *Arjuna* that he is indeed blemishless and that the Lord will always support him. Because *Arjuna* has cultivated disciplines that diminish *rajas* and *thamas*, thereby allowing *satthva* to shine forth, he stands free from attachment and aversion, capable of receiving the Lord's guidance without bias. Sri: *Krushna* clarifies to *Arjuna* that His intention is never to confuse or trouble him.

Earlier, Sri: *Krushna* had explained that people engage in two kinds of spiritual practices depending on the goals they consider suitable for themselves. Human action is influenced by one's place, circumstances, and the time of the day. Therefore, a practice suitable for one person at a particular time, place, or situation may not be suitable or even possible for another.



For example, when we are at home, we are expected to bathe, maintain cleanliness, and give offerings to the Lord. But while traveling, such practices may not always be feasible. In such situations, one should simply do what is appropriate without anxiety, guilt, or regret.

Hence, Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, “Earlier I spoke about *karma* and *jna:na*. *karma* refers to actions, and when those actions are performed in the proper spirit and with the correct understanding, they become *karma-yo:ga*. To practice *karma-yo:ga*, you must engage all your senses, mind, and intelligence in the performance of your duties. At times your actions may bring success, and at other times failure. In either situation, you must remain steady and unwavering.”

Sri: *Krushna* had also explained earlier that only those who attain equanimity can reach perfection in the art of performing *karma*. Therefore, one must cultivate equanimity, and to support that equanimity one must deepen their knowledge.

Sri: *Krushna* further clarifies: “Thus, what I am saying is this: first comes *karma*—performing one’s prescribed duties with



equipoise while gaining clear understanding of those duties. That is *karma-yo:ga*, and everyone must follow this path. Next comes *karma-yoge:na yogi:na*—only those who have practiced *karma-yo:ga* for a long time, with maturity and sincerity, become perfected in it. ***One does not become a karma-yo:gi merely by theoretical understanding.***”

For example, a person learning to ride a bicycle cannot ride simply by reading instructions on how to hold the handle or how to pedal. Without practice, they will fall, because they have not yet learned balance. Only through days or even months of practice does balancing become effortless.

In the same way, one must practice continuously even to attain spiritual bliss. First, one must learn about the *a:thma*, the *Parama:thma*, and the need to realize both. But realization does not happen instantly. The *Ve:da* teaches that one must perform their ordained duties as service to the Lord over a long period. When the Lord is pleased, *saththva* increases and naturally suppresses *rajas* and *thamas*.



Once *rajas* and *thamas* are restrained, anger and aggression naturally dissipate, allowing one to live in peace. Therefore, to attain true peace, one must perform their ordained duties as an offering and service to the Lord.

How long does it take to attain realization? One must practice diligently over a long period without becoming discouraged. If one is fortunate and receives the Lord's grace, realization will come in time. Just as a person striving for a gold medal must endure long, rigorous effort to achieve their goal, so too a practitioner of *karma yo:ga* must persevere. Through long, dedicated practice, one attains the state of ***sthithaprajna***—the stable, unwavering awareness of *a:thma*—and then naturally progresses toward *jna:na yo:ga*. As Krishna describes:

***"prajaha:thi yada:ka:ma:n... athmanyeva
a:thmana: thusthaha sthitaprajnaha "***

This depicts the final stage of self-realization when the practitioner is content in the Self.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* clarifies:



“*jna:na yo:gis* and *karma yo:gis* pursue two distinct paths, depending on their goals and qualifications. I explained these differences without causing any confusion.”

jna:na yo:gis—described as ***jna:na yo:ge:na sa:nkhya:na:m***—are those who have attained self-realization. ***sa:nkhya*** refers to the steadfast knowledge of the Self, the *a:thma*. Those who possess this understanding are called *sa:nkhyas*, and their practice of *jna:na yo:ga* aligns with their realization.

karma yo:gis—referred to as ***karma yo:ge:na yo:gina:m***—are those who perform their ordained duties as service to the Lord. Their path is one of action, gradually purifying the mind and preparing them for eventual realization.

These are the two types of spiritual practice, tailored to the aspirant’s qualifications and goals. There is no confusion here, and since Sri: *Krushna* is perfectly unbiased and desires only the welfare of all, His guidance is flawless.



In response to *Arjuna's* query, Sri: *Krushna* proceeds to explain *karma yo:ga* in detail in this third chapter and *jna:na yo:ga* in fourth chapter.

Sri Krishna says, ***“Simply renouncing activities does not make one accomplished, nor does it lead to success. One must actually perform the necessary practices correctly and consistently. For instance, we say someone has truly learned to ride a bicycle only after they practice long enough to ride effortlessly.”***

Right at the beginning, Sri: *Krushna* makes it clear that merely giving up responsibilities will never lead to realization. True wisdom lies in performing one's duties properly, and He proceeds to explain how:

***na karmana:m ana:rambha:th naishkarmyam
purusho:snuthe: |***

***na cha sannyasana:de:va siddhim samadhi
gachhathi || 3.4 ||***



In any walk of life, people generally desire two things: ***Naishkarmyam***, the state of having fulfilled all responsibilities, and ***Siddhi***, the attainment of the desired results.

When are these accomplished? Only when one makes a sincere and deliberate effort toward them. They cannot be achieved by merely abstaining from or giving up the necessary actions.

If a student wants high marks in an exam, they must get the right textbooks, study diligently, and only after gaining confidence can they close the book and take the test. Another unprepared student may observe the first student closing the book and assume that the simple act of closing the book guarantees success. The result is predictable - the one who studied passes, and the one who merely imitates fails.

It is like an illiterate person watching a scholar wear glasses. Believing that the glasses are the reason the scholar can read, the illiterate person buys a similar pair, hoping to read—yet



never learning the alphabet. They imagine that simply wearing glasses will give them knowledge.

On the same lines, some people on the spiritual path believe that they have fulfilled their responsibilities simply by giving up their duties — by wearing saffron robes or by adorning themselves with external insignia such as a tilak or a *thulasi* garland. Thinking these signs alone make them spiritual, they go to forests, the Himalayas, the banks of the Ganga, or to places like Badrinath. Sri: *Krushna* says this is not the right approach. The true spiritual path begins with fulfilling one's duties, neither by quitting nor by abstaining from them. Only after one has completed their responsibilities can they go to Badri or the Himalayas without causing trouble to themselves or to others.

Showing Interest is not same as realization



Sri: *Krushna* states: ***na karmana:mana:rambha:th naishkarmyam purusho:snuthe: - naishkarmyam*** means the state reached by one who ***starts*** the work, ***performs*** the work properly, and ***completes*** it. Such a person is called a ***nishkra:ntha***—one who has fulfilled their obligations and emerged purified through action.

In contrast, someone who refuses to begin their duties can never reach their goal. For example, a person standing on the riverbank will never reach the opposite shore merely by *desiring* to cross. To reach the other side, they must enter the water and swim—or find a boat or a boatman who can take them across. But simply sitting on the bank, declaring a desire to cross while doing nothing, will never get them there.

Likewise, many people imagine they are on the spiritual path while avoiding their duties, yet they still expect spiritual realization. Without action—without fulfilling responsibilities—they will never attain siddhi.

Sri: *Krushna* further explains that the human body is meant for action, not for idleness. It is like owning a car that is meant to



be driven to reach a destination. It would be unwise to keep the car unused out of fear that the tires may wear out or some parts may get damaged. If one refuses to drive the car, they will never reach their destination. Similarly, this body—just like any tool—is given to us so that we may perform the necessary activities that lead us toward our spiritual goal.

Sri: *Krushna* intentionally uses the word ***purusha***, without limiting it to a man, woman, brahmachari, householder, *va:naprastha*, or monk. Nor does it refer to *Parama:thma* in this context. Pura means ‘city,’ and the body is described as a ***navadva:ra-pura***, a city with nine gates. The *ji:va* resides *within* this city. Depending on one’s *ka:rmic* record, the body may be male or female, but regardless of gender, the body together with the *ji:va* is called *purusha*—*the indweller living in the city of the body*.

Sri: *Krushna* is addressing *Arjuna* as *purusha* and teaching that a *purusha* cannot attain siddhi unless they become ***naishkarmya***—one who has fulfilled their duties and responsibilities completely.



So then, what must one actually do?

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains, “*First, one must begin by fulfilling one’s ordained duties. You are a ruler, and therefore your responsibility is to punish wrongdoers. Fighting this battle is your present duty, and it is necessary to punish the Kauravas for the crimes they have committed. Therefore, practice your karma—fight. The same principle applies to everyone.*”

Some people think of becoming monks and believe that *sanya:sa* simply means giving up responsibilities. “*na cha sanyasana:de:na*”—merely renouncing external duties does not lead to **siddhi**, spiritual attainment or *yo:gi*c perfection. One does not attain **siddhi** by *thinking* they have renounced everything—**siddhim samadhigacchathi** requires far more.

Not only for attaining **siddhi** but also to achieve success in anything, God must be pleased with our actions. Only when He is satisfied do we receive success. And He is pleased when we perform our duties as worship, offering our actions to Him. Therefore, if one does not perform their duties as service to



God—or worse, abandons their responsibilities—then they will never achieve success. Thus, Sri: *Krushna* instructs: Begin performing your duties, and perform them as worship to the Lord.

Sri: *Krushna* further clarifies that it is impossible in practice for someone to remain idle, refusing to fulfill their obligations. Even sleeping is an action; sitting in meditation is an action. Anyone who possesses a body cannot remain without any activity—whether in mountains, forests, riversides, homes, or anywhere else.

***na hi kaschith kshanam api ja:thu thishthathy
akarmakruth |
ka:ryathe:hyavasah karma sarvah prakruthijair
gunaihi || 3.5 ||***

Sri: *Krushna* says that at every moment—whether days, months, or years, or even hours, minutes, or seconds—no embodied being can remain without performing some activity. All born on Earth are compelled to engage in activity.



We see a striking example in the Sri:mad *Bha:gavatham*. The sage *Sami:ka* retired to the forest, choosing to remain in deep meditation, thinking he was engaging in no activity. Yet that very ‘inactivity’ became the cause for the events that led to the entire *Bha:gavatham*’s emergence. King *Pari:kshith*, exhausted and searching for water, approached *Sami:ka a:shram*. But *Sami:ka*, absorbed in meditation and believing himself inactive, failed to respond... and the chain of events unfolded from there.

King *Parikshith* noticed that Sage Samika did not respond to his presence and, overcome by anger and spite, placed a dead snake around the sage’s neck before leaving. Immersed in deep meditation, the sage was unaware of this. However, upon returning and seeing the insult, Samika’s son became enraged and cursed the king to die from a snakebite *within* seven days. When Samika learned what had happened, he rebuked his son for reacting excessively to the king’s small mistake. He reminded him that a guest—especially a king—should have been received with care, and that anger had clouded his judgment. Since the curse could not be withdrawn, Samika



instructed his son to immediately inform the king so that he could prepare himself for what was to come.

Meanwhile, even before the boy reached the palace, King *Parikshith* was already repenting for insulting the sage. Upon hearing the curse, the king renounced his kingdom and sought out Sage Suka, who imparted to him the profound teachings of the 18,000-verse *Sri:mad Bha:gavatham*. Through *Parikshith's* earnest pursuit of truth, the world received this most revered scripture.

Necessity for action

The phrase *na kaschith, na hi kaschith* highlights *Parikshith's* own history and underscores a teaching of Sri Sri: *Krushna: No one can remain idle; every being must act at every moment*. In the fifth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri: *Krushna* explains what the term 'action' truly means:

*pasyan srunvan sprusan jighran asnan gacchan
svapan svasan || 5.8 ||*



pralapan visrujan grunhan unmishan
nimishannapi || 5.9 ||

Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that as long as the **ji:va** resides in a body, every movement is an action—seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, opening or closing the eyes, stretching or folding the hands. All of these arise from the qualities of *rajas* and *thamas*, and the body continues to act according to the vast store of *karmas* accumulated over time. The sole purpose of our senses is that they experience and exhaust accumulated *karmas*, both good and bad, through their respective activities.



Moreover, the senses function according to their long-established tendencies created over past births. They readily cooperate when engaged in familiar activities, but they resist when forced into actions they are not inclined toward. So how do we train them to listen to us? The key is not suppression, but gentle redirection. Keep the senses engaged in the activities they are accustomed to, and while they are active, gradually guide them toward more beneficial actions.

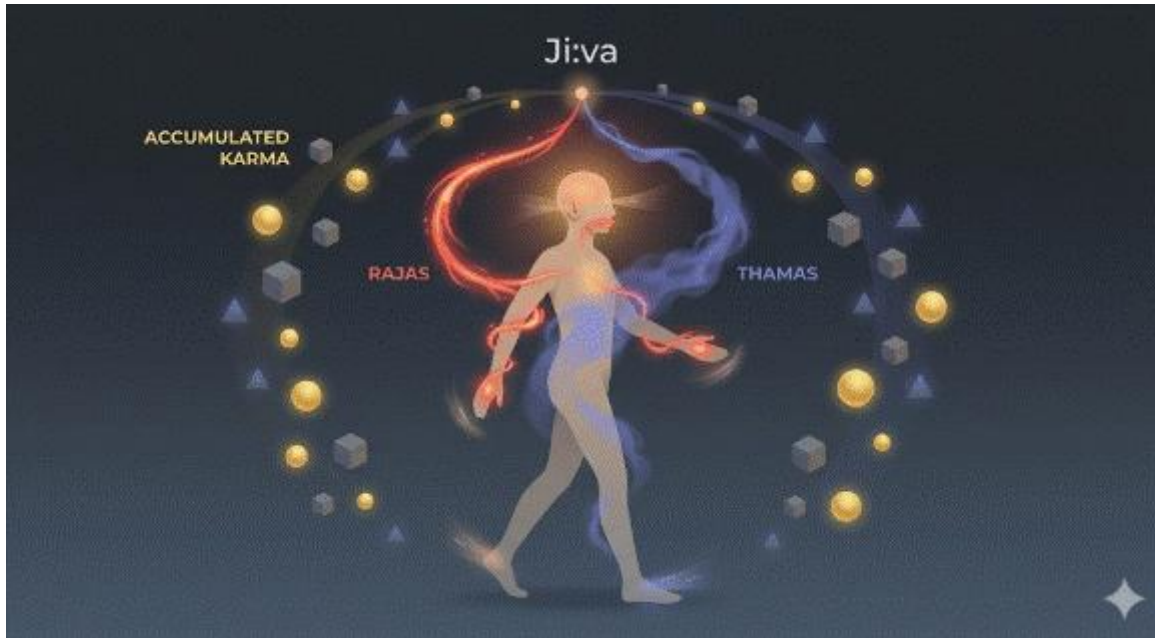
For example, the tongue is accustomed to tasting. If we suddenly decide to starve it, it rebels. Even if we sit in a temple, the moment we stop feeding the tongue, it will pull the



mind toward thoughts of food. While chanting hymns, the mind may drift toward *do:sas*, jalebis, puris, laddus, and everything the tongue enjoys. Thus, completely restraining the tongue becomes counterproductive.

Instead, offer wholesome, nutritious food in a controlled manner. This both satisfies the tongue and supports one's discipline. Once the tongue is content, the mind becomes steady and available for the tasks we want to pursue—studying, worship, reflection, or any other focused activity.

Similarly, the eyes must be guided with the same principle. Show them what they are accustomed to, but gradually introduce them to uplifting and purifying sights—such as sacred places, scriptures, or images of divinity. When the senses are gently satisfied and reformed, they begin to cooperate, allowing us to engage in higher pursuits without inner resistance.



Let us take breathing, for example. It is essential to life, and one should never forcefully hold the breath in the name of attaining a higher spiritual state. Progress must be gradual and disciplined. In *pra:na:ya:ma*, a common practice begins with a simple cycle of inhaling for five seconds, retaining the breath for ten seconds, and exhaling for five seconds. As one becomes comfortable, the counts can be increased, allowing one to reach deeper stages of *pra:na:ya:ma*. With steady practice over time, some may comfortably hold the breath for one or even two minutes. However, if a person tries to hold their breath for three minutes without any preparation, it can be dangerous—even life-threatening.



This principle applies to all the senses. Since the senses are meant to function, they must be engaged in constructive activities rather than forced into idleness. It is like having a flashlight: it is unwise to sit in darkness while keeping the flashlight switched off. The senses are tools given to us, and we must use them wisely to progress toward higher spiritual states. Suppressing them into inactivity only creates resistance.

Discipline, like in any skill, requires persistent training. Consider a military parade—watching soldiers march in perfect synchronization is inspiring, but it is the result of months of rigorous and consistent practice. In the same way, we must train our senses with continuous effort so that they learn to act in a disciplined manner conducive to spiritual growth.

Therefore, Sri: *Krushna* tells *Arjuna*: “Practice continuously and fulfill your responsibilities. Only then will you attain siddhi.”



Sri: *Krushna* tells *Arjuna* that one must continue to act, practicing diligently and one must feel that engaging in activities itself as fulfillment. It is not right to stop without sincere effort, nor to hope for results without labor. The Lord reminds us that inaction leads to no outcome and certainly not the results we seek.

The body is made for action and accustomed to work. It should be guided along its natural course, not forced into idleness. When held back, it resists and brings suffering. Since activity is its nature, the body should be guided to move with awareness, discipline, and devotion.

Sri: *Krushna* says, “***na hi kaschith kshanam api ja:thu thishthathy akarmakruth***”, even for a moment, no one can remain inactive. Even the Lord Himself is never idle. He is always engaged in some work. If action is inevitable for Him, how can it be otherwise for us? Therefore, we must act in ways that bring no harm to ourselves or others, choosing actions that lead to well-being for all. This is the essence of Sri: *Krushna*’s teaching.



No one can truly remain idle. “**sarvah prakruthijair gunaihi ka:ryathe:hyavasaha**”, everyone is compelled into action by the inherent nature of **prakruthi**, **the primordial nature**. **prakruthi** works through three modes, **saththva**, **rajas**, and **thamas**. Even if we wish to stop, these forces push us into action. It is like sitting on an oiled floor and expecting not to get oily; it cannot be avoided. Similarly, once we are born into this **prakruthi**, the primordial nature, we are compelled to act according to its qualities. Even the Supreme is not exempt. The Lord demonstrates this truth through His actions whenever He takes an **avatha:r**.

Consider a simple analogy. We know that God took **avatha:r** as a model human, **Ra:ma**. As a human, He acted according to human nature, performing both good and less virtuous actions.

When we praise a person saying they are 100% good then it only means that virtuousness is dominating in that person. On the other hand, when we denounce saying that they are an extremely vicious person then it only means that the person



has ignorable virtue. Therefore, 100% pure good or 100% pure bad never exist in this world; both good and bad always coexist but only in different proportions. We need to recognize what quality is dominating and respond accordingly.

Ra:ma, for instance, is universally recognized as virtuous in every possible way. In the Sri *Ra:ma:yana*, *Va:lmi:ki* declares that *Ra:ma* possesses no negative traits—only noble qualities. Yet, since *Ra:ma* was born on Earth as a human, He invariably demonstrates few flaws. When looked at closely, seeming imperfections can be observed.

Ra:ma's seemingly minor flaws became known through *Si:tha pira:tti*. As the keeper of the household's secrets, she alone could reveal what outsiders could not know. She shared these truths with *Hanuma:n* in Lanka.

Mother *Si:tha* first reveals *Ra:ma*'s virtuous qualities to *Ra:vana*, highlighting the righteousness that made Him renowned across the world. Later, she acknowledges His subtle imperfections to *Hanuma:n*. Upon hearing from *Hanuma:n* the news of *Ra:vana*'s defeat, Mother *Si:tha* is



overwhelmed with joy and offers to grant *Hanuma:n* anything he desires. *Hanuma:n* then seeks her permission to punish the demonesses as retribution for the suffering they caused her. *Si:tha*, however, questions his intentions, pointing out that the demonesses were merely performing their duties—and doing them very well. Why, she asks, should they be tortured instead of rewarded? Furthermore, *Si:tha* reminds him that if he considers them at fault, then no one in this world is truly without flaws.

Since she said that no one is without flaws, *Hanuma:n*, out of curiosity, asks if *Si:tha* herself had ever made any mistakes. She admits that she has. She recalls how she once insulted the blemishless *Lakshmana*, even though he stayed by her side solely to protect her while *Ra:ma* went after *Ma:ri:cha*. *Si:tha* had blamed *Lakshmana*, accusing him of accompanying *Ra:ma* to the forest only to cause her harm.



Hanuma:n agrees with *Si:tha*, but curiosity gets the better of him, and he asks if he himself has ever erred. *Si:tha* reflects on his actions in Lanka and responds thoughtfully - though he was sent only to search for her and report back, he had also burned the city and killed the king's son and minister. Now, she points out, he intends to punish the demonesses, who are under the king's protection. It would be wrong to harm those who are under the protection of their ruler.

Hanuma:n is now intrigued. Curious to hear her perspective on *Ra:ma*, whom he believes to be without any flaw, he asks



Si:tha if *Ra:ma* ever made any mistakes. To *Hanuma:n*'s surprise, *Si:tha* responds that many of the ensuing troubles arose from *Ra:ma*'s own actions. She explains that had *Ra:ma* acted differently, much of the subsequent turmoil might have been avoided.

She gives an example from the events in the forest. *Su:rpanakha* approached *Ra:ma* with romantic intentions, and he playfully suggested she pursue *Lakshmana* instead, since *Ra:ma* already had *Si:tha*. *Lakshmana*, attempting to teach her a lesson, insisted that he was merely a servant and that she should return to his 'master,' *Ra:ma*. Yet *Ra:ma* again redirected her to *Lakshmana*. Frustrated by this back-and-forth shuttling, *Surpanakha* eventually tried to harm *Si:tha*.

What appears to be a small, playful teasing reveals a subtle human flaw in *Ra:ma*—a flaw that, though minor, set in motion the chain of events that followed.

There was another instance that revealed *Ra:ma*'s subtle flaw. *Sumanthra* was driving Sri *Ra:machandra*'s chariot as He was setting out for the forest. King *Dasaratha* stood across the



path, blocking the way and ordering *Sumanthra* to stop. *Ra:ma* grew restless, eager to move forward, while people gathered in groups, crying and wailing loudly. *Sumanthra* wished to depart before the crowd grew larger, yet *Dasaratha* kept commanding him to halt. Confused and under immense pressure, *Sumanthra* struggled to control the chariot.

Meanwhile, *Ra:ma* urged him to proceed quickly, while *Dasaratha* insisted he stop. Torn between the two, *Sumanthra* hesitated, fearing that any wrong move might incur the king's wrath. *Ra:ma* then suggested that he continue forward and, if *Dasaratha* later became angry, explain that amid the noise and commotion he had not heard the command to stop. In doing so, *Ra:ma* did not hesitate to encourage *Sumanthra* to speak an untruth. Asking another to lie can be viewed as a flaw in *Ra:ma's* character. Yet just as a small blemish on the moon enhances its beauty, such minor imperfections in *Ra:ma* only added to his grace rather than diminishing it.

Even those regarded as perfectly virtuous possess small flaws. This is the nature of the world, the nature of *prakruthi*, the primordial force that governs life. No one can be entirely good



or entirely bad, for *prakruthi* continually influences human behavior and propels everyone into action. Anyone who believes they can remain inactive is mistaken. One is compelled to act, sometimes even without one's control. Not even for a moment can a person remain completely without activity.

avasaha - everyone is helplessly drawn into activity. Therefore, it is essential to learn how to perform one's duties skillfully, to restrain the senses, and to regulate the mind, so that the path of righteousness can be followed.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* urges *Arjuna* to prepare for action, to engage in his *karma*, and to carry it out with wisdom. The essence of His teaching is to reveal the ordained responsibilities and guide humanity toward higher and nobler goals. Through His guidance, even an ordinary person can grow in wisdom and inner strength.

Action cannot be avoided as long as the body exists, hence, it is better to perform our duties joyfully rather than reluctantly. When action is unavoidable, it should be undertaken with a



positive spirit. Sri Sri: *Krushna Parama:thma* teaches that while performing our duties, we must also discern what is right and beneficial.

ka:ryathe:hyavasah karma - Every living being, not only humans, is compelled to perform some form of work. Humans, however, possess the intelligence to understand this necessity and to act in accordance with proper principles. Even sleep is a kind of activity, regulated by certain natural laws and *rhythms*. There is truly no state of complete inaction. *prakruthi*, primordial nature, has given us a body meant to be engaged and utilized in the proper way.

Later, in the eighteenth chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* returns to this same truth. *Arjuna* declares, “I will not fight under any circumstance. I am in control of myself. I will simply sit and watch what happens.”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* replies:

yadahanka:rama:srithya na yo:thsya ithi manyase: |



mitthyaisha vyavasa:yastthe: prakruthisthva:m niyo:kshyathi || 18.59 ||

When a decision arises from ego, such as resolving “I will not fight” or “I will renounce action,” it is ultimately meaningless. Such a resolve does not come from true wisdom instead it comes from ignorance.

prakruthis thva:m niyo:kshyathi - Your body is formed with inherent qualities, and those qualities will inevitably compel you to act according to their nature.

It is not wise to expect that one will not feel the spiciness while eating spicy food, or the sourness while drinking a sour liquid, or remain unaffected by poison while consuming food laced with poison.

Therefore, ***mitthyaisha vyavasa:yastthe: prakruthisthva:m niyo:kshyathi***. The body is formed from ***prakruthi***, which consists of three attributes ***saththva, rajas, and thamas***, with ***rajas*** and ***thamas*** playing a dominant role in shaping it. These attributes,



influenced by past *ka:rmic* records, continue to impel all our actions, and there is no way to escape their impact.

The three attributes of *prakruthi* constantly condition the mind, causing one *ka:rmic* impression or another to surface. Only when the mind is completely freed from all *ka:rmic* records does ***a:thma thatthvam***, the knowledge of the Self, begin to emerge. For this to happen, the mind must become pure and free from all blemishes. Such purification has to occur while one is engaged in action, because no one can remain idle.





Sri Sri: *Krushna Parama:thma* therefore advises that since action is unavoidable, it must be directed toward good and purposeful work.

In the world, there are two kinds of people. Some renounce action after attaining maturity, since, for them, there is no longer any necessity to engage in activity. Others renounce action without proper practice or preparedness. Some give up work because there is truly no need for it, while others do so merely to appear great, even when action is still required of them.

Consider a person who can stand under the scorching sun without being affected, either due to long practice or adequate protection. Another person, lacking both practice and protection, sees this and tries to imitate. Initially, he endures the heat, but soon it becomes unbearable and he is forced to retreat. The difference lies in preparation.

In the same way, some individuals no longer need to act through the body, while others, even when action is necessary, abandon it out of pride or for pretentious reasons.



Ostentation leads to downfall

Fasting on ***e:ka:dasi*** is a practice some follow with sincerity. When the heart is drawn to God and the mind remains absorbed in Him, thoughts of food do not arise, and abstaining becomes natural. This is one form of fasting.

There are others who undertake fasting merely to appear disciplined. Though they claim to have given it up, their minds stay occupied with thoughts of what to eat the next day, how much, and in what way. The entire day passes in such thoughts.

Others take only what is necessary and then continue their duties without desire or craving.

Who can be said to have truly renounced? Between the person who keeps thinking that he has renounced and the one who eats and then moves on without any thought or desire for it, the latter may be called the truer renunciate. Even higher is the one whose mind remains absorbed in an inner focus, centered on something beyond himself, so that the thought of food never even arises.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* is addressing such people. This third chapter describes actions and the proper methods of performing them.

karme:ndriya:ni samyamya ya a:sthe: manasa: smaran |

indriya:rttha:n vimu:dha:thma: mitthya:cha:ras sa uchyathe: || 3.6 ||



karme:ndriya:ni samyamya - Some strive to restrain every bodily activity, thinking they have achieved complete control. They sit in stillness, attempting to restrain the senses, yet the senses do not fully yield and begin to wander in different directions. Even one with great self-discipline cannot fully restrain the mind, which follows its own habits and



begins to engage in various thoughts. ***ya a:sthe: manasa: smaran***, this inner restlessness is very dangerous.

Our *a:charyas* explain that there is no fault in staying at home instead of going to the temple. The difficulty arises only when the sense of home takes firm root in the mind and binds it. In the same way, eating is not wrong, but allowing the mind to dwell on food is. When the body is given what it needs and one proceeds without attachment, all remains well. However, when the mind begins to dwell on the notion of renunciation itself, that too becomes a source of difficulty.

A familiar analogy suggests that a boat on the water is not in danger, but if the water enters the boat, it may sink. Similarly, being surrounded by external objects is not harmful, yet if they take hold in the mind, danger arises.

In the world, some appear disciplined, restraining bodily impulses outwardly, while the mind continues to wander. Sri: *Krushna* calls such a person ***vimu:dda:thma***, one who is not truly knowledgeable. Their desires point in one direction, their thoughts in another, and their intentions fail to align with



their actions. Such a person is called ***mitthya:cha:rah***, a hypocrite.

Fake meditation of a crane is a familiar example. Standing on one leg in water, it appears calm and pure, like a *yo:gi* absorbed in penance. It seems detached, yet its focus lasts only until a fish it desires comes near, which it swiftly catches. Similarly, a fox's fast ends the moment a crab appears. Outward calm may hide inner desire, but the senses respond the moment opportunity arises.

People can behave in the same way. Even when they appear meditative or detached, past habits continue to occupy the mind. When objects of desire come near, attention is drawn to them, and the mind is fully disturbed. Despite intending one course, they may end up following another. Such a person is called a ***mitthya:cha:ra***, a hypocrite, and is unlikely to achieve true perfection.



An episode, ***Baka:sura Vadha***, from Sri: *Krushna avatha:r*, illustrates this. A crane pretended to meditate with the intent of capturing Sri: *Krushna* and separating him from the cowherd children. Enchanted by its appearance, the children approached, unaware of its intent. The crane tried to swallow Sri: *Krushna*, but as if burned by fire, it spat him out. Sri: *Krushna* then destroyed the crane by breaking its beak, ending its life.

The crane's meditation aimed to separate Sri: *Krushna* from the cowherd children, but because they trusted Him, Sri: *Krushna* protected them by destroying the crane.



Similarly, people may attempt to control their senses as if performing a crane-like meditation. When the mind remains focused on worldly pleasures, it drifts away from God and becomes attached to other objects, obstructing spiritual progress. By turning the mind toward God and offering the actions of the senses to Him, inner conflict is resolved, and the senses naturally fall under proper guidance. When the senses act rightly, the mind functions harmoniously. As the mind becomes purer, attachments and aversions diminish, leading to a reduction in sins. With fewer sins, ***saththva guna*** grows, bringing knowledge that illuminates the path to experiencing bliss. This is the natural way humans are meant to act.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* how natural human tendencies can be transformed for good. The body is composed of many parts, but the actions of these parts are remembered by the inner self, the *ji:va*, not by the organs themselves. Even if a hand or leg is lost, the person retains memory of the actions performed by it. The hands, legs,



organs of excretion, and the tongue are called ***karme:ndriyas***, the organs of action.

Perception occurs through the ***jna:ne:ndriyas***, the sense organs: the eyes, ***chakshurindriya***; ears, ***sravane:ndriya***; nose, ***ghrane:ndriya***; and tongue, ***rasane:ndriya***. Even if these senses fail, one may recall their past function, such as the clarity of sight or hearing, demonstrating that awareness resides *within*, not in the organs themselves.

Therefore, people naturally remember actions performed when the ***jna:ne:ndriyas*** were active. This indicates the presence of something beyond the senses that retains these impressions, namely the ***ji:va***. Its nature, location, and mode of functioning are not directly observable, but the ***sa:sthra:s*** provide insight into them.

The ***sa:sthra:s*** describe ten primary instruments: five ***jna:ne:ndriyas*** and five ***karme:ndriya:s***, all governed by the mind. The mind observes, directs, and preserves ***samska:ra:s***, which are internal impressions formed



through repeated experience. These ***va:sana:s*** enable the ***a:thma*** to recall past actions whenever required. Even when a particular organ ceases to function, the ***a:thma*** can still recognize its past actions through these impressions. This is similar to recorded memory: even if a camera stops functioning, the data it has already captured can still be accessed.

Over time, the senses develop habitual patterns through repeated use and are not easily redirected. Just as a driver accustomed to right hand traffic needs time to adjust to left hand traffic in another country, the senses must be gradually trained to follow new guidance.

Sri Sri: ***Krushna***, in the third chapter of the ***Bhagavad Gi:tha***, instructs that the mind should initially provide the senses with what they are accustomed to and then refine them gradually in the proper manner.

Only ***karma yo:ga*** leads to success



Our senses are far subtler and more powerful than external objects, and therefore they cannot be managed in the same way objects are managed. The senses are said to reside *within* the body: the ***chakshurindriya***, the sense organ of sight, at the tip of the black pupil; the ***ghrane:ndriya***, the sense organ of smell, at the tip of the nose; the ***thvagindriya***, the sense organ of touch, spread throughout the skin; and the ***rasane:ndriya***, the sense organ of taste, at the tip of the tongue. Each of these is exceedingly subtle and beyond direct measurement.

In the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* compassionately conveys the wisdom of true practitioners, those who through long years of discipline have experienced both the ferocity of the senses and the profound satisfaction that arises from mastering them. This teaching is regarded as authoritative because it comes from realized experience rather than from abstract theory. Control of the senses is therefore not achieved through sudden restraint or forceful suppression. The senses carry deep rooted habits and attachments, and an attempt to stop them abruptly often causes the mind to



unconsciously follow their familiar patterns. Instead, the senses must be guided gradually, beginning with activities they are accustomed to, and only then directed toward disciplined practice. This measured approach allows the mind and body to align naturally, opening the way for higher self control and spiritual growth.

Arjuna, though accomplished in warfare, sought to renounce his familiar duty and adopt a life of seclusion, believing it to be a superior path. Sri: *Krushna*, however, advised that the senses should first be allowed to continue their accustomed functions and then be gently refined and redirected.

When the senses are forced into sudden restraint, they unknowingly draw the mind back into their habitual tendencies, resulting in inner conflict and suffering. History offers many reminders of this truth. *Viswa:mithra*, when he began his austerities in the forest, sought to conquer his senses, yet suffered setbacks due to their subtle influence. Similarly, *Ra:va:na:sura*, convinced that he had mastered them, allowed his senses to govern his desires even as he ruled the three worlds. As *Mando:dari*, *Ra:va:na:sura*'s wife,



observed, the very senses he believed he controlled eventually turned against him and became the cause of his downfall.

For instance, during **e:ka:dasi** fasting, if the body and senses are completely denied food, they become restless, preoccupied with thoughts of what and how much to eat later. It is better to guide them gently. Taking a measured portion of **naive:dyam** as **bhagavannive:ditham**, divine offering, without personal desire or attachment, allows the senses to be properly guided and the action to remain wholesome.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that merely restraining the body while the mind lingers on desires does not bring true mastery. Such a person is a **mithya:cha:ra**, exhibiting **da:mbhika pravruththi**, a hypocritical tendency, where outward actions contradict inner intentions, leading to spiritual harm. The proper approach is to first discipline the mind. When the mind is focused, the senses naturally follow.



We know that when trash accumulates, it begins to emit a foul odor. Air fresheners may temporarily mask the stench, but the only real solution is to remove the trash itself. In the same way, as long as our mind is filled with unwanted tendencies—such as ego, attachment, and hatred born from possessiveness and material desires—our senses will continue to pull us toward harmful paths, no matter how much we try to control or restrain them.

There is nothing wrong with allowing the senses to function; in fact, they must function. The key is to purify the mind so that the senses do not drag us in undesirable directions. *Arjuna* initially tries to control the senses by making them inactive, but Sri: *Krushna* teaches that true mastery begins with cleansing the mind, not suppressing the senses.

yasthvi:ndriya:ni ***manasa:***
niyamya:rabhathe:rjuna! |
karme:ndriyaih karmayo:gam asakthas sa
visishyathe: || 3.7 ||



Sri: *Krushna* says, “O *Arjuna*! One who first brings the mind under control, and then engages the senses in action through that controlled mind, becomes ***asakthaha***—unattached. Such a person is not deluded by notions of doership, ownership, possession, or selfish enjoyment even while performing actions.”



Consider an analogy: the relationship between an employee and an employer remains harmonious as long as the employee’s personal goals align with the objectives of the organization. Likewise, our actions should not be performed merely for self-glorification. Instead, they must be dedicated



to God, who orchestrates the functioning of the entire universe.

The real obstacle is a mind clouded by attachment and aversion—directed toward people, objects, and experiences. Thus, the first discipline is the purification of the mind. When the mind is cleansed, Sri: *Krushna* assures, “*Your actions will no longer bind you with ka:rmic consequences.*”

asakthaha karme:ndriyaihi karmayo:gam - Sri: *Krushna* teaches that even when the senses are active, as long as one is free from attachment and aversion, such a person is considered to be using *jna:na* properly.

True knowledge (*jna:na*) naturally expresses itself through action. It is only through one’s actions that the depth and quality of one’s knowledge can be understood. Therefore, one who performs action guided by right knowledge is superior to one who merely suppresses the senses under the pretense of being a *jna:na yo:gi*. **Visishyathe:** — the former is indeed superior to the latter.

This superiority is understood through a clear sequence:



-
- The goal determines what is considered superior.
 - Action is the means to attain that goal.
 - The senses enable action.
 - The mind must direct the senses correctly.
 - And the mind must be free from ego, attachment, and hatred.

Consider a simple example: if a child asks for food and the mother refuses, the child will look for food through wrong means. Similarly, if the senses are denied or suppressed while still influenced by negative qualities, they push us toward harmful actions. But when the mother gives the child nutritious and appropriate food, the child eats happily and grows healthily. In the same way, the senses must be guided—not suppressed—by a disciplined mind. Sri Sri: *Krushna's* teachings show us how to train that mind.

Sri: *Krushna* begins by ensuring that *Arjuna* abandons the mistaken idea of becoming a *jna:na yo:gi* by suppressing action. *Arjuna* wished to withdraw, but Sri: *Krushna* speaks plainly and firmly:



***niyatham kuru karma thvam karma
jya:yo:hyakarmanaha |
sari:ra ya:thra:pi cha the: na prasiddhye:d
akarmanaha || 3.8 ||***

Sri: *Krushna* says, “O *Arjuna*! perform your ***niyatham kuru karma***—the actions appropriate to your body and duty. Action is superior to inaction. Even the maintenance of your body would not be possible through inaction.”

Just as taste is inherent to fruit, fragrance is inherent to a flower, and light is inherent to a lamp, action is inherent to the body. These inherent qualities cannot be separated from their objects. Likewise, actions cannot be suppressed or removed from embodied existence.

Otherwise, life becomes a challenge

We value a lamp for its light, a flower for its fragrance, and a fruit for its taste. In the same way, we value the body and mind through the actions they perform. It is only through right action that the body and mind earn dignity and respect.



Therefore, Sri: *Krushna* urges *Arjuna* to act nobly and not to abandon his duties or the battle.

Just as it makes no sense to say, “I want the lamp but not its light,” it is equally unreasonable to say, “I want the body but will give up action.” Anyone who possesses a body must perform the duties appropriate to that body. This is called ***niyatham karma***—ordained action—and there are profound reasons for it.

niyatham kuru karma thvam — performing one’s prescribed *karma* is essential.

karma jya:yo: hi akarmanaha — action is superior to inaction.

In this verse, Sri: *Krushna* uses the word *akarma* twice, each with a distinct meaning. The first refers to *jna:na*, the state beyond binding action. The second refers to inaction, the refusal to perform one’s duties.

Regardless of one’s intentions, the journey of the body must continue. Even if a person wishes to abandon all action, they cannot escape the basic activities required for ***sari:ra***



ya:thra — the maintenance of the body. The body needs food, the tongue seeks taste, the eyes look for forms, the ears seek sound, the hands need activity, and the legs must move. If these natural functions are denied, the body and its faculties will weaken and wither.

Therefore, we must act—but we must act with understanding and in the right spirit. Sri: *Krushna* highlights these natural activities because they are inherent to the body, making it easier to guide the body through them toward righteous action.

The second reason Sri: *Krushna* gives is that *karma yo:ga* never produces harmful results. The third reason is that even if one attempts to withdraw the senses, they will not remain inactive for long. Thus, Sri: *Krushna* presents three compelling reasons to practice *karma* rather than abandon it.

Another key point is that action and knowledge always accompany each other. When a person chooses to act, they already possess clarity about *why* they are acting and *what* the goal is. The ultimate goal is lasting happiness through self-



realization. With this goal in mind, one engages in actions that are aligned with the right understanding, while the body simultaneously performs functions natural to it. In this way, both the mind and the body remain satisfied—the goal stays undisturbed, actions stay on the right path, and the *ji:va* within the body moves steadily toward its destination. Everything proceeds harmoniously.

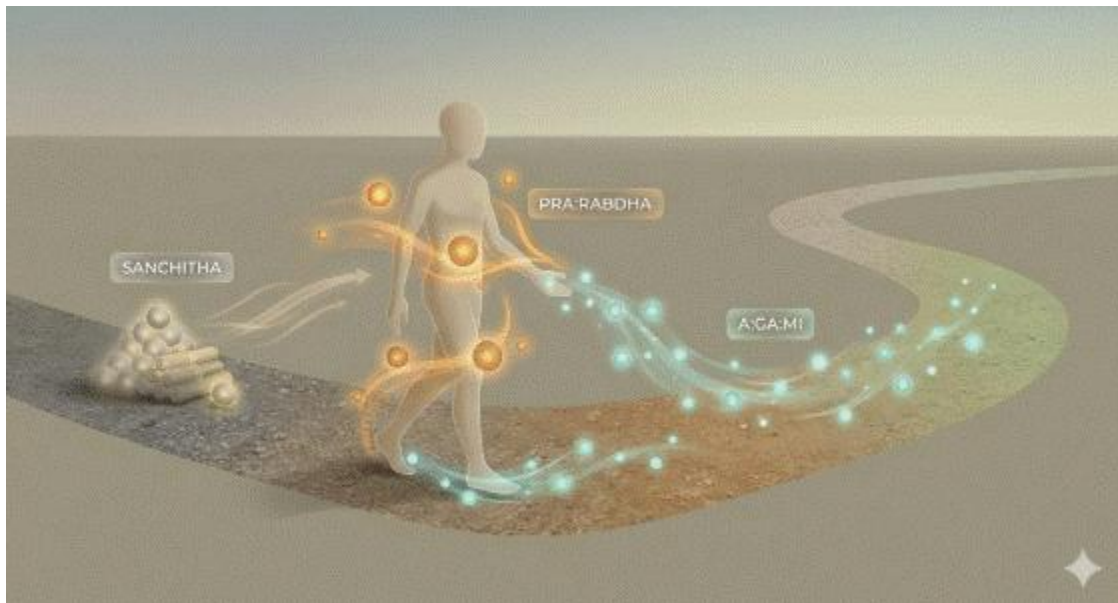
Therefore, Sri: *Krushna* affirms that practicing *karma* is beneficial, and giving up *karma* in favor of mere intellectual knowledge is unworthy and ineffective.

Moreover, the journey of the body must continue. Realizing that self-realization is the supreme goal does not mean one can take shortcuts, chant a *mantra*, or rely on some magical method to attain it instantly. Even if one wishes for immediate realization, it is impossible because the body remains bound by *pra:rabdha karma*—the current *ka:rmic* forces that have already begun to bear fruit. As long as a person lives, these *pra:rabdha karmas* must be experienced, and thus the journey of the body must be properly maintained.



Sri: *Krushna* says, “**sari:ra ya:thra:pi cha the: na prasiddaye:th**”, emphasizing that for those who abandon action, even the basic maintenance of the body becomes difficult.

karma is of three types:



- **Sanchitha** – the accumulated past *karmas* waiting to manifest.
- **pra:rabdha** – the portion of past *karma* currently being experienced through this body.
- **A:ga:mi** – new *karmas* generated by present actions, which will yield results in the future.



Of these, *pra:rabdha karma* sustains the present body. Although we cannot determine how much *pra:rabdha* remains, the body continues to exist until all of it is exhausted. Thus, the body may remain for a day, a month, a year, ten years, or even a hundred years—but it will not disappear merely because one has gained the initial understanding of self-realization.

If the body were to fall away the moment one attained knowledge, then enlightenment would mean instant death — and no one desires such an outcome. Therefore, the true purpose of knowledge is to understand how to use the body properly. The essence of this understanding is to engage in rightful action — *karma*. When one chooses to act, one chooses a superior path. Thus, in the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes the importance of *karma yo:ga*.

Self-less service is unbinding



The deep longing for permanent bliss — liberation from *ka:rmic* bondage — is called ***mumukshuthva***. It is a state where all obstacles and limitations are dissolved. Such liberation arises only through ***upa:sana***, a sustained, loving remembrance of the Divine. And even this remembrance becomes effective only through the grace of God. Therefore, one must engage in *upa:sana*. But *upa:sana* requires mastery over the mind.

Control of the mind becomes possible only when it is free from attachment and aversion. To remove these mental impurities, the senses must be engaged in proper action. The senses must be directed toward beneficial activities and wholesome objects. These activities and objects fall into three categories: ***ra:jasik***, ***tha:masik***, and ***sa:thvik***. *ra:jasik* and *tha:masik* engagements generate agitation, delusion, and additional *ka:rmic* accumulation, making the mind increasingly unruly. Hence, one should choose *sa:thvik* activities, which cultivate purity, health, clarity, and happiness. *ra:jasik* activities fuel desire, anger, and restlessness; *tha:masik* activities lead to inertia and dullness.



When the senses are steadily guided toward *sa:thvik* engagements, the mind's impurities gradually fade. A purified mind naturally turns toward constant remembrance of God. This state of remembrance is *upa:sana*, which ultimately releases one from *ka:rmic* bondage and leads to the experience of permanent bliss. The timeline for attaining this depends solely on the intensity and sincerity of one's *upa:sana*.

The *Upanishads* prescribe many methods of *upa:sana*, but they all share a common foundation: *karma-yo:ga*. To practice *karma-yo:ga*, one must perform one's ordained duties as an offering to God. Whatever results arise from such actions can be accepted and enjoyed without harm. Because these actions and their outcomes are *sa:thvik* in nature, they help purify the mind. In time, this purity brings the mind fully under control and prepares it for the highest spiritual realization.

Cha:ndo:gya Upanishad says, “*a:ha:rasuddhau satthvasuddihi, satthvasuddhau dhruva:smruthihi, smruthilambhe: sarvagranthi:na:m vipramo:kshaha*”.



a:ha:rasuddhau = When the food we consume is wholesome and *sa:thvik*,

satthvasuddihi = the ***saththva*** (here meaning the mind) becomes pure and calm.

Just as muddy water, when left undisturbed, appears clear on the surface while the sediment settles at the bottom, the accumulated ‘impurities’ of the mind may remain hidden yet difficult to remove. These mental impurities arise from the objects we engage with and from unnecessary or harmful activities. The world around us presents objects with mixed *ra:jasik*, *tha:masik*, and *sa:thvik* qualities. When we deliberately offer the senses predominantly *sa:thvik* inputs, the mind begins to purify. Even if some *ra:jasik* or *tha:masik* impressions slip in, they can be cleansed more easily.

satthvasuddhau dhruva:smruthihi = Once the mind is purified, our knowledge becomes steady, and the corresponding thought-flow gains single-pointed focus.



A mind burdened with impurities is easily disturbed by unwanted thoughts, just as a streaming video becomes disrupted by random and irrelevant frames. Therefore, one should consciously choose *sa:thvik* food, so that new impurities do not form in the mind. Over time, the existing ones will also dissolve gradually.

Once the mind becomes purified, the flow of thought gains single-pointed focus. When this happens, ***sarvagranti:na:m vipramo:kshaha*** —all inner knots are loosened. The word ***granti*** literally means *a tied hair-bun*. Our ignorance, attachments, avarice, and inner confusions are like a tightly wound knot that binds us to worldly life. This knot must be untied, and when its grip loosens, we experience unobstructed bliss, regardless of where we are—be it on earth, in heaven, or even in hell.

How is this inner knot loosened?



The *Upanishad* says: **smruthilambhe: sarvagranthi:na:m vipramo:kshaha**—when memory, awareness, and thought become steady and single-pointed for an extended period, the knots begin to unravel. This sustained, focused contemplation is called **upa:sana**. Through continuous *upa:sana*, the existing bondages are gradually released, and one attains the desired bliss and the highest spiritual state. This is exactly what Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains, echoing the teaching of the *Cha:ndo:gya Upanishad*.



sari:ra ya:thra:pi cha the: na prasidhye:th akarmanaha — therefore, one must continue performing one's ordained duties.



Just as a vessel can only be cleaned by repeatedly pouring clean water into it, the mind too can be purified only by offering it pure impressions. The senses must be given objects in a deliberate, disciplined, and *sa:thvik* manner—not randomly, not whenever or however we feel like. Therefore, one must stay active and engage in the right kind of *karma*.

There is also a second point:

The moment one starts desiring liberation, the mind itself becomes restless and loses single-pointed focus. And as we have learned, until such focus is attained, the body simply will not remain still.

na hi kaschith kshanamapi ja:thu thishthathi akarmakruth — As Sri: *Krushna* has already said, no one can remain inactive even for a moment. If we are bound to act anyway, we might as well choose actions that are noble and beneficial. The body has its natural necessities. Even a fully renounced monk must eat, for a body must be sustained—though the kind and amount of food may differ. Therefore, Sri:



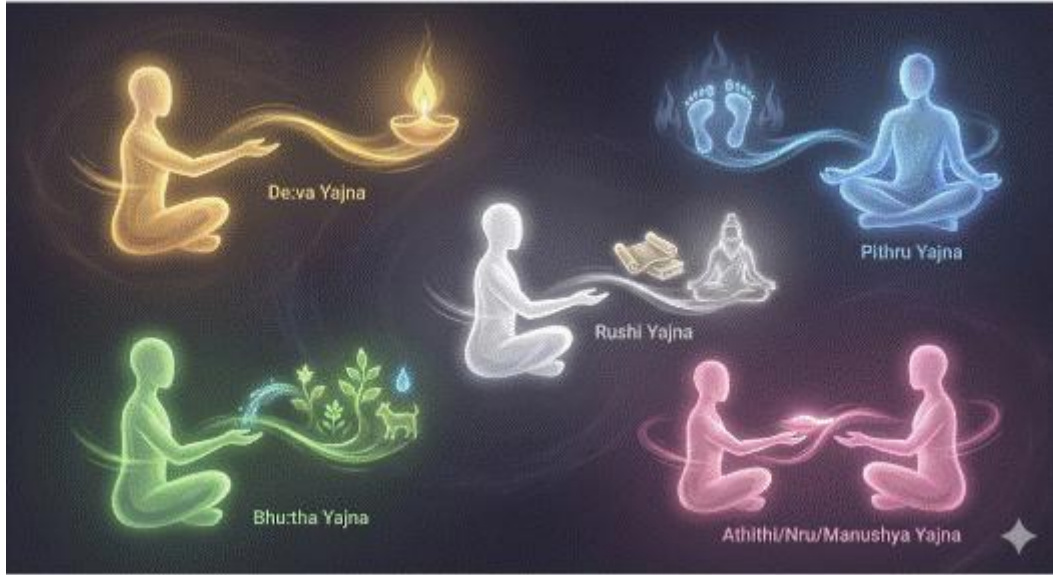
Krushna instructs us to continue performing good actions, for good actions invariably bring good results.

On the other hand, if one fails to use the body for its intended purpose, even the journey of life becomes burdensome, and the body itself begins to suffer. Not employing this body—given to us as an instrument for righteous action—is a loss both to the giver and to the one who has received it. It is like wasting a resource that someone else might have used wisely. If a bottle of milk meant for many people is simply stored in a refrigerator for years without ever being used, it becomes a meaningless possession.

In the same way, keeping a tool idle is wrong; keeping the body idle is even more so. Therefore, Sri: *Krushna* urges *Arjuna* to perform his ordained duties. But to perform our duties properly, we must know *how* to perform them. The wealth we earn must be righteous, and the way we enjoy that wealth must also be in accordance with *dharma*. This harmonious way of performing actions and accepting their results is called *yajna*. Sri: *Krushna* asks *Arjuna* to transform



his duty as a warrior—his responsibility to fight—into a *yajna*, and to engage in it with that sacred attitude.



Everyone, regardless of age or gender—men, women, children, the elderly—must perform five types of *yajnas*: ***de:va yajna*, *pithru yajna*, *bhu:tha yajna*, *rushi yajna*, and *athithi* (also called *nru* or *manushya*) *yajna*.**

The results of such actions are not seen immediately, just as a seed does not sprout the moment it is sown. Likewise, knowledge does not appear in a child overnight. First, the child must begin with the basics—learning the alphabet with



determination—and only after years of steady effort can he read advanced books, even at the PhD level.

Necessity and Outcome of *karma yo:ga*

If a person continues to put in steady effort without interruption, they gradually gain competence in whatever they undertake. Consider how a child grows: at six months, the child begins with light milk, then whole milk; later comes mashed rice in small portions, then solid rice, and eventually rice with curry once the child has developed stronger teeth. At each stage, the nourishment appears small and the progress slow, yet every early effort is essential for reaching the final stage. Similarly, though our efforts may sometimes seem fruitless because results are not immediately visible, those initial steps are just as important as the final achievement.

Therefore, when a person sets a high and noble goal, they must begin working towards it the moment they understand



it, with discipline and consistency. Such disciplined, purposeful action is called *karma yo:ga*. If the goal is self-realization or God-realization, then one must cultivate devotion. To attain devotion, one must practice uninterrupted meditation. To meditate steadily, one must first purify the mind—freeing it from attachment and aversion to worldly objects. For such purity, the senses must be directed toward ***sa:thvik*** activities and objects that uplift and refine. Only then does ***siddhi***—spiritual accomplishment—become attainable.

To attain *siddhi*, one must practice continuously, without breaks, for as long as necessary. We have received this body solely for this purpose, and therefore we must engage in *karma yo:ga* without being discouraged by temporary setbacks. Even if we do not see immediate results, we cannot afford to keep the body idle, because *a:ga:mi* and *sanchitha karma* will naturally manifest in due time.

However, if one develops unwavering faith in God, surrenders completely to Him, and receives the grace of the mature and enlightened, then through the Lord's divine power both



a:ga:mi and *sanchitha karma* can be destroyed—as declared in the *Upanishads*.

***thadyathe:shi:ka:thu:lamagnau, pro:tham
pradu:ye:the:va sarve: |
pa:pma:naha pradu:yanthe:, ya ye:thade:vam
vidva:nagniho:thram ju:ho:thi ||***

“The Cha:ndogya Upanishad teaches that all past and future karmas are burnt away—just as a tuft of cotton is instantly reduced to ashes when cast into a blazing fire. However, the karma that has already begun to bear fruit—pra:rabdha karma—does not get destroyed by any means. It must be experienced.”

To understand this, consider rice at various stages. The rice stored in our home can be given away. The paddy still growing in our fields can also be given away. Even the cooked rice we have just eaten can be vomited out immediately. But once that food has been digested after three or four hours, its effects cannot be reversed. One must undergo whatever nourishment or discomfort it brings. ***pra:rabdha karma*** is like this



digested food—it has already entered the body and must play out as long as the body lasts.

If one abandons the body before exhausting *pra:rabdha*, another body will inevitably arise to allow the remaining *karmas* to unfold. And since we cannot know what kind of body we may receive next, it is wise to use the present body to take up *sa:dhana*—the disciplined practices that lead toward liberation. There is no assurance that a future body will offer the same opportunity or inclination for spiritual progress. Therefore, one must endure the unpleasant experiences that arise in this life and continue steadfastly on the path to realization.

“*tha:n thithikshasva*”—patiently endure these difficulties. Do not deviate from your goal.

Just as a teacher may gently slap a student to correct their writing, the challenges we face are not meant to harm us but to refine us and guide us toward greater clarity and wisdom.



It is not sensible to stop eating merely because, on occasion, a small stone slips into the rice and hurts our teeth. If we decide to avoid eating altogether for fear of these stones, we would neither survive nor would the tongue tolerate such deprivation. Instead, whenever we come across a stone, we simply remove it and continue eating, fulfilling the needs of the body.

I:sa:va:sya upanishad declares, kurvanne:ve:ha karma:ni jiji:vishe:th sathagumsama:ha - sathagumsama:ha = "one should desire to live for the full span of life allotted to them"



We should never think of abandoning the body before its destined time. Attempting to end life prematurely only leads to a worse condition. Therefore, one must wish to live, and to live one must take care of the body. For that, one must work, earn, and sustain oneself for the entire duration granted. This is what is referred to as ***pra:rabdha***. Since *pra:rabdha* cannot be destroyed, one must learn to accept and experience it with steadiness.

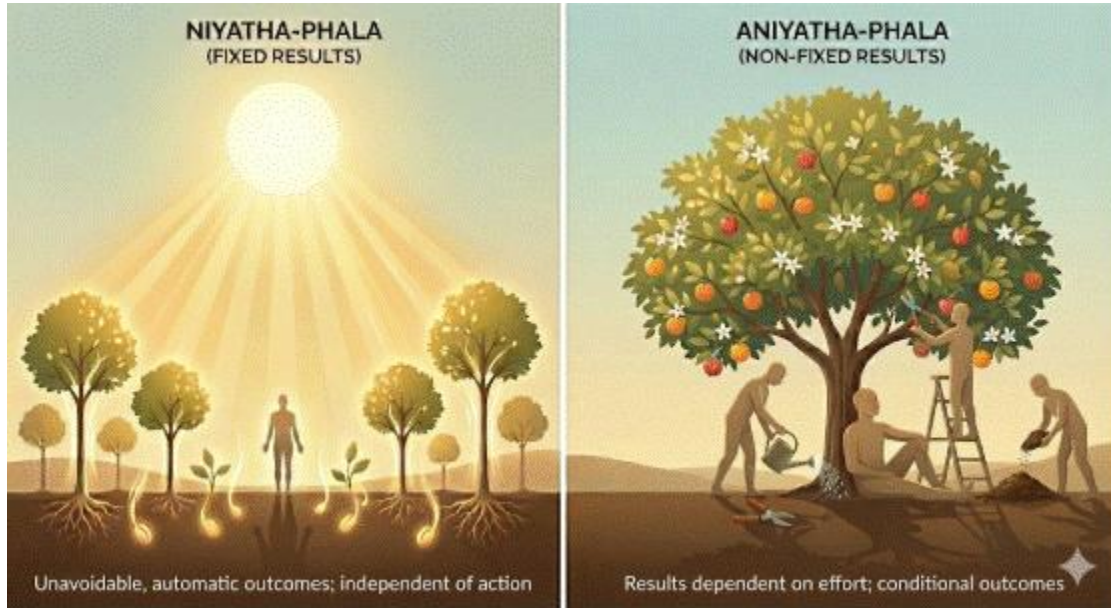
At the same time, one should acquire what is good and enjoy what is beneficial and harmless.

The *Ve:da* further assures us that we need not worry excessively about all actions dragging us into undesirable *ka:rmic* consequences. This is because the fruits of action fall into two categories:

1. ***niyatha-phala*** – fixed results that must be experienced and cannot be avoided.
2. ***Aniyatha-phala*** – non-fixed results that arise only if one chooses to seek or enjoy them.



niyatha results are inevitable, but *aniyatha* results can be relinquished if one has no desire for them.



This can be compared to the difference between speaking and singing. Speaking is a *niyatha karma*—a necessary action we must perform while interacting with others. Singing, however, is an *aniyatha karma*—an optional pursuit that we may undertake only if we have the desire for it.

niyatha karmas cannot be abandoned; their results must be experienced. These arise in two ways. In this birth or in previous births, a realized being, a deity, a *rushi*, or even God might have bestowed a boon (*vara*) out of compassion or



pronounced a curse (**sa:pa**) out of displeasure. Such boons and curses constitute *niyatha* results and are unavoidable.

For example, King *Pari:kshith* received a curse from the son of Sage *Angi:rasa*, declaring that he would die *within* seven days from the bite of the serpent *Takshaka*. Accordingly, *Pari:kshith* had to relinquish his body at the appointed time. Similarly, Sage Gauthama cursed his wife Ahalya:, and she had to undergo the consequences until the curse was lifted. Both such blessings and curses are forms of *niyatha karma-phala* that must be lived through.

In contrast, *aniyatha karmas* produce outcomes that can be altered, modified, or even entirely given up if one does not desire to experience them.

People sometimes fall sick, and they take medicine to recover. In the same way, the body carries its own natural tendencies and habits. It takes a long disciplined effort to alter those habits. *veda:ntha* scholars say that simply having a body is like carrying a quiet, lifelong illness. It remains with us as long as we live. Experiences that come from the body are *niyatha*



karmas and cannot be avoided. This is like the food we eat. Our daily meals are *niyatha*—steady and predictable, taken regularly. Festival sweets or special foods, on the other hand, are *aniyatha*. We prepare and consume them only if we choose, and may also decide to forgo them.

ka:rmic results follow the same pattern. Some are flexible and can be modified through spiritual practice, guidance, or ethical living. Others are fixed and must be experienced, no matter what.

In the third chapter, *Arjuna* expresses his concern: “Sri: *Krushna*, you ask me to act. But actions bring results, and I will have to experience them. Will these not bind me again? How long will this continue?”

Sri: *Krushna* explains that when actions are performed in the spirit of *yajna*, without selfish attachment, the results do not bind. Such actions produce only *aniyatha phalam*, outcomes that do not cling to the doer and fall away if one does not hold on to them.



Sri: *Krushna* teaches that when our ordained activities are done as *yajna*, the fruits of the activities become *niyatha karmas*. Hence, one can either accept or release the fruits and they create no binding. He tells *Arjuna* to practice this kind of action as long as he lives.

As we learnt earlier, there are five types of *yajna*, ***the pancha maha: yajnas - de:va yajna, rushi yajna, pithru yajna, nru yajna, and bhu:tha yajna.***

bhu:tha yajna refers to offerings made for all living beings around us. These include animals, birds, insects, and even plants. Ensuring their well-being by providing food, water, or other means to sustain them, is a form of *yajna*. People used to place powdered rice, wheat, or other grains to feed ants, flies, and other creatures. It is considered to give us prosperity if the creatures are satisfied. Watering trees or creating resting spaces for animals also constitutes *bhu:tha yajna*.



Nru yajna refers to serving the needs of humans. This includes providing food to the hungry, assisting those in need, and showing respect and care to elders and virtuous individuals. As *Go:da de:vi*, sings in her devotional song, “***aiyyamum pichchaiyum a:ndanaiyum kaiga:tti***,” giving to elders is called *da:na*, and providing for the necessities of common people according to their needs is called *dharma*. Both acts, performed according to one’s capacity, are forms of ***nru yajna***. Hospitality to guests and ensuring that people receive what they require also fall under this category.

Pithru yajna acknowledges that our bodies come from our parents and ancestors. It is the act of honoring one’s elders during their lifetime and performing offerings and rituals after they pass. It also involves preparing a worthy successor to continue these duties, ensuring that the family lineage and the service established by previous generations are preserved as a sacred and righteous act.



The fourth type of *yajna* is ***rushi yajna***, acknowledging the debt we owe to the sages who organized human life, its duties, and experiences. These sages provided us with and preserved carefully over generations, a remarkable body of knowledge, some of human authorship (***paurushe:ya***) and some not written by anyone (***apaurushe:ya***). ***apaurushe:ya*** texts are the *Ve:das*, the sounds that are naturally present and are not written by anyone. By studying these texts, sharing their teachings, or supporting those who do, we help preserve their wisdom and fulfill our debt to the sages.

The fifth type of *yajna* is ***de:va yajna***, which recognizes the constant support we receive from the forces of Nature. Their benefits through air, water, soil, sunlight, heat, and cold etc., support the careful and healthy growth of our bodies. These forces are called celestial powers or ***de:vatha: vise:sha***. Behind all these powers is the singular principle of ***Na:ra:yana thaththva***. When Krishna revealed his universal form, he demonstrated in the eleventh chapter that all these celestial forces exist *within* him. Remembering the help we receive from these forces of Nature and offering



gratitude toward them fulfills our debt to the *de:vathas*. It is not necessary to know each *de:vatha* individually. Sincere worship in whichever form is accessible, such as a cow, a deity, or a mother, pleases all the celestial beings . In this way, acts of devotion performed with the right intention constitute *de:va yajna*.

In acquiring, producing, enjoying, or sharing things, many unintended mistakes occur, often causing harm to others through words, actions, or subtle means. Such harm creates *do:sha:s*, faults. Sri: *Krushna* explains that performing *karma*, actions as *yajna* purifies the mind and conscience, helping remove these *dosha:s*.

He instructs *Arjuna* to perform *karma* without attachment, assuring him that such *karma* does not bind the doer or obstruct devotion. Some results of *karma* are variable (*aniyatha phalam*) and can be mitigated through proper conduct, while fixed results (*niyatha phalam*) must be experienced as long as the body exists. *do:shas* from our *karmas* can be removed through purifying practices and the



five *maha:yajnas* - ***yajna:rtha:th karmano:nyathra lo:ko:yam karma bandhanaha.***

Just as an employee's work belongs entirely to the organization, whether it produces benefit or loss, so too is every human a servant in the divine order. Taking a human body is like being appointed to a position in a company. While in this role, one must perform duties without personal attachment or claiming the results. The *Upanishads* state that from the moment a soul takes on a body until the body is left behind, the soul holds a position of service, showing that life itself is a sacred duty.

All activities during this period belong to the Supreme .. Life in the human body is like being an employee in a company, where one performs all duties for the organization without personal attachment or concern for gain or loss. If an individual carries out work with this attitude, the outcomes, whether favorable or adverse, are not personally binding. When the body is given up, the period of this particular service, *di:ksha*, ends.



Throughout life, one should act in accordance to Divine Will, , accepting whatever comes as willed. Whatever arises is accepted on His behalf, and one acts only as per His instructions.. This attitude keeps one free from encumbrances ; without it, all burdens fall on the individual. While performing actions, one must set aside ego and act without attachment. *Abhima:na* is the possessiveness that comes from thinking “*I am experiencing this, I am doing this, or it is happening because of me*”. Krishna instructs *Arjuna* to perform actions with the body devoid of *abhima:na*.

***yajna:rtha:th karmano:nyathra lo:ko: yam
karma bandhanaha |
thadarttham karma kaunthe:ya! muktha sangas
sama:chara || 3.9 ||***

Sri: *Krushna* explains that the true purpose of every action is *yajna*. ***yajna:rtha:th***, your work should be done in the spirit of *yajna*. Only then does it serve its proper purpose. Acting in this spirit ensures freedom from attachment.



If actions are performed for personal gain, for one's own pleasure, or merely to satisfy desire, then they create ***karma bandhana***, bondage. This affects not only the individual but can influence the entire human race. Selfish actions increase *karma*, further binding the doer and entangling them in the worldly birth and death life-cycle.

Sri: *Krushna* points to ***thadarttham karma kaunthe:ya***, the understanding that one's actions are to be done with *yajna* as their purpose, aligned with a higher aim. He then suggests *muktha sangas sama:chara*, to perform every act of earning or gathering without attachment, holding nothing with a sense of 'mine'. When actions are performed in this spirit, no fault is incurred.

“Why must everything be oriented toward *yajna*? If not done in this spirit, does work become meaningless? People everywhere earn, cook, and eat and live their daily lives; surely they are not all thinking of *yajna*. Moreover, in common usage, *yajna* is often linked to ritual fire offerings - a kunda, oblations, *mantras*, and so it is natural to wonder how everyone could



possibly perform that. Sensing these unspoken questions in *Arjuna's* mind, Sri: *Krushna* begins to reveal the deeper meaning and importance of *yajna* and why *karma* should be performed with that attitude.

How did creation happen?

***saha yajnai:h praja:s srushtva: puro:va:cha
praja:pathihi |
ane:na prasavishyadhvam e:shavo: sthv ishta
ka:madhu:k || 3.10 ||***

praja:h srushtva: saha yajnai:h - The Lord brought forth all beings together with *yajna*.

When an action is offered as ***bhagavad a:ra:dhana***, worship to the Lord, it becomes *yajna* — that is the true meaning of the word. *Yajna* is not limited to a small ritual of building a fire-pit, pouring ghee, and chanting *sva:ha:*. The Lord explains in the fourth chapter, and again later, what kinds of actions become *yajna* and how they must be performed for that transformation to happen.



The Supreme Being, in the form called *Aniruddha*, dwelling in the *kshi:ra sa:gara*, ocean of milk, brought forth a lotus from His navel. *Within* that lotus appeared a four-faced being named *Brahma*, also called *chathurmukha*, four-faced. Initially, *Brahma* did not know how to proceed. The Lord gave him instruction using the two syllables *ta* and *pa*. By meditating on this teaching in multiple ways repeatedly, *Brahma* acquired the knowledge and understanding necessary to create many beings. .

Among those who were created by *Brahma*, were *Mari:chi* and others, who became the root cause not only of the human race but of all living creatures on earth. For this reason, they are collectively called the *praja:pathi:s*.

puro:va:cha praja:pathihi - *Praja:pathi* said, ***ane:na prasavishyadhvam*** - you are provided with the necessary *yajnas*; use them well to meet your needs. ***e:shavo:: sthvishta ka:madhu:k*** - these *yajnas* will truly fulfill all the desires you hold.



Just as a cow consumes various grasses and leaves, naturally filtering out impurities to produce pure, *sa:ththvik*, and wholesome milk, *yajnas* serve to purify and focus our endeavors, guiding them toward the achievement of desired results.



When a *yajna* is performed, offerings are dedicated to particular deities. We see ghee or sticks offered into a fire pit with the *manthra*, “*indra:yasva:ha, varuna:yasva:ha, va:yavye:sva:ha, so:ma:yasva:ha, etc*”. The material offered, along with sincere intent put into it, reaches its proper destination, helping fulfill the purpose of the *yajna*. Such



offerings act as *upa:ya:s*, tools that bring us closer to what we seek.

saha yajnai:h praja:h srushtva: - Just as the Lord brings a newborn into the world along with its mother's milk, He brings all beings into this world, especially humans, granting them the tools and means to fulfill every need and desire. The ***yajnas*** serve as wonderful tools to fulfill desires and should not be abandoned.

These include the *pancha maha:yajnas*, the five great *yajnas*. Some are *nithya*, daily duties, some ***naimiththika***, occasional; and some *ka:mya*, performed to fulfill desires. All daily and occasional duties should be performed diligently, even without seeking a specific result.

ane:na prasavishyadhvam e:shavo:: sthv ishta ka:madhu:k - the *yajnas* grant the desired results. Sri Sri: *Krushna Parama:thma* urges that when actions are performed as *Yajna*, enjoying the outcomes is harmless and brings no fault.



At birth, every being is provided sustenance naturally. For humans and animals, the mother's milk sustains the child. This provision is not dependent on the mother's will or the baby's request but is arranged by the Lord through Nature.

na:ra:yana param brahma gi:tha sa:sthre: sami:rithaha - When *Na:ra:yana* created this entire world, He also assigned a duty for everyone, according to their status. When they perform these duties as worship of the One who sustains life, their actions become true *yajna*.

The root verb in Sanskrit is ***yaja de:va pu:ja:ya:m***. The meaning of the word '*yajna*' is 'to worship the Lord'.

The *yajnas* performed in the world are dedicated to various *de:vathas*. But since all those *de:vathas* have the Supreme Lord as the indweller, , whatever you offer ultimately reaches ***Na:ra:yaṇa***, the indwelling soul. If you perform it with this understanding, it becomes a properly performed *yajna*. Even if you worship ***agniho:thra***, the sacred fire, it reaches ***Na:ra:yana***, who is the inner soul of *agni*. The same



principle applies to all actions performed with this understanding.

When you offer food or gifts to someone, it should not be just to satisfy the body. Fulfilling the body is temporary; true benefit comes from nourishing the *a:thma within*, which then supports the body. Therefore, offer with the thought that you are giving to the Divine Lord who dwells *within* this body. Offerings cannot reach the Lord directly; they must be made through the body in which He abides, whether sentient or insentient.

When you realize that the Divine Lord brought you into the world to experience certain *karma* and thereby grant you eternal bliss, your worship naturally becomes loving and without expectation of reward. Just as you give gifts to a true friend purely to see them happy, offering to the Divine Lord arises from love, not desire for gain.

Offerings to the Lord cannot be made directly; they must pass through this world, which is His body. Humans, animals, plants, and all beings serve as the medium, as do offerings.



Whatever is offered to anyone ultimately reaches the indwelling *Na:ra:yana*. When given with this understanding, the Lord *within* is pleased, removes obstacles, grants bliss, and ensures all that is necessary for the journey of the body.

ane:na prasavishyadhvam e:shavo:: sthv ishta ka:madhu:k - If you keep this sacred instrument *of yajna*; *prasavishyadhvam* - it will produce whatever you desire; *ishta ka:madhu:k* - like a wish-fulfilling cow.



We refer to ***Chathurmukha Brahma*** and the sages like ***Mari:chi***, whom ***Brahma*** created, as ***praja:pathi:s***. Sri:mad ***Bha:gavatham*** and ***Upanishads*** reveal a deeper truth; though ***Brahma*** created the world and sages like ***Mari:chi***



carried out the cycle of creation, *Na:ra:yana* is the ultimate *Praja:pathi*. He is the supreme supporter dwelling *within* all souls, inspiring and directing their creative work.

The *Parama:thma* is the ultimate cause of the vast collection of visible universes in the multiverse and of all the objects *within* them. Possessing the entire cosmos as His body, He is the sole ultimate destination for all beings. *Na:ra:yana* Himself provides the *upa:di*, the necessary means, for every living being to reach Him. Even from a local perspective, before attaining this human form, we had no control over our existence. The soul enters the mother's body through the father, develops gradually in the womb under divine guidance, and finally emerges as a human being. At every stage, whether as a tiny particle in the father, growing in the mother's womb, or later as a child, control rests with Lord *Na:ra:yana*, not with the parents nor the soul in the developing body it acquires .

Ever-compassionate and merciful, *Parama:thma*, seeing souls in a formless state during cosmic dissolution, wished to help them attain eternal bliss and avoid returning to that state of



stupor. He provided the means by embodying them so as to reach the blissful, liberated state, instructing them in various processes of worship known as *yajnas*. To empower beings to perform these *yajnas* and receive offerings, He established a system of *de:vathas*. *Within* this system, all beings including *de:vathas*, *manushyas*, *thiryaks* and *stha:varas* are expected to perform their duties flawlessly and without conflict. Unfortunately, other than humans, all other beings fulfill their responsibilities perfectly.

Humans are the only beings that are inconsistent. People often seek an easy way out, neglect their duties, pretend to fulfill them, or try to avoid them altogether. Yet humans also possess the capacity to act with true integrity. Their behavior shifts with circumstances - sometimes sincere, sometimes superficial, and sometimes evasive. This is the nature of human conduct.

By contrast, the rest of Nature follows its order flawlessly. Animals live according to their instincts, taking only what they need and giving back what is required, without pride or worry. Trees and plants coexist in harmony, exchanging resources



without conflict. The forces of Nature, including the sun, rain, wind, and water, act with precision, giving and taking exactly what is necessary.

Even when food is scarce, animals endure without harming others. If creatures violated their natural laws, life itself could not be sustained. Yet humans alone disrupt this balance, creating suffering for themselves.

The Lord instructs humans that just as everything around them acts according to its rules, they too must give and act in accordance with their duty. By following these principles, one lives a life as *yajna*, aligned, in harmony with the order of the cosmos.

The process of performing *yajna*, sacrifice, is elaborated by Sri Sri: *Krushna* in the third chapter. The procedure differs based on whether it is performed by a layperson or by someone following the *ve:dic* tradition. Sri Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes that one should live their entire life as a *yajna*, dedicating every action to please the supreme governing force, *Na:ra:yana*.



All beings are sustained and supported solely by *Na:ra:yana*. Just as an employee's salary is not paid directly by their line manager but comes from a higher authority *within* a company, in the same way, everyone is ultimately in service to *Na:ra:yana*. By living in this spirit of service, one attains everlasting happiness, or *mo:ksha*.

This approach to life is known as *karma yo:ga*. Actions performed with selfish desire create bondage, but actions offered as *yajna*, in service to *Na:ra:yana*, lead to liberation.

Thus, Sri Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes the importance of using the body as a tool to attain *mo:ksha*, recognizing that this is what *Arjuna* truly desired. In the first chapter, *Arjuna* had declared that he cared not even for rulership over the three worlds, ***thrailo:kya ra:jyasya he:tho:h kinnu mahi:kruthe:***, revealing his disinterest in worldly gains. In response, Sri Krishna guides *Arjuna* toward a higher goal - *mo:ksha*, liberation.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that using the body appropriately—as an instrument for righteous action—can lead one to *mo:ksha* regardless of one’s status, caste, creed, or position in life.

When *yajnas*, sacrificial rituals, are performed to appease deities such as Varuna, Indra, *Va:yu*, and *Agni*, the ultimate recipient of these offerings is *Na:ra:yana*. This is similar to how a letter or a bank transfer, though routed through various intermediaries, ultimately reaches its intended recipient. In the same way, all acts of worship and sacrifice, regardless of the immediate deity invoked, ultimately reach *Na:ra:yana* only.

Thus Sri Sri: *Krushna* declares, “*aham hi sarvayajna:na:m bhoktha: cha prabhure:va cha.*”

No matter who performs a *yajna*, where it is performed, or what kind of *yajna* it may be, *sarvayajna:na:m bho:ktha*, I alone accept the offerings of all *yajnas*. Not only that, I am the supreme authority behind every sacrifice, and it is I alone who bestow the fruits of the sacrifice. Whatever *de:vatha* one chooses to worship, the offerings are in fact made to Me, and through that very *de:vatha* I grant the results.



Sri: *Krushna* further explains that if one worships a *tha:masa de:vatha*, He grants the results through that *tha:masa de:vatha*. If one worships a *ra:jasa de:vatha*, He grants the results accordingly through that *ra:jasa de:vatha*. Likewise, even when offerings are made through other human beings, He ensures that the fruits are received through them. Since *Na:ra:yana* is the indweller of all *de:vathas* and all beings, He accepts every offering and dispenses the results in the appropriate manner.

Moreover, the Lord possesses the awe-inspiring power of remembering all our actions, both good and bad. *Na:ra:yana*, being ***sarvajna***, omniscient, and ***sarvavid***, all knowing, has the infinite capacity to remember every single action and to grant its results accordingly. Just as the Lord brings forth a sapling long after its seed has been sown, so too He ensures that the fruits of our efforts reach us, no matter how long it takes. Therefore, there is no need for anxiety about whether one's efforts will bear fruit.

Sri: *Krushna* therefore urges *Arjuna* to act strictly according to His instruction. *Arjuna* then asks why the Lord does not



appear directly and grant the results Himself, instead of working through **de:vathas** or human agents.



Sri: *Krushna* explains that He does not appear before us because we lack the capacity to recognize Him even if He were to appear. From the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, we know that even a warrior as valiant as *Arjuna* required **divyane:thra**, the divine vision, to behold Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s universal form. Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs worship through the **de:vathas** in verse 3.11.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* says,



***deva:n bha:vayatha:ne:na the: de:va:
bha:vayanthu vaha |
parasparam bha:vayanthaha sre:yah param
ava:psyattha || 3.11 ||***

Sri: *Krushna* says, “I created the *de:vathas*. Perform your ordained duties by transforming them into worship, by acting without expectation of results. In this way, through mutual support between humans and *de:vathas*, you shall attain the highest good.”

Arjuna asks, “What is the need to worship *de:vathas*?”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* replies, “***the: de:va: bha:vayanthu vaha.***” The *de:vathas* fulfill your needs, and you, in turn, must reciprocate by offering what is due to them. I ensure that both you and the *de:vathas* benefit and remain joyful. I see to it that the offerings you make reach the *de:vathas*, and at the same time, I ensure that you receive the graces they bestow. There must be a mutual and reciprocal relationship between you and the *de:vathas*, and through this mutual nourishment,



the highest good is attained, *param sre:yah
ava:psyattha.*

What is this highest good?

It is a state free from obstacles, free from *ka:rmic* bondage, and filled with unending bliss.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* urges us to use this human body to attain that supreme benefit. Yet He also points out how deeply selfish human beings can be. Nature, which is a manifestation of His divine power, provides us with countless resources. We drink water, draw food from the earth, and receive vitality from sunlight, yet we begin to think that all this is of our own making and meant solely for our enjoyment. We then attempt to dominate and manipulate these forces, forgetting the One who stands behind them all.

When we hear the word *de:vathas*, we often imagine celestial beings adorned with jewels and garments. In truth, *de:vathas* signify the divine forces operating through nature around us. We freely take from water, air, and sunlight, yet we forget the Supreme Being who makes all this possible. Sri Sri: *Krushna*



declares such an attitude to be unacceptable in the following verse:

***ishta:n bho:ga:n hi vo: de:va:ha da:syanthe:
yajna bha:vitha:ha |
thair daththa: na prada:yaibhyo: yo: bhunkthe:s
the:na e:va saha || 3.12 ||***

The Lord teaches that the *de:vathas* grant desired enjoyments when they are nourished through *yajna*. One who enjoys these gifts without offering worship and service in return is likened to a thief. Therefore, sincere worship through *yajna* is essential, for taking benefits without rightful offering is nothing but unrightful appropriation.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, “Hey *Arjuna*! A life that is lived without transforming one’s activities into *yajna* is the life of a thief, similar to one who takes goods from a store without paying for them.” Although there are many forms of theft, in this third chapter Sri Sri: *Krushna* elucidates what theft truly means.

The system by which this world functions is astonishing. Every living being depends on another, while at the same time



supporting one another. More specifically, humans depend on Nature for their sustenance, and through humans, Nature in turn continues to flourish. For instance, what is excreted by animals, such as manure, becomes nourishment for trees, and what trees give out, such as fruits, vegetables, and leaves, becomes sustenance for humans. Humans, in turn, produce waste that becomes food for animals. This is a beautiful and self sustaining cycle that exists in Nature. When such an intelligent and interdependent system exists, it necessarily implies the presence of an intelligence that governs and regulates it. In the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* asserts that this governing intelligence is He Himself.

He continues that except for humans, all other living beings in Nature do not interfere with this system. They function *within* their natural limits. Humans, on the other hand, attempt to alter the system. Sri Sri: *Krushna* therefore clarifies the extent to which humans are permitted to interfere with it.

He explains that *de:vathas* are specific forces of Nature, and humans may receive benefits from them as long as it is done in the proper way. Even though the *de:vathas* give in many



different forms, one must accept only what is necessary, and enjoy it as an offering and an act of worship to the Lord. When this attitude is present, the act becomes *yajna*, a sacred sacrifice. Further, since the *de:vathas* bestow what we desire and enjoy, there must be reciprocity. One must offer back what pleases them. What truly pleases the *de:vathas* is ***sraddha***, a deep and respectful faith accompanied by inner clarity and sincerity.

For example, the Sun bestows abundant sunlight upon us. In return, we do not pay a fee in the way we pay the government for electricity. *Yet gratitude demands reciprocity. To fail to offer anything in return is ingratitude, a moral lapse, and a serious error for humans, who possess the capacity to discern and reflect.*

Then the question arises, what can we offer to the Sun that He can actually receive from us? The *Ve:das* and the ***dharma sa:sthras***, the scriptural laws governing moral and social duties, provide clear instructions on what is to be offered to the Sun.



What is it that one can offer?

Scripture says there is no need to spend money or offer material possessions. All one needs to do is bring the hands together and, while prostrating, offer ***sraddha*** a deep and reverential faith filled with sincere gratitude.

When should one offer?

One offers in the morning, thanking the Sun for casting His powerful rays upon us and waking us from slumber. One offers again in the afternoon, prostrating to the Sun in gratitude for the passage of time from morning to afternoon. Once more in the evening, one offers obeisance as an expression of gratitude for the withdrawal of sunlight, allowing us to rest in darkness. Thus, with the acknowledgment that the Sun sustains our life, offering obeisance in the morning, afternoon, and evening is all that is required.

This practice is called ***sandhya:vandanam***, a salutation to the Lord in the form of the Sun. The early morning ritual is called ***pra:thar arghyam***, the afternoon ritual is called



ma:dhya:nika arghyam, and the evening ritual is called ***sa:ya:nika arghyam***.

What is essential is the offering of gratitude to the Sun. This may be done in any language Sanskrit, English, or one's own mother tongue. One may chant sacred hymns, recite verses, or simply say "thank you." What is offered is water, the very basis of our sustenance, to the Sun. While the expression and form of prayer may vary according to one's capacity, eligibility, and cultural inclination, the foundation of all prayer remains the same: the sincere expression of gratitude to the Sun.

The only requirement from us, then, is the expression of gratitude.. Further, if one knows the ***manthra*** or a sacred hymn, the inherent power of that hymn has the capacity to impart benefit through the Sun.

What does one get from performing ***sandhya:vandanam?***

The *ve:dic* scripture declares, ***savithrumandala madhyavarthi na:ra:yanah sarasija:sannivishtaha***. Scriptures such as the



Cha:ndogya Upanishad proclaim that *Pundari:ka:ksha*, seated in the *padma:sana* posture, Lord *Srimanna:ra:yana*, resides at the center of the *su:rya* mandala, the Sun. Lord *Srimanna:ra:yana* accepts our sincere offering of gratitude, ***sraddha***, and through the Sun bestows benefits upon us, granting the very source of our sustenance.

Even if one forgets to offer, or deliberately avoids offering obeisance, the merciful Lord continues to grace us. This is similar to how loving parents strive in every possible way to correct a wayward child rather than punish or abandon them. They advise the child directly or seek the help of friends, neighbors, and teachers, but they never forsake their child.

In the same manner, Lord *Srimanna:ra:yana* constantly endeavors to uplift us through the Sun, wind, earth, fellow humans, *a:charyas*, or other means. He assumes presence in both sentient and insentient forms and is always ready to bestow good upon us. It therefore becomes our responsibility to reciprocate once we recognize His grace. Yet, whether we reciprocate or not, the ever compassionate and loving Lord continues to care for us.



Parama:thma unfailingly fulfills His responsibilities. It is our fortune if we acknowledge this. If we fail to do so, we naturally experience the consequences of our ingratitude. The Lord uplifts those who perform ***sandhya:vandan***, while allowing those who do not to proceed according to their own choices. He does not interfere in our affairs if we do not reach out to Him.

Lord *Srimanna:ra:yana* is the ***antharya:mi***, the indweller, abiding *within* all forces of Nature such as wind, Sun, water, trees etc. . When we worship and offer anything to Lord *Srimanna:ra:yana*, He accepts it and, in return, grants us what we truly deserve.

Lord *Srimanna:ra:yana* continues to provide what we need through Nature, for if He were to cease, life itself would not be sustainable. Nature has honored its sacred covenant with *Parama:thma* and has continuously supplied resources for all. . Humans, however, have violated their covenant. We take endlessly, deplete natural resources, and give nothing in return. As a result, Nature has fallen out of balance.



We observe that rains no longer arrive at the appropriate time of the year, and at times they pour down excessively when they should not. We also witness scorching heat, due to which farmers lose their crops, along with many other adverse effects on Nature. Because of improper human conduct, Nature appears to have been deviated from its established order and practices.

We are already familiar with the depletion of the protective ozone layer surrounding our planet. By duly respecting Nature and its presiding *de:vathas*, we may be able to prevent natural calamities such as floods, global warming, and harvests that yield no produce.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, “Therefore, *Arjuna! Thaih dattha:n aprada:ya e:bhyo: yo: bhunkthe:*, such a person must be called a thief, for they take what Nature gives and enjoy it without giving back what Nature requires.”

One may wonder why it is considered theft to enjoy what appears to be freely available, such as sunlight, water, soil, and other natural resources. However, theft can occur at both the



mental and physical levels. Even merely assuming ownership over something that does not belong to oneself is regarded as theft. Just as physically taking an object unlawfully is theft, enjoying something with a false sense of ownership is also a form of stealing.

It is acceptable to enjoy what truly belongs to you, what is rightfully meant for you, or even what is borrowed with permission from another. However, when something that exists for the benefit of others is taken and enjoyed for oneself, it becomes theft.

Such behavior reflects a failure in conduct and becomes punishable when a person enjoys an object in violation of the order for which it exists and the purpose it is meant to serve.

Parama:thma established the order of Nature. He did not create it for His own enjoyment, but for a specific purpose. Nature was created for the welfare of all *ji:vas*, and therefore *ji:vas* are permitted to enjoy it. However, *ji:vas* are considered to have fulfilled their responsibilities only when they seek



Parama:thma's permission and enjoy Nature as an act of worship to Him. Otherwise, they are deemed thieves and are unfit to partake of Nature. This is because nothing in this world belongs to the *ji:vas*, and *ji:vas* themselves cannot act independently without the support of *Parama:thma*.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* further establishes, “Therefore, *Arjuna! yo: bhunkthe: sthe:na e:va saha*, whoever enjoys Nature without transforming his actions into *yajna* is indeed a thief.”

Arjuna then asks, “If that is so, how are we meant to enjoy Nature? What should we do while enjoying it? How do we transform our actions into *yajna*?”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* responds.

Why do we portray someone like *Ra:va:na:sura* as evil?

Such beings possessed their own kingdoms, complete with wealth, power, and pleasure. Yet they were not content with what they had. Driven by arrogance and the belief in their own superiority, they relentlessly sought to expand their dominion and accumulate more wealth and resources for selfish



enjoyment. Whatever they found admirable in others, they desired to possess. This unchecked ambition gradually turned into unrighteous acquisition.

Consumed by the urge to conquer and claim, *Ra:va:na:sura*'s conduct ultimately led to the abduction of *Si:tha pira:tti*, the divine consort of Sri *Ra:machandra pira:n*. At that point, it became necessary to uphold *dharma* and demonstrate righteous conduct. Though given opportunities to correct himself, *Ra:va:na:sura* refused to reform, and his obstinacy resulted in his downfall. Even today, he is remembered not for his strengths or scholarship, but for the grave errors born of arrogance and *adharma*. In contrast, many in this world commit minor mistakes, yet the scale and intent behind one's actions determine their consequence.

Everything in this world belongs to *Parama:thma*, including us. We are His, and all that exists is part of His creation. There is no fault in enjoying what He has created, but it must be done with reverence and rightful acknowledgment. It is like a gardener who lovingly cultivates a beautiful garden filled with fragrant flowers and ripe fruits. If we respectfully seek



permission to take a flower or fruit, the gardener is likely to grant it gladly. But if we intrude and seize what is not offered, we invite rightful displeasure.

This universe is the Lord's garden and sacred domain. To live with gratitude, restraint, and acknowledgment of His sovereignty is to live a life of *yajna*. Such individuals are honored as virtuous devotees. Those who disregard these principles and act solely for selfish gain are regarded as ***ra:kshasas and asuras***, and are remembered with caution rather than reverence.

There is another episode in our sacred history that illustrates how the Lord corrected one who had strayed from ***dharmā*** and at the same time protected a *de:vatha*. Indra, the king of the *de:vas* and ruler of Svarga, was governing his realm in accordance with his ordained role. Bali Chakravathy, though powerful and prosperous, was not content with his own kingdom. Driven by ambition and pride, he sought to conquer Indra and seize Svarga for himself. To restore balance, the Lord incarnated as *Va:mana* and later revealed His cosmic form as Thrivikrama. Through this divine intervention, He



corrected Bali and demonstrated the limits of unchecked ambition.

In the third chapter, Lord Sri: *Krushna* explains that He blesses each soul with a unique opportunity to live, act, and evolve according to its own nature and journey. While enjoying the gifts of creation, one must acknowledge the giver. For this purpose, the Lord has established divine channels through which offerings are made and received. When *ji:vas* offer through the proper means, those offerings reach their rightful destination and return as blessings. One who merely takes without offering is described as a thief.

Arjuna then asks, “What if the things we enjoy become exhausted?”

Sri: *Krushna* replies that the system He has created is self-sustaining. When offerings are made in the spirit of *yajna*, the *devas* are nourished, and in turn they provide what is needed for continued living and offering. Whenever you offer with sincerity, I ensure that you receive anew. Thus, giving and receiving continue in harmony.



***ishta:n bho:ga:n hi vo de:va:ha da:syanthe:
yajnabha:vitha:ha*** - When the *de:vathas* are honored through *yajna*, they grant the desired necessities. In this mutual exchange, both humans and *devas* flourish in cooperation and gratitude.

However, if one merely consumes what is given without reverence or offering, such enjoyment becomes improper. It disrupts the divine order.

Sri: *Krushna* further explains in verse 3.13:

***yajna sishta:sinas santho: muchyanthe:
sarvakilbishaihi |
bhunjathe: the: thvagham pa:pa:ha ye:
pachanthi a:thmaka:rana:th || 3.13 ||***

Those who partake of what remains after *yajna* are freed from all impurities. But those who cook and consume solely for themselves partake of sin.

There is nothing wrong in enjoying the resources of this world when they are received and used in the spirit of *yajna*.



However, when we seize what belongs to others without rightful acknowledgment, it creates fear and disharmony. Such a life can never lead to true happiness or peace.

Instead, if you ask politely, the other person may willingly share the object with you. Moreover, if they like you, they might even allow you to keep it. In contrast, if you take it forcefully without their consent, they will not be happy with you.

Similarly, when enjoying the material objects granted by *Parama:thma*, one should think: “O Lord, this is Your grace. O Lord, please protect this. O Lord, if it pleases You, may it be transformed or used differently.” Those who consume what remains after offering the fruits of their actions as *yajnas* to the Lord are considered to be practicing rightly. Sri: *Krushna* speaks about food because it is something we are most familiar with.

However, we do not only consume food through eating. We consume forms with our eyes, sounds with our ears, touch with



our skin, and fragrances with our nose. If we can transform all experiences through the senses into service to God, then all sins are gradually purified.

Earlier, we learned from Sri: *Krushna* that we must perform the fivefold *maha:yajnas*, the *panchamaha:yajnas*, to atone for the sins accumulated while acquiring and enjoying material objects. While these sacrifices are sufficient to eliminate the sins related to the objects, if we perform them as service to God, they not only remove the sins incurred during the sacrifices and the enjoyment of their fruits but also destroy the beginningless *ka:rmic* records, called ***sanchitha***, and erase the attachments, aversions, and ignorance that have enveloped the mind and the *a:thma* for ages.

We also learned from the analogy of cleaning a vessel: if we pour clean water into a dirty vessel with thick sediment, the water gradually cleans the vessel without adding any new dirt. Eventually, the vessel becomes sparkling clean. Similarly, if we transform our actions, including sacrifices, into *yajnas* performed in service to the Lord and enjoy their fruits in that spirit, these activities do not create new *ka:rmic* records and



gradually eliminate all accumulated past *karma*. Eventually, the mind becomes ***nirmala***, completely pure and spotless. Such a person is called a ***sanmanushya***. *Va:lmiki* says that the mind of a *sanmanushya* is spotless.

When *Va:lmiki* went to a river for his afternoon service, he observed how clear the water was, so much so that he could see a needle at the riverbed. At that sight, he remarked, “Just like the mind of a virtuous person, free from slush and fully serene, the water is crystal clear and flowing peacefully.” The mind of a virtuous person is transparent, like clear water. In this way, the mind is transformed, all sins are purified, and the person becomes a ***sajjana***, a truly virtuous individual.

Sri: *Krushna* addresses all of humanity and affirms that if one performs all activities as service to God, all past *karmas* accumulated for countless ages will be erased.

Instead, out of arrogance or ignorance, if a person chooses to work merely to fill the stomach, gratify the body, or indulge the senses, without elevating those actions into *yajna*, then whatever they do and whatever they consume becomes a



source of demerit. The words ***the: thu agham bhunjathe: pa:pa:*** convey that such enjoyment turns into sin. Despite all the effort invested in pleasing the body and senses, true satisfaction will still remain elusive. ***Ye: pachanthi a:thma ka:rana:th*** teaches that actions performed solely for oneself, driven by selfish intent, carry moral fault.

Consider a person working in a bank. The money they handle does not belong to them; it belongs to the institution. If they forget this truth and begin to treat the money as their own, seeking personal recognition, expecting special benefits, or distributing it as though they are the owner, such a person is deemed a culprit deserving punishment.

Likewise, this entire world is a system established by ***Parama:thma***. One who ignores this reality and lives only for personal gain, striving merely to fill the stomach, accumulate possessions, and indulge in enjoyment, becomes a thief in the highest sense.



The seriousness of theft depends on both the value of what is taken and the stature of the one from whom it is taken. Stealing something insignificant from a poor person may incur a minor penalty. Taking from an ordinary person invites a greater one. Stealing from a noble or highly regarded person results in a far more severe consequence.

Even when the victim is the same, the gravity increases with the value of the object. Taking something of little worth may bring a small punishment, stealing something valuable invites a heavier penalty, and seizing something precious leads to a severe outcome. To take what is most precious from the highest being invites the gravest consequence of all.

Material objects are insignificant when compared to the *a:thma*, the inner self, the most precious of all realities. That *a:thma* belongs to *Parama:thma*. We are neither independent nor in control of our origin or destiny. If merely misusing worldly objects leads to punishment, then claiming ownership of the *a:thma*, thinking “I am independent and everything exists for my enjoyment,” is the greatest form of theft. It is the appropriation of *Parama:thma*’s most treasured possession.



The *Maha:bha:ratha* declares that there is no greater sinner than the one who appropriates the self, an ***a:thma apaha:ra***. The consequences of such delusion are beyond measure. Sri Sri: *Krushna* warns us never to fall into this grave error.

What then should one do?

Transform every action into *yajna*. This does not merely mean constructing altars or performing ritual offerings, though those are valid expressions. Here, *yajna* signifies performing every action in the spirit of ***bhagavada:ra:dhana***, as an offering to the Divine. When actions are consecrated in this way, sin does not arise. Life continues, duties continue, experiences continue, but they become sanctified. In that sanctification, true contentment and joy emerge.

To explain how this transformation sustains harmony, the Lord presents a beautiful ***chakra***, a cycle. Let us now learn about that cycle.



Cycle of Life

Whether we acknowledge it or not, a remarkable cycle governs life. Not only humans, but all living beings move *within* the cycle called **samsa:ra**. Just as a person seated on a giant wheel has no control over its rotation and must move with it, every living being, once born, is carried along by the inevitable movement of life.

What distinguishes a human being is the capacity to recognize this cycle. Those who understand it and consciously align their actions in harmony with it alone deserve to be called truly human. Living beings that remain unaware and are simply swept along by the cycle function at the level of animals, birds, and insects. Accordingly, humans who live without awareness of this governing order do not fulfill the true potential of human birth.

What, then, is this cycle?

To understand it, we must first know who we really are. When we say ‘I,’ we refer primarily to **chaithanyam**, the pristine awareness that reveals we are alive. At the same time, in



common experience, the 'I' is also associated with the body that supports and expresses this awareness. In nature we observe countless bodies, each with its own pattern of activity and behavior. Humans, animals, birds, trees, and other forms of life all display distinct modes of growth, function, and decay.

What drives these varied activities and behaviors?

Food plays a central role. Humans consume cooked grains, vegetables, and pulses. Animals partake of food suited to their nature. Plants draw nourishment from air, water, and soil. When each living being consumes what is appropriate to its constitution, the body is nourished, grows for a period of time, and eventually declines.

If creatures, including humans, take in their proper nourishment in an orderly way, their bodies develop and function effectively for a time. Eventually, however, every body undergoes deterioration and dissolution, and the living being acquires another body. While these bodily changes are visible to the naked eye, what happens to the underlying awareness,



the ***chaithanyam***, is not directly perceptible. We cannot see it, nor can we fully determine its journey through ordinary reasoning. Therefore, to understand its true nature, we turn to the *ve:dic* scriptures, the ***sa:sthras***.

The scriptures teach that the *a:thma*, the indwelling self, is the true foundation underlying both the body and the manifested awareness. As long as the *a:thma* resides *within* the body, the body functions. When it departs, bodily activity ceases and the physical form gradually disintegrates. Only when the *a:thma* and body are joined do we recognize an entity as living. While they remain together, the being can act, perceive, and experience. When they separate, all such functions come to an end.

How, then, do the body and *a:thma* relate to one another and contribute to the functioning of the world? How should a human being live in this understanding? Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains these principles clearly in the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.



As we learned earlier, when an *a:thma* and a body come together and begin to function as a single unit, that entity is called a ***bhu:tha***. *bhu:tha:s* may be either sentient or non sentient. Sentient beings include humans, animals, and birds, all of which are endowed with life. Non-sentient entities include stones, rocks, and pebbles.



It is easier to study sentient ***bhu:tha:s*** because their life processes are observable. We can readily understand how they grow and how they sustain themselves.

anna:th bha:vanthi bhu:tha:ni parjanya:d anna sambhvaha |



***yajna:th bha:vathi parjanyo: yajnah karma
samudbhavaha || 3.14 ||***

anna:th bha:vanthi bhu:tha:ni teaches that all ***bhu:tha:s*** exist and maintain their forms because of the food they consume.

What is ***annam***? The literal meaning of ***annam*** is ‘that which is both the eaten and the eater.’ The *Upanishads* define it as: ***adyathe aththi cha bhu:tha:ni thasma:d annam thad uchyatha ithi. Adyathe*** means that which, when properly consumed as food, nourishes us. ***Aththi cha*** means that when taken improperly, it begins to consume us. In other words, food taken in an orderly and appropriate manner sustains life, whereas food taken in violation of proper order becomes life threatening. The *Ve:da* therefore teaches that food is the source of life, yet the same food, when misused, can become the cause of harm.

Contrary to common understanding, ***annam*** does not refer only to cooked rice or rice based dishes. Its meaning varies according to the type of living being. Each creature has food



suited to its own nature and constitution. Broadly, all forms of food fall into solids and liquids. Solids are called ***po:shaka***, the nourisher, while liquids are called ***dha:raka***, the sustainer that supports life energy.

Beyond ***po:shaka*** and ***dha:raka***, which nourish and sustain, there is a third category of consumables taken primarily for pleasure. These are not essential for survival and offer little nutritional necessity. This group includes coffee, tea, festival delicacies, sweets, ice creams, fruits, and similar enjoyments. Such items are called ***bho:gya***. Through the proper intake of nourishment, sustenance, and occasional pleasure foods, living beings grow, function according to their nature, and eventually decline.

Among all living beings, humans alone frequently violate the natural order of consumption. Other creatures instinctively take only what is appropriate for their nature. Humans, even when experiencing indigestion, often justify eating by worrying that food may go to waste or that the person who prepared it may feel disappointed. When reminded of their discomfort, they rationalize further by noting that medicines



are available, and that not eating would waste both the food and the medicine. In this way, human reasoning sometimes overrides natural discipline.

Consequently, when food is taken without order or discipline, one compensates by taking medicines. The illness worsens, more medicines are taken, yet the person continues eating in a disorderly way. Among all beings who eat without restraint, humans are the foremost.

Not every human behaves this way, but most do. If we observe animals, birds, cats, dogs, or other creatures around us, they follow a different pattern. Whenever an animal feels unwell or suffers indigestion, it instinctively follows its natural order. It does not ask anyone for advice or visit a doctor. It may stop eating for the day, or it may chew a blade of grass in a garden to vomit undigested material from its body. This becomes their way of fasting and restoring health.

No one teaches them this, and they do not study medical texts either. Yet when their health deteriorates, they naturally stop



taking food, remove harmful substances thereby taking care of themselves, and return to their normal life. Humans, however, even when unwell, often force themselves to eat and then rely on medicines for any resulting illness.

There was once a man in a village who accepted to ritually partake sraddha meal on behalf of the ancestors of the people in the village. One day, he received an invitation but could not go. He summoned his son and requested that he go instead. The son, however, declined, explaining he was feeling unwell with indigestion and asked his father to excuse him.

The father grew furious, expressing deep shame and lamenting that all the *veda:ntha* knowledge he had taught his son now seemed wasted. The boy questioned him, asking how he could go to a meal while suffering from indigestion, and reminded him that one should avoid food when unwell and stop eating on one's own accord.

In response, the father harshly questioned if this was all the wisdom the boy had acquired. The son was surprised, unable



to understand his father's strong reaction, as he believed he was simply following the rules prescribed by the *sa:sthra:s*.

Then the father quoted a striking verse: ***para:nnam pra:pya durbhuddhe: ma: pra:neshu daya:m kuru*** - Even with indigestion, he should have gone and eaten. When the boy questioned if his health wouldn't suffer, the father conceded that it would become significantly worse. The boy then remarked that a severe decline in health could result in the loss of life itself.

The father then questioned the boy's fear of death, reminding him that life is not confined to a single birth. Life arises anew with each birth and eventually departs. He pointed out that refusing such a generous offering of food out of fear was illogical. He explained ***para:nnam durlabham lo:ke: pra:na:h janmani janmani*** - In this world, food given by others is difficult to obtain, whereas life continues from birth to birth. Even if the boy were to lose his life now, it would return in another birth, for rebirth is certain. The father



supposedly gives his son wise advice, "Therefore, while you are alive in this birth simply enjoy the food, there is no reason for you to be so preoccupied with preserving his life."

In this way, although a person must learn the proper order of eating to carefully preserve life, they often use overly clever intellect to break those very rules. Consuming food by breaking the rules only harms the body. Food taken with discipline brings health. The same food, taken without discipline, destroys health and can even endanger life. It is through food that all living beings survive, and through it they gradually grow in form.

The question then is where does this food come from?

Food has many sources such as plants, trees, etc. But how do those sources come about? Sri Sri: *Krushna* answers, ***parjanya:d anna sambhava*** - Rain is the source of all types of food.



He illustrated this entire process as a "cycle." While all beings are part of the worldly cycle, only humans have the ability to learn and to reflect on their existence, their purpose, and proper action. Except that someone has to reveal it to us. Therefore, recognizing the need for giving proper guidance to us and to have us use our ability to learn and to act properly, Sri Sri: *Krushna* used *Arjuna* as a conduit to teach the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* to all mankind. In the third chapter, He details how humans and all living beings exist and should live, presenting this interconnected process as a continuous wheel.

anna:th bha:vanthi bhu:tha:ni parjanya:d anna sambhvaha |

yajna:th bha:vathi parjanyo: yajnah karma samudbhavaha || 3.14 ||

karma brahmo:dbhavam viddhi brahma:kshara samudbhavam |

thasma:th sarvagatham brahma nithyam yajne: prathishtitham || 3.15 //



e:vam pravarthitham chakram - He described it as a wheel, a continuous and repeating cycle. It begins at a point, moves along its course, returns to the same point, and then begins again.

anna:th bha:vanthi bhu:tha:ni - He started with the living beings, ***bhu:tha:ni***

What is the cause of these beings? Tracing backward, it is ***annam***, food.

And what is the cause of food? Going further back, it is ***parjanya***, the rain.

Thus, one must trace backward step by step and return to the living beings to complete the cycle. This is what is called ***e:vam pravarthitham chakram***- the wheel thus set in motion.

Many great scholars who have explained the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* appear confused in their commentaries, unable to fully understand how Sri: *Krushna* refers to this as a ***chakram***.



However, *Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja* clarifies beautifully how Sri Sri: *Krushna* conceived of this as a cycle.

“What sustains all these living beings?” - ***anna:th bha:vanthi bhu:tha:ni***

“Who are the *bhu:tha*? Are they like spirits or ghosts?” - No.

“Then who? Are the *bhu:tha* merely insentient objects?” - No.

“Are *bhu:tha:s* merely things that exist?” - No.

“Then who are the *bhu:tha*?” According to Sri Krishna, the *bhu:tha* are those beings that take food and live, those that survive by consuming some form of nourishment. These living beings exist in many forms. They may be humans, animals, or plants.

“What sustains them?” ***anna:th bha:vanthi bhu:tha:ni***
- They live by the food they consume, which sustains their being.

“Then how does that food come to them?” For some, it comes as grains; for others, as pulses; for some, as leaves; for others, as animals.



“How do all these forms arise?” ***parjanya:d anna sambhvaha*** - Through clouds and rain, food is produced on the earth. Animals drink this water to nourish themselves. Some animals also eat other animals for sustenance. Humans on the other hand are not approved to consume meat.

Ultimately, it is also ***parjanya:d anna sambhvaha*** - through the water of the clouds that falls as rain, we receive food. Even if water exists in the ocean, that ocean water alone cannot serve us. To grow crops or sustain living beings, that water must first become clouds. That cloud water must travel to us and then fall from the sky. That is what is called rain.

The water that falls in this way flows into rivers and collects in ponds. It also fills tanks, wells, and borewells. Thus, for water to reach us, it must come from the ocean and pass through the clouds. There is no other way for it to reach us. It is through clouds that we ultimately receive the food we need.

“Then how are these clouds formed? Who creates these clouds?”



It is commonly observed that the sun's rays turn water into vapor. Because of changes in the atmosphere, this vapor rises to different heights and forms various kinds of clouds. Only certain clouds at certain levels move with the wind and eventually release rain. Sometimes the rain falls where it is needed, and sometimes it falls in deserts where it serves no purpose. Modern scientists therefore say that clouds are formed only through the action of the sun's heat.

However, here Sri Sri: *Krushna* says ***yajna:th bha:vathi parjanya***, meaning that clouds arise from *yajna*. This may not seem to match what we observe, yet this is what the *ve:dic* scripture teaches. Whenever water becomes scarce, governments attempt various scientific methods to induce rain. Many times these efforts produce no results and are eventually abandoned.

But great beings who understood the *ve:dic* method performed the prescribed procedures and were able to bring rain even in places and times where people believed it would



never fall. History, including modern accounts, records many such events. Such demonstrations are still possible today. Rain arises from *yajna*, clouds form through *yajna*.

Ve:da says -

***agnau pra:stha: huthihi samyaga:dithyam
upathishttathe: |
a:dithya:jjaya:the:vrushtih vrushte:rannam
thathah praja:ha ||***

When an oblation is offered in the ***agniho:thra***, **sacred fire**, to a particular ***de:vatha***, the substance placed in the fire, together with the ***manthra*** and the ritual arrangement, is said to rise toward the sun, ***a:dithyam upathishttathe:***. It reaches the sun, where a subtle divine radiance is generated. From that radiance arises the power that produces clouds.



a:dithya:th ja:yathe: vrushtihi - from the sun, clouds arise and produce rain.

vrushte:rannam thatah praja:ha - from that rain, crops grow and food becomes available. Through that food, all embodied beings are sustained and able to live.

Whether the *yajna* we perform truly strengthens the sun is something beyond ordinary perception. Our eyes cannot grasp it, and scientific inquiry has not reached that subtle realm.

In the simple altar prepared for the fire ritual, ***agniho:thra***, small sacrificial sticks called *samidha:s* are placed into the fire along with ghee and clarified butter. Sacred ***manthra:s*** are then chanted with devotion. The vibration of these ***manthra:s*** carries its own force, and the materials offered into the fire possess inherent potency. Together, they give rise to ***ho:madhu:ma***, a sacrificial smoke with distinct and extraordinary qualities.

The powerful smoke is analogous to the sound waves emanating from a cell phone. We know that one can speak on



a small mobile phone and be heard by someone far away. Even without any visible connection, these devices allow *communication* across states, countries, and even continents. The sound travels because it transforms into waves, spreading through the atmosphere, and reaches a receiving tower in a form that can be captured and delivered to the listener. This transformation depends both on a special effect in nature and on the skill of the person using the device. Merely having a tower and a phone is not enough. A speaker is needed, and a listener must be ready to receive the message.

Similarly, when an *agniho:thra* is performed in a properly constructed *kunda*, a vessel, and the *ve:dic manthra:s* are chanted with devotion, the sound of the *manthra:s* spreads and transforms through nature in the proper sequence. It reaches its intended destination and brings the desired result or effect to those performing the ritual.

In addition, the characteristics of the materials used are also prescribed. The type of sesame seeds, ghee, bricks, and the exact method of constructing the *agniho:thra* follow strict scientific rules. When certain rules are observed in the use of



the *manthra*, the sound departs from its origin and reaches its destination. Likewise, the intention and devotion of the practitioner follow a proper sequence. Who performs the ritual, when, and in what state are all carefully regulated.

When these conditions are met, ***a:dithyam upathishttathe*** - the offering reaches the solar sphere. There, it engages with the power of the Sun as the inner overseer, and is directed wherever needed, purifying and removing obstacles along the way.

Just as the sound waves from a mobile phone reach a distant receiving tower, the *manthra*, combined with the substances offered, spreads throughout nature. Along its path, it gradually removes impurities and obstacles, ultimately reaching its intended destination. This process yields two benefits: one, the removal of pollution and two, the fulfillment of material needs or worldly comfort. Both are realized, provided the practice is performed correctly. To ensure this, the *Ve:da* prescribes precise sounds and pronunciations, which must be carefully learned and meticulously executed. This methodical



practice is called *yajna*, and both its timing and procedure are strictly regulated.

yajna:th bha:vathi parjanya - When *yajnas* are performed properly, rain, in the form of clouds, forms without fail, bringing all dependent results. Yet sometimes clouds do not appear, and at other times, even when clouds form, they may drift away without raining where it is needed, while pouring where it is not required. Rain must fall where it is most needed, and *yajnas* are understood to bring about such clouds and rainfall. As Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains, the cause of food is the clouds, and the cause of clouds is the *yajna*, showing the cycle of cause and effect.

The Lord establishes the world order, and He alone governs its functioning. If any changes or additions are needed, one must turn to the Lord. It is essential to first understand the system and its natural laws before judging what is right or wrong. Once the system is understood, any modifications should be made under the guidance of those with proper knowledge.



In the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* provides a remarkable description of this system, illustrating the cycle beautifully. All living beings survive because of food, food is produced through rain, and rain arises from the performance of *ve:dic yajnas* and rituals. There is no need to doubt this; history provides many examples where properly performed *yajnas* produced rain. Mistakes or incomplete rituals may not yield results, but when performed correctly, the outcome is natural and is assured.

Just as grains can be separated from husks only through proper processing, the results of *yajnas* are obtained only through correct performance. Attempting rituals without following the proper method is ineffective. Even in recent history, efforts to bring rain through *ve:dic manthra:s* sometimes failed, highlighting the importance of correct procedure.



The essence of the *Ve:da* lies in the sound it carries. It must be used carefully and without alteration, and the person using it must be disciplined, trained, and well-versed in its proper method. The materials used must be pure, for only then will the desired results follow. Sri Sri: *Krushna* demonstrates that it is through *yajna* that rain occurs.

The recitation of *manthra:s* and the offerings into the fire create a combined process that induces changes in nature. This empowers the sun, forms clouds, and brings rainfall. This is the effect of *yajna*.

But how does a *yajna* occur? Simply wishing it to happen is not enough. Sri: *Krushna* explains: ***yajnah karma samudbhavaha*** - *yajna* arises from *ve:dic* practices. For a *yajna* to manifest, deliberate activity must take place. Constructing an altar with bricks in a specific arrangement, arranging *samidhi:s*, decorating them in a certain way, procure small ladles called ***sruk*** and ***sruva***, vessels such as ***prani:thi*** and ***pro:kshani***, and placing *darbha* grass according to precise rules are all part of the process. This



deliberate action is *karma*, and it is through *karma* that *yajna* arises. *yajna* facilitates the formation of clouds, from clouds comes rain, rain nurtures the growth of crops, and these crops are the source of sustenance for innumerable living beings. The cycle is complete only when the final element connects back to the beginning.

To clarify how *karma* arises, Sri: *Krushna* says: ***karma brahmo:dbhavam viddhi brahma:kshara samudbhavam*** – *karma* arises from *Brahma*. *Sanskrit* is a remarkable language, and *brahma* itself carries multiple meanings. Without careful understanding, even the learned may err, and diverse commentaries arise from this very complexity.

The ability to discern the intended meaning and context is the key skill. An individual who possesses this ability is proficient, whereas one who lacks it remains perpetually confused.

Many different philosophical views exist in the world. Such misunderstandings often occur when words are interpreted



differently from their intended meaning, without first understanding their true original sense.

For example, the word *a:thma* in *sa:nskriṭh* consists of just two syllables, yet it carries many meanings - *a:thma ji:ve: dhruthau de:he: svabha:ve parama:thmani*. The word *a:thma* can mean body. The same *a:thma* can also mean nature or character. When one says *idandi: mruda:thmakam*, *mruth* means mud, and *a:thmaka* refers to the nature of clay or the transformation of mud.

Thus, depending on context, *a:thma* may refer to the physical body, or to one's innate nature. When someone is described as having a saintly temperament, the word *a:thma* is used in the sense of nature. One also hears expressions like *guna:thmaka*, meaning one whose nature is endowed with virtues. In this way, *a:thma* can mean nature.

a:thma can also mean that which upholds, or that which supports. It can mean 'the ji:va,' the individual soul. In the



Upanishads, *a:thma* is also used to mean *Parama:thma*. Thus, the same word can refer to *prakruthi*, the physical world or to the *Parama:thma*. Scholars skilled in language explain that the word *brahma* can also be used in all these meanings.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* Himself uses such words in astonishing ways. The word *brahma* can mean *prakruthi*, nature or *ji:va*, individual soul. The word *brahma* primarily refers to *Parama:thma*. Likewise, the principal meaning of *a:thma* is also *Parama:thma*.

Other meanings arise depending on how roots and syllables combine. This is called *yo:gika:rtham*, the etymological meaning. When a word is commonly and authoritatively used in one main sense, that is called *ru:dhi*, the conventional meaning.

A word's meaning may thus arise from its verbal root, or from the way its letters and sounds join together. Sometimes both



yo:gika:rtham, etymological sense and *ru:dhyartham*, conventional sense apply; sometimes only one applies.

Consider the word *pankajam*. *panka* means mud, and *ja* means born from, so *pankaja* literally means that which is born in mud. This is its *yo:gika:rtham*, the meaning derived from its roots.

Many things are born in mud such as worms, insects, and tiny organisms. All of these could technically be called *pankaja* because they fit the root meaning.

A lotus also arises from mud, but over time the word *pankaja* became fixed specifically for the lotus. This fixed, commonly accepted usage is called *ru:dhi*. When a word acquires a set meaning simply through usage, without analyzing its roots, that is *ru:dhi*.

Thus *pankaja* holds both etymological and conventional meanings for the lotus, while for worms or insects it holds only the etymological sense.



Therefore, such distinctions must be understood and applied with care.

A person might feel proud when addressed as *pankaja:kshi*. Yet, the term could mean ‘one with eyes as beautiful as a lotus petal,’ or, on the contrary, ‘one with eyes like insects dwelling in the mud.’ This type of multiple-meaning usage is called *yo:garu:dhi*. Similarly, the words *a:thma* and *brahma* can both refer to *parma:thma*.

Depending on the root and the construction of sounds, a word can have multiple meanings. For example, *brahma* can signify the *Ve:da*, *parma:thma*, *ji:va*, or *prakruthi*.

Sri: *Krushna* says: “***mamayo:nihi mahad brahma thasmin garbham dadha:myaham***” - “The primordial element called *mu:la prakruthi* is responsible for the creation of this universe and is infinitely expansive—***mama mahad bramha***. This *prakruthi* belongs to Me.”

Here, Sri: *Krushna* uses *brahma* to mean *prakruthi*, the primordial element. In other contexts, such as the eighth chapter, He uses *brahma* to refer to the *ji:va*, and elsewhere to



parma:thma. Thus, *brahma* can describe multiple realities. Depending on the context, a person's knowledge of the *Ve:das*, their discernment, and the grace of God, one will choose the appropriate meaning.

Bhagavad *Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya* explains:
“*karma brahmo:dbhavam viddhi*” — here, *karma* means activity.

We have learned that rain is the source of food, and the *Ve:da* states that *yajna* is the source of rain. *Yajna* is an activity we perform, and to perform it, we require the body. Sri Sri: *Krushna* thus uses *brahma* to signify the body. *Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya* interprets this as: the body is the source for performing *karma*.

This leads to the next question: If the body is the source for *karma*, what then is the source of the body itself?

To understand the Lord's intentions and to grasp His teachings, one must receive both God's grace and the guidance of preceptors who have realized God's true form. Among the many preceptors, *Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja:s*



commentary is particularly clear and closely aligned with the actual reality. *Ra:ma:nuja* elucidates the cycle of life and the source of this world as described by Lord Sri: *Krushna*.

All living beings are collectively called *bhu:thas*, and their flourishing depends on food. Food, in turn, is made possible by rain, which occurs when competent *ve:dic* scholars perform *yajnas*. *yajnas* arise from *karma*, and *karma* is enacted through the body. This naturally leads to the question: How are bodies formed?

Some claim that bodies form merely through the conjugation of a man and a woman. However, modern healthcare specialists, as well as the *Ve:da*, reveal a deeper truth. The body initially forms from a combination of the five elements—earth, water, fire, wind, and space. Then the *ji:va* must be present for the body to perform any activity. Even during human conception, the *ji:va* must reside in the respective bodies.



We have no control over the *pra:na*, for we did not place it in the body, nor can we prevent it from leaving. The *pra:na* always accompanies the *ji:va*.

Neither *pra:na* nor *ji:va* can be seen with the naked eye or any available instruments. Yet, *Ve:davya:sa Bhagava:n* establishes their presence in the *Bramhasu:thra*, under the principle of *uthkra:nthi gathya:gathi:na:m*. According to this principle, when the *ji:va* resides in the body, the body gains the ability to move and act. Without the *ji:va*, the body becomes a corpse and is immediately discarded.

A *ji:va* is essential for all activities—eating, speaking, learning, and more. Furthermore, the *ji:va* enables the body to transition through its natural stages—from infancy to toddler, to adulthood, and finally to old age.

The body takes on different names as it undergoes various stages and transformations. These transformations occur only because the *ji:va*, along with *pra:na*, resides *within* the body. A two-year-old becomes a twenty-year-old because the *ji:va* is present. If the *ji:va* is missing, the body becomes a mere



corpse, and no matter how carefully it is preserved, it will not change or grow. Therefore, to expect the body to perform any action, the presence of the *ji:va* is indispensable. In short: the body changes; the *ji:va* does not. The body is a product of *prakruthi*, whose nature is constant modification, while the *ji:va* is unchanging. Sri Sri: *Krushna* has already explained this thoroughly in the second chapter, but we can briefly revisit it here.

The *ji:va* says ‘I’ whether it is in the state of a child or an adult. We do not perceive any change in this sense of ‘I,’ yet the body of a child is completely different from the body of an adult—strength, complexion, capacities, and activities all vary significantly. Still, the one who says “me” or ‘I’ undergoes no modification. Nor do we observe any deterioration of *athma-jna:na* in either state. Deterioration is called ***kshara***. The body deteriorates, and so it is termed ***kshara***, whereas the *a:thma—ji:va*—does not deteriorate and is therefore called ***akshara***. Sri: *Krushna* teaches this not only in the second chapter but also in the eighth and twelfth chapters. The *Upanishads* affirm the same truth: ***na ja:yathe:***



***mriyathe: va vapaschith ajo: nithyah
sa:svatho:yam pura:naha na hanyathe:
hanyama:ne: sari:re:***

—The knower is never born, nor does it die. It is unborn, eternal, everlasting, and always youthful; it is not slain when the body is slain.

Thus, even as the body changes and decays, the *ji:va* remains unchanged and undecaying. It has no birth, no death, and no old age. Therefore, the *ji:va* is called *akshara*, and when this *akshara-ji:va* is present in the body, the body becomes capable of performing actions, or *karma*.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* then instructs that these *karmas* should be transformed into *yajna*. From *yajna* arise rain-bearing clouds. From rain, crops grow. When we consume the food produced by these crops, the body—*within* which the *ji:va* resides—receives nourishment. If the *ji:va* is to continue residing in the body, the body must be sustained constantly. Only then can it grow and serve as an instrument for the *ji:va* to carry out its



activities. The body, in fact, has no greater purpose than to be a useful vehicle for the *ji:va*.

Once the *ji:va* departs from the body, even if its favorite food is placed nearby, the body will not respond. The body desires, acts, and responds only as long as the *ji:va* resides *within* it. Thus, when the *ji:va* unites with a body, that union is called “birth,” and the being gains an identity and a name—it becomes a *bhu:tha*. This applies equally to humans, cows, dogs, insects, flies, mosquitoes, and all other creatures: each is fundamentally a body animated by a *ji:va* along with *pra:na*.

This principle extends to trees as well. As long as the *ji:va* presides *within* a tree, it produces shoots, leaves, and new growth. The moment the *ji:va* leaves, the tree begins to dry up and is eventually regarded as mere wood. Therefore, every living being—human, animal, or plant—is called a *bhu:tha*, meaning a composite of the *ji:va* and the five elemental forms of *prakruthi*.

The scriptures then trace a profound cycle:

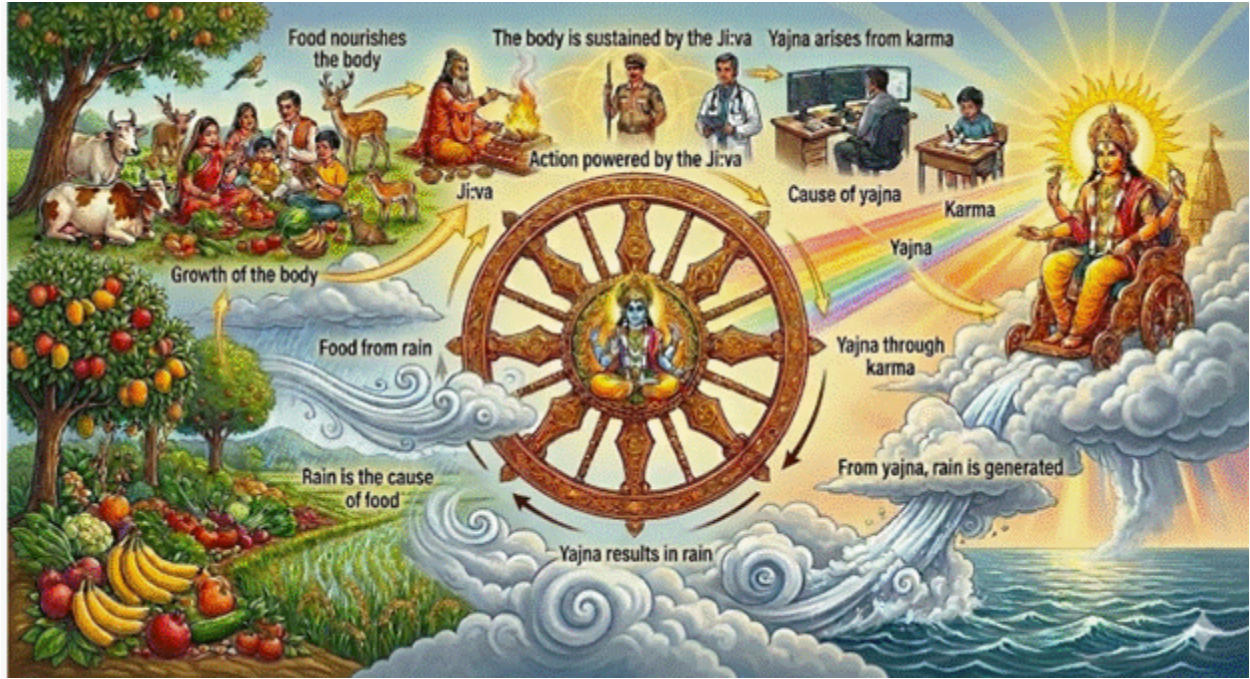
- How does the body grow? — From food.



-
- Where does food come from? — From rain.
 - What causes rain? — *Yajnas* (sacrificial acts).
 - What is the cause of *yajnas*? — *karma*.
 - What gives rise to *karma*? — The body.
 - What sustains the body? — The *ji:va*, whose presence alone enables the body to act.

This entire sequence is described as ***akshara-samudbhava***. Only a body endowed with *ji:va* has the capacity to create and sustain life. A corpse, devoid of *ji:va*, cannot produce anything.

Thus, the *ji:va*—referred to as *akshara*—when united with the body—called brahma in this context—forms a *bhu:tham*.



Finally, the scripture concludes: ***“anna:th bhavanti bhu:tha:ni”***—all beings arise from food. With this, the cycle comes full circle.

A *bhu:tham*, therefore, is a composite of *karma*, *ji:va*, and body. And the entire chain depends on food, which depends on rain, which depends on *yajna*, and so on. *Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja* beautifully elucidates this cycle in a manner unmatched by other interpretations.

At this juncture, Sri: *Krushna* turns to *Arjuna* and asks, ***“O Arjuna, on what do you think this entire cycle rests? Do you***



believe it functions on its own?” Sri: Krushna declares that it does not.

“thasma:th sarvagatham brahma nithyam yajne: prathishtitham” — Therefore, Bramhan—who is present everywhere—abides eternally in *yajna*.

Sri: *Krushna* urges *Arjuna* to look beyond his immediate conflict with the *Kauravas* and instead contemplate the welfare and sustenance of all living beings.

What, then, must *Arjuna* do? Since *yajna* sustains the cosmic order—*yajna* bringing rain, rain nurturing crops, and crops sustaining the bodies of all living beings—Sri: *Krushna* urges *Arjuna* to perform his duty of battle as a *yajna*. When actions are offered as *yajna*, the cycle continues to nourish the world. If not, rains cease, food diminishes, and the entire system collapses. Thus, *yajna* stands at the very center of this cosmic wheel.

“saha yajnaihi praja: srushtva: puro:va:cha praja:pathihi ”—At creation, the Lord brought forth all beings along with *yajnas* meant for their prosperity. Further,



“*yajna:rtha:th karmano:nyathra lo:ko:yam karmabandhanaha*”—Actions liberate only when performed as *yajna*; otherwise, the same actions bind one to worldly existence. Therefore, **“*thadartham karma kaunthe:ya mukthasangah sama:chara*”—perform all your duties for the sake of *yajna*, free from attachment to worldly objects or personal gain.**

Sri: *Krushna* thus shows how *yajna* is central to the harmonious functioning of the world.

e:vam pravarthitham chakram na:nuvarthayathi: ha yaha |
agha:yur indriya: ra:mo: mo:gham pa:rttha! sa:ji:vathi || 3.16 ||

One who does not follow this divinely established cycle lives in vain. Such a person is considered a thief, for they consume the world’s resources without contributing to its welfare.

- ***agha:yuhu*** — their life becomes a source of sin.
- ***agha:yurindriya:ra:maha*** — such an individual lives only for sense gratification, forgetting the very



purpose of their birth. Their senses remain the sole center of their life's activity. Such a person neither attains self-realization nor allows their knowledge to bear fruit.

- ***mo:gham pa:rttha! sa ji:vathi*** — O *Arjuna*, the life of such a person is futile.

Animals, trees, and other beings do not have the capacity to perform *yajna*, for their bodies are not equipped for such spiritual responsibility. Yet, they do not misuse their lives for mere sense enjoyment; they live according to their nature.

The privilege of learning and performing *yajnas* belongs exclusively to human beings. When humans, despite having this rare capability, neglect *yajna* and live only for their senses, they fall below even the level of trees. In such cases, animals and plants become more beneficial to the world than those human beings who refuse to uphold the cosmic cycle driven by *yajnas* .



Sri: *Krushna* says, “Therefore *Arjuna*, if one does not understand this cosmic cycle nor live in accordance with it, life becomes futile. One misses a profound opportunity. That is why, in the second chapter, I taught you how to transform all your actions into *yajna*.”

Sri: *Krushna*’s intention in giving this teaching is not merely to make *Arjuna* realize his duty to fight. His purpose is far greater: He offers the supreme knowledge of *karma-yo:ga* to all of humanity, for the times when we struggle to shoulder our responsibilities. Fulfilling our duties—however demanding they may be—and thereby securing prosperity in a righteous manner is what Sri Sri: *Krushna* wants to establish.

To live this way, humans must transform their very lives into *yajnas*. Sri: *Krushna* says, ***thasma:th sarvagatham brahma nithyam yajne: prathishttatham***—meaning that our bodies must be used *solely* as instruments for performing *yajna*, and for nothing else.

Here Sri: *Krushna* deliberately uses the word ***prathishttitham*** instead of the simpler ***sthitham***. The



prefix *pra*—meaning “well” or “firmly”—is intentional. It conveys that humans must gradually learn the true significance of the body and apply it properly. If the body is not used as an instrument for *yajna*, then it is no different from one lying in a graveyard or *sama:dhi*—it serves no purpose, and nourishing such a body becomes meaningless. In fact, such a misdirected life becomes harmful to the person themselves.

For this reason, Sri: *Krushna* reiterates ***nithyam yajne: prathishtitham***—that one must live in this disciplined manner alone. In reality, Sri: *Krushna* had already laid out the complete teaching of the *Bhagavadgi:tha* by the end of the second chapter itself. However, *Arjuna* then asked an important question: ***sthitha-prajnasya ka: bha:sha:?***—“How does a person of steady wisdom behave? What do they do, and how do they act?”

Since *Arjuna* posed this question, supremely compassionate Lord Sri: *Krushna* continues, explaining in detail how to practice transforming *karma* into *yajna*.



As part of His response, Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes that while performing any action, one must remember: *Why* we are acting, *how* we are acting, the *manner* in which it must be done, and the *purpose* for which it should be done. He stresses the need for absolute clarity of knowledge behind every action. Thus, Sri: *Krushna* highlights the importance of thought and understanding.

But *Arjuna* misunderstood this teaching. He assumed that knowledge alone is superior and that he must pursue knowledge exclusively, neglecting *karma*.

Moreover, *Arjuna* believed that various worldly activities only lead the mind toward distraction, whereas knowledge appears to be something one can pursue in stillness, without action.

Arjuna was indeed intelligent. He had studied the *Ve:das* deeply and possessed the right knowledge. Yet at this moment, neither intelligence nor knowledge was serving him. As *Hanuma:n* says in the *Sundara:ka:nda* of the Sri *Ra:ma:yana*, **so:kaha na:sayethe: jna:na**—grief destroys knowledge. When sorrow overwhelms a person, they



cannot recall what they know. Sorrow drains one's strength, clouds intelligence, and completely obscures sound judgment. *Arjuna* too was submerged in grief; his judgment was clouded, and he had lost sight of reality. This is why he became prone to erroneous thinking and required the compassionate teachings of Sri Sri: *Krushna*.

In the second chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* tells *Arjuna*: ***sruthiviprathipanna: the: yattha:sttha:syathi nischala:***—“*Arjuna*, when you constantly listen to enlightened teachers, your knowledge will become steady and unwavering. Only when knowledge becomes steady does true vision arise.” ***thada: yo:gam ava:psyasi*** —“At that point, you will have fulfilled your responsibilities and will become eligible for self-realization.” Sri: *Krushna* reminds *Arjuna* that this principle applies to him as well.

Only then does *Arjuna*—out of subtle pride and ego—ask whether he too must undergo such listening, imagining for a moment that he might be exempt. Although *Arjuna* had been listening attentively as Sri: *Krushna* spoke about the body, the *a:thma*, and realization throughout the second chapter, it was



only when Sri: *Krushna* explicitly said that this teaching applied to *him* that *Arjuna* stirred. It was like embers glowing to life when a dormant fire is disturbed, or like a sleeping serpent that suddenly strikes when awakened.

Towards the end of the second chapter, Sri: *Krushna* uses the word *vimuhyathi*—“having given this knowledge”—and *stthitva:sya:m antha ka:le:pi*—“if you hold firmly to this knowledge even at the time of death, it will benefit you.” When *Arjuna* heard this, he became inwardly proud. His expression seemed to say, “*Haven’t I already attained that state? Am I not already skilled? Why should I still be expected to work? I reached that steady maturity long ago.*”

In truth, *Arjuna* was no ordinary person. In the past, he had performed intense austerities to please *PaRa:ma* Siva and obtained the mighty *Pa:supatha* weapon. He had also conquered the temptations of his own senses and rejected *U:rvasi*’s advances. Because of these accomplishments, a subtle pride had grown in him. He felt that *karma yo:ga* was unnecessary for someone as accomplished as himself, someone who thought he could govern his body and mind at



will. Convinced that he could directly enter *jna:na yo:ga*, he asked Sri: *Krushna* about the characteristics of a ***stthitha-prajna*** only to prove to himself that he already possessed those qualities.

However, after hearing Sri: *Krushna*'s explanation, *Arjuna* realized the truth—he did not possess even a single one of the qualities of a *stthitha-prajna*. Therefore, Sri: *Krushna* began to clearly outline the stages required to attain that state.

Sri: *Krushna* explained that one must understand two things: *nishka:ma karma* and *jna:na* (or *buddhi*). *karma* is the domain of the body, while *jna:na* is the knowledge of the *a:thma*. *Arjuna* assumed that because Sri: *Krushna* praised *jna:na* so highly, he should focus only on increasing his knowledge. He thought, “As my knowledge of the *a:thma* grows, faith will naturally come, and then there will be no need for bodily actions.”

To clarify this misconception, Sri: *Krushna* responded with an analogy: “*Arjuna!* The body and the *a:thma* are like two actors on a stage. When one actor speaks, the other must respond



with appropriate expressions. Even if one actor has no lines, he must still react. If he stands like a statue, the entire play collapses.”

We observe this even in simple village dramas. Suppose a play depicts Sri: *Krushna* teaching *Arjuna*. When the actor playing Sri: *Krushna* speaks profound words, the actor playing *Arjuna* must express surprise, grief, confusion, or humility. If he stands motionless without any expression, the entire performance fails.

When the second actor responds at the right moment and in the right manner, aligned with the context of the play, that actor is considered truly competent. Otherwise, no one recognizes them as an actor of merit. Only such timely coordination creates an indelible impression on the audience. In the same way that the harmonious effort of two actors makes a dRa:ma successful, the *a:thma* and the body must work together: the body performs actions, and the *a:thma* imparts knowledge and discernment. Therefore, the body must always be engaged in the appropriate activity, while the *a:thma*'s knowledge must be continuously applied. On the



stage of life, both the body and the *jīva* must play their roles in proper synchronization.

There is a story of a lady and her five daughters-in-law. She gave clear instructions, assigning each of them a specific household task—one to cook, one to lay the banana leaves for dining, one to serve food, one to take out the trash, and one to clean. Although they understood their individual tasks, to the lady's shock, they all performed their respective chores simultaneously: one began cooking, another laid the leaves, another served food, another took out the trash, and the last one began cleaning—all at the same time! Without proper coordination, even correctly assigned duties fail to fulfill their purpose.

Similarly, the activities of the body and the knowledge *within* must be coordinated. Only then do we call it life. Rice and curry are not eaten separately; they are mixed in the right proportion before being enjoyed. In the second chapter, highlighting this coordination, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains how one must perform bodily activities while applying knowledge. But *Arjuna* did not fully grasp this, prompting Sri: *Krushna* to



describe the cycle of life and establish the relationship between bodily action and inner knowledge.

Humans perform four types of *karma*:

1. ***Nithya karmas*** – daily duties such as *sandhyaa:vandanam*, bathing, eating, etc.
2. ***Naimiththika karmas*** – actions triggered by specific circumstances. For example, if one falls into dirt, one must bathe. If one touches something that causes impurity, again one must bathe. Bathing due to a particular event then becomes a ***naimiththika karma***.
3. ***ka:mya karmas*** - activities driven by personal desires. For example, when we occasionally crave a particular dish, we gather the required ingredients, prepare it, and enjoy it. Such acts are not essential for sustaining life; therefore, they fall under *ka:mya karmas*.
4. ***Nishiddha karmas*** - actions that must be avoided. For instance, the *Ve:da* advises refraining from consuming items like onion and garlic.



Therefore, one must understand *nithya*, *naimiththika*, and *ka:mya karmas*—how to perform them, what to perform, and to what extent. One must also clearly know *nishiddha karmas* to avoid activities that are counterproductive. Actions that must be performed are called *parigra:hyas*, and those that must be avoided are called *parithya:jyas*. Both categories guide us in the right direction—toward a life where we care for the body only to the extent necessary to follow the path of self-realization, the true purpose of human embodiment.

The purpose of buying a car is not merely to keep the car polished; it is a means to reach a destination. We maintain the car only so it can serve that purpose. Similarly, the body is not to be protected for its own sake. It is a tool given to us to realize our true nature. The *nithya*, *naimiththika*, and *ka:mya karmas* we choose to engage in should support the growth of self-knowledge, ultimately helping us exhaust the *ka:rmic* impressions that obscure it.



By nature, the *ji:va* already possesses knowledge; it is not something newly acquired. However, this inherent knowledge becomes veiled by *ka:rmic* records. Some actions further cloud the knowledge, while others help reveal it. Yet other actions help preserve the clarity once gained. This process is natural.

In essence, *karma* refers to the activities we perform, while *jna:na* refers to the self-knowledge that is uncovered and nourished. Knowledge unfolds as we consistently listen to enlightened teachers and reflect on what we have learned. This repeated reflection enables knowledge to deepen and remain steady. Meanwhile, because the body still requires care, we must choose activities that do not hinder this growth of knowledge.

Thus, *karmas* must be practiced in a way that supports—rather than obstructs—the expansion of self-knowledge. At the same time, we must strive to eliminate the *ka:rmic* impressions that stand in the way of this unfolding.

What is Dharma?



The impressions left by past *karmas* act as subtle filters through which *jna:na* (knowledge) passes as it reaches us through the senses. Just as the color of a lamp's chimney tints the light that shines through it, our *ruchi* and *va:sanas*—the tendencies formed by previous *ka:rmic* experiences—color our understanding. This filtered knowledge influences the kinds of activities we pursue: what we seek, what we avoid, and how we act in the world. In this way, knowledge itself impels action.

However, knowledge must always support and direct our actions. Knowledge that is not applied is of no use, and actions performed without the guidance of knowledge resemble the mechanical movement of inanimate objects. True progress requires perfect coordination between knowledge and action.

At the same time, *ka:rmic* impressions cannot be erased merely by knowing that they exist. One must engage in appropriate, corrective actions to purify them. It is like trying to change the color of a tinted glass: becoming aware of the tint does not change it—you must physically replace the glass to alter the color.



Similarly, the *ji:va*'s *ka:rmic* impressions are not dissolved by simple awareness. They are removed only through certain prescribed activities. Since we do not inherently know the nature or location of these *ka:rmic* records, the *Ve:da* instructs us on the means to eliminate them. The *Ve:da* declares: ***dharme:na***—only through *dha:rmic* practices are *ka:rmic* records purified.

What, then, is *dharma*?

Dharma refers to the practices and duties that the *ve:da* prescribe. Activities not rooted in the *ve:da* cannot be called *dharma*. The *Ve:da* outlines many paths and duties, tailored to one's eligibility, capacity, and needs. These collective disciplines constitute *dharma*, and only through such *dharmic* conduct can *ka:rmic* impressions be removed.

Yet, when we perform *dharmic* actions, they naturally yield fruits—health, longevity, prosperity, happiness, and more. But if our ultimate goal is self-realization or God-realization, we must not become attached to these intermediate results. For example, when we pour water with our hands, the flow of water



on the ground may look pleasing, but we cannot stop to enjoy it if our larger purpose lies ahead. We must continue the act to achieve the intended goal.

A similar principle applies to the *ve:dic* ritual *jyo:thishto:ma*. One who performs *jyo:thishto:ma* is destined to reach *svarga*, commonly called *Indra-lo:ka*. But the performer does not ascend to *svarga* immediately. First, they receive its preliminary benefits—long life, good health, virtuous children, wealth, and happiness. These blessings continue as long as the individual stays committed to the primary goal of attaining *svarga*, without being sidetracked by the intermediate rewards.

Instead, if they begin re-directing their efforts toward accumulating wealth, expanding their family, improving health, or other such pursuits, they risk losing sight of their primary goal. The intermediate results of action are always enticing or repelling. Some experiences bring pleasure and others bring sorrow. These reactions arise from deeply embedded *ka:rmic* impressions. When one tastes something sweet, the immediate thought is “I want more of this.” When



the taste is bitter, the mind reacts, “I do not want this.” In the same way, all activities produce worldly outcomes that give rise to pleasant or unpleasant experiences. We become attached to pleasant experiences and try to increase them. At the same time we try to avoid or reduce the unpleasant ones. This impulse to increase pleasure and to escape sorrow creates new *samska:ras*, the *ka:rmic* records.

These records do not dissolve on their own. To remove them, one must learn to remain unaffected by pleasure and grief. Consider a doctor prescribing medicine. The patient must take the medicine whether it tastes sweet or bitter. Only then can the illness be cured. If the patient refuses to take the medicine because it is bitter, or continues taking it only because it is sweet, the disease will never go away. The focus must remain on the primary goal, which is to remove the disease, and not on the temporary taste of the medicine.

In the same manner, one should not be driven by the immediate results of actions. Because the immediate results are attractive or unpleasant, a person uses all their *jna:na* either to obtain the desirable outcomes or to avoid the undesirable



ones. In this process they exhaust the very *jna:na* that is required to pursue the true goal, which is self realization. Instead of using the body as an instrument to nurture *jna:na*, the body begins to command the *a:thma* and its *jna:na*. The *a:thma* then becomes a servant to the body.

“This is like the tail wagging the dog instead of the dog wagging the tail,” said Dara Shikoh, the friend of Aurangzeb, after understanding the essence of the *Upanishads*.

The body must be used to strengthen and expand *jna:na*. Whenever the body attempts to wander away from the true goal, one must discipline it and direct it back to the proper path. Enlightened scholars feel sorrow at our condition, because we often fail to guide our own bodies toward the right actions. When we cannot make the body act correctly, it creates many harmful *ka:rmic* records. We must learn how to reduce them.

We have already learned the harmful tendencies that arise from ignorance. These include thinking that the a:thma and the body are the same,



believing that we act independently without the Lord's guidance, developing possessiveness toward worldly objects connected to the body, and assuming that everything exists for our personal enjoyment. In addition to these, a person often convinces himself that he possesses righteous qualities and that he is already following dharma.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* then explains how we can transform ourselves. He says that *yajna* is the key. *Yajna* means understanding the actions we must perform and offering them as service to the Lord. The reason we struggle to do this is the immense accumulation of *ka:rmic* records gathered through countless millennia of *yuga:s*. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains this clearly in the second chapter. The remaining chapters further illuminate these ideas so that the teachings become clear enough to practice. *Arjuna* was still confused after the second chapter, and Sri Sri: *Krushna* continued to clarify the path for him.

The first step is to listen to enlightened *gurus*. After listening and repeatedly contemplating their teachings, the understanding should inspire the right action that aligns with



the knowledge gained. However, in the beginning the body resists and refuses to listen.

Nevertheless, one must remain aware of what is truly beneficial. You may not immediately grasp what is good for you the first time you hear it. That is natural. Consistent listening, reflection, and learning gradually bring clarity. Even if the body initially shows certain weaknesses or resistance, the pursuit of learning should never stop. Over time, this steady learning strengthens your resolve.

The most important element is developing a firm resolve, ***sankalpa*** - one that actively supports virtuous conduct and steadily discards what is undesirable. There is a reason resolve is central. The *Upanishads* declare, ***I:sava:syam idagum sarvam*** - the Supreme Being, *Parama:thma*, resides in all beings. The *Ve:das* further state that *Parama:thma*, dwelling *within* each person, supports the *ji:va* in three distinct ways.

1. uda:si:naha (Indifference)

At certain times, the Lord allows the *ji:va* complete freedom. He remains neutral toward the *ji:va*'s resolutions. This



occurs when the *ji:va* is free from *ka:rmic* impressions and worldly attachments—at the very beginning of time, called ***A:dyasankalpa***. Knowledge (*jna:na*) is intrinsic to every *ji:va*; *Parama:thma* does not have to give it to them. Though the *ji:va* is ***anu*** (minute) and *Parama:thma* is ***vibhu*** (all-pervading), both possess natural *jna:na* appropriate to their nature. *Parama:thma*'s knowledge is infinitely expansive, while the *ji:va*'s knowledge, though limited in comparison, is equally remarkable.

The *ji:va*'s *jna:na* expresses itself through the power of choice, which naturally leads to action.

2. ***A:dyapravruththi*** (Consent)

When a *ji:va* forms a resolution and contemplates it repeatedly, that resolution becomes action—but only with *Parama:thma*'s consent. In the case of ***A:dyasankalpa***, however, the Lord does not intervene; He grants full freedom to the *ji:va* to pursue whatever it chooses. He simply waits for the *ji:va*'s first decision to manifest as its first action, ***A:dyapravruththi***.



A:dyapravruththi is the very first action a *ji:va* performs that is agreed upon by *Parama:thma*.

3. *auda:si:nya* (Support)

At this stage, *Parama:thma* supports the *ji:va* in every possible way, yet without taking any decisions on its behalf. The *Brahma su:thras* explain this with the principle ***kruthaprayathna:pe:kshasthu***—the Lord fully respects the *ji:va*'s initial effort and does not impose His will on it. This neutrality and non-interference is called ***auda:si:nya***.

Although every action requires *Parama:thma*'s permission, in this initial stage He merely agrees, like two people living in the same house—one expresses the desire to go out, and the other simply consents without influencing the decision. *Parama:thma* allows the action to proceed but does not determine what the *ji:va* should choose.

When two individuals share a joint bank account, both signatures are required to withdraw funds. Likewise, when the leaders of two nations agree on a joint initiative, the plan



moves forward only with the consent of both sides. In the same way, every action of the *ji:va* proceeds only with *Parama:thma*'s consent.

Even when someone like *Sisupa:la* chose to insult Sri Sri: *Krushna* 108 times, Sri: *Krushna* permitted it. Conversely, when Dhruva wished to praise the Lord, Sri: *Krushna* touched His conch, *Pa:nchajanya*, granting the young devotee the ability to express his devotion. Dhruva, at four years old, was overwhelmed with bliss; he had the resolve (*sankalpa*) to glorify the Lord, but the words would not arise on their own. It was Sri: *Krushna* who enabled their flow.

***yo:ntaha pravisya mama va:chamima:m
prasuptham sanji:vayath akhilasakthidharaha
svadha:mna: |
anya:mscha hastacharanasravanathvaga:di:n
pra:na:nnamo: bhagavathe: purusha:ya
thubhyam || Sri:mad Bha:gavatham 4.9.6 ||***

Dhruva declares, “It is He who enters *within* and awakens my dormant speech.” The Lord’s inspiration manifested as



Dhruva's words. Sri: *Krushna* supports what is necessary and appropriate.

However, merely taking a resolve does not guarantee that it will yield results. A resolve must be strong enough to manifest into action. For a resolution to gain strength, one must repeatedly listen, reflect, and contemplate. Only through such steady learning does the resolve—and therefore *jna:na*—become firm, eventually expressing itself as action. When the resolve is directed toward virtuous deeds, it is called ***subhasankalpa or subhe:ccha***, the desire for what is good.

A resolve toward goodness must be cultivated in three essential ways:

1. Study of the *Ve:da*. One should continuously study, listen to, and discuss the scriptures.
2. ***Sajjana sangathi***. One must remain in the company of kind, enlightened *gurus* who can recognize one's good qualities and weaknesses, and have a desire to enhance the former and reduce the latter.



3. **vaira:gya abhya:sa**. One should contemplate the limitations and drawbacks of things that are harmful or distracting, developing natural detachment from them.

Namma:lwa:r, the esteemed and enlightened poet, says in the Dravida Prabandha, the Tamil thesis: “*What a disgusting body this is. What a terrible birth. We do not want it. It always gives false knowledge, and it never allows true knowledge to emerge clearly. No matter how many times we clean it, the body constantly excretes impurities from the eyes, ears, mouth, skin, and everywhere else.*” In this way, *Namma:lwa:r* laments that he does not wish to be associated with the body at all.

Through this, *Namma:lwa:r* teaches us a practice meant to reduce our attachment to the body. This practice is called **vaira:gya:bhya:sa**. By continually listening to enlightened *gurus* and scholars, one gradually cultivates *Ve:dantic* knowledge, good association (*sajjana sangathi*), and *vaira:gya:bhya:sa*, ultimately bringing these qualities into one’s actions.



We all understand the power of association. When a person spends time with those who sing bhajans, perform *sandhya:vandanam*, or chant regularly, they too will feel inspired to join, even if they have never done such practices before. In the same way, even if someone has neither the habit nor the interest in performing good activities, being close to virtuous people naturally creates a desire to participate. They develop a *sankalpam*, a sincere resolve to engage in these activities. Once that resolve arises, *Parama:thma* supports and strengthens them, enabling the body to act in the right way. *Parama:thma* never forces anyone to do anything without their own resolve. He guides us to use the body according to the *sankalpam* we make.

Moreover, the body never remains idle. As the scripture says, “*na hi kashchith kshanamapi ja:thu thishthathi akarmakruth*” — the body is always engaged in some activity, even when one tries to keep it still. Therefore, it is better to engage in activities that are beneficial. When we direct the body toward good deeds, we receive the corresponding benefits. Both aspects are necessary:



performing noble actions with the body, and allowing those actions to steady our *jna:na*, clear past *ka:rmic* impressions, and ultimately lead to self-realization.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* offers all these teachings to emphasize the importance of performing our ordained duties. Yet *Arjuna* wanted to accept the wisdom and renounce all action.

When one visits a temple or attends a discourse, scholars often advise engaging the hands in simple, constructive tasks such as making cotton wicks or preparing garlands for temple use. The reason is that when the hands are idle, they tend to drift toward unproductive or negative actions like tearing the carpet, plucking grass, or biting nails. Since the hands will inevitably seek activity, it is wiser to direct them toward meaningful service. These small offerings, such as garlands, ultimately become acts of devotion that support spiritual progress and prepare the mind for self-realization.

However, when we perform good actions, they naturally produce beneficial results. One must not become attached to these intermediate outcomes. The moment we become



attracted to these small rewards, we risk being diverted from the true goal. Therefore, we should continue doing good deeds while offering all intermediate results to the Lord. When the Lord is pleased with our sincere service, He removes our *ka:rmic* burdens and allows our knowledge to deepen.

This is the essence of *nishka:ma karma*. Just as switching on a light automatically performs two functions — dispelling darkness and illuminating the room — the practice of *nishka:ma karma* simultaneously removes *ka:rmic* impressions and elevates our *jna:na*.

Another helpful analogy is drawing water from a well. There are two actions involved. One is pulling the rope and the other is bringing the water to the surface. When we pull the rope, the water naturally rises with it. In the same way, when we perform one primary action correctly, all other necessary outcomes follow automatically.

In this manner, when we perform our ordained duties as service to the Lord, obstacles, sins, and *ka:rmic* impressions



are gradually removed. A steady form of *jna:na*, the knowledge of the *a:thma*, begins to develop *within*.



The goal is self-realization, and it is achieved by keeping this *jna:na* steady. *karma*, performed without expectation of results, helps stabilize this knowledge. This must occur in two places. The mind must take a firm resolution, and the intellect must form a deep and unwavering conviction.

If the senses distract the mind or the goal shifts away from self-realization, then even though a person performs *karma*, the necessary firmness of dedication will not arise.



In reality, both the senses and the intellect can pull us away from the goal. They are drawn toward ***vishayas***, the worldly objects that attract, bind, and hold our attention. Because the senses and mind run toward these attractions, the intellect tends to follow. This is why the first step is to reform and strengthen the intellect.

When the intellect gains confidence and clarity, it can guide the mind so it no longer chases the senses. When the mind and intellect work in harmony, all actions can be offered as service to *Parama:thma*. Only then, when the Lord is pleased, will He remove our *ka:rmic* impressions, allowing *jna:na* to become steady. In this way the intellect is the key to the entire process.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, ***buddhya: yuktho:yaya pa:rtha karma bandham praha:syasi***. This means that when the intellect becomes steady and reformed, one becomes free from all bondage. When the intellect is firmly rooted in the right resolve, everything that must be given up naturally falls away, and *Parama:thma* grants everything that must be attained.



The *Upanishad* says, ***e:sha hye:va sa:dhu karmaka:rayathi***. Since the Lord is the inner motivator, He enables such a person to perform noble actions. Therefore, activities and worldly objects are not inherently harmful. It is the corrupted intellect that makes them binding.

There is a helpful example from the life of *Mahatma* Gandhiji. His wife, Kasturba, had diabetes and the doctors advised her to avoid salt. When Gandhiji insisted that she follow this, she became upset and asked how she could eat food without salt. She challenged him to give it up himself. Accepting the challenge, Gandhiji stopped consuming salt, and in time he became completely accustomed to it.

When we give something up, initial discomfort or longing is natural. But with persistence, we develop a new taste and even a liking for the change. Once we commit to a goal, all our actions and interests must align with it. Gradually, we develop ***aruchi***, a natural disinterest toward anything that does not support that goal.



Just as salt is always salty regardless of time, place, or situation, worldly objects too remain the same. However, our feelings toward them change when we experience them. If they appear favorable, we feel pleased. If they seem unfavorable, they disturb us.

King Janaka and other great *yo:gis* maintained steady knowledge of the *a:thma* even while engaging with worldly objects. Because their awareness was unwavering, they remained established in *jna:na yo:ga* even while ruling a kingdom. Therefore, *jna:na yo:ga* means keeping *a:thma jna:na* steady at all times.

Bhagavad Ramanuja:cha:rya's revered teacher Sri *Yamuna:cha:rya* explains this beautifully. He says that the mind is truly under control when it does not run after the senses and does not become attached to worldly objects even while engaging with them. This is similar to taking medicine without worrying about whether it tastes bitter or sweet. The purpose is fulfilled regardless of the taste. In the same way, Sri *Krushna* emphasizes that maintaining steady *a:thma jna:na* is what truly matters.



Thus, the act of experiencing objects is not the real problem. It is our inner reaction and emotional involvement that creates bondage. For this reason, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs us to reform our feelings. *ve:dic* knowledge, *companionship* with noble people, and cultivating non-attachment are essential for this transformation. Knowledge and the practices that support it must grow together.

Sri: *Krushna* also corrects *Arjuna* by reminding him that true knowledge does not increase by giving up action. Instead, it grows when the mind becomes purified and steady while performing one's duties.

A person usually develops doubt only if they have misunderstood what was instructed. If someone listens carefully but still fails to understand, it suggests that the speaker may not have conveyed the message clearly. In such a case, the speaker must accept that the *communication* may not have been presented in a way the listener could fully grasp.

Sri Sri: *Krushna*, as an exemplary teacher, accepts that *Arjuna* might not have comprehended His earlier explanations.



Therefore, He patiently reiterates His teachings in a manner that *Arjuna* can understand. Sri: *Krushna* describes two types of seekers who follow two distinct approaches to realization. One path is called ***a:thma nishtta*** and the other is ***karma nishtta***. Both are valid means, and those who follow either path will ultimately reach self-realization. However, some people mistakenly think that performing actions is called *karma yo:ga* and that renouncing action is called *jna:na yo:ga*.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* clarifies that simply avoiding *karma* is not *jna:na yo:ga*. Renouncing action can never lead to self-realization. The purpose of the body is to perform *karma*, and the practice of *karma* leads a person toward realization. Realization occurs in two ways. First, *karma* itself can directly lead to realization. Second, *karma* can purify and strengthen knowledge, and then that knowledge leads to realization.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* is now discussing the second pathway, where *karma* nourishes *jna:na* and *jna:na* then leads to self-realization. *karma* is always an independent and complete means on its own. *karma* can also serve as the foundation on which *jna:na* grows. This is why *karma* should never be



renounced. Everyone must fulfill the responsibilities appropriate to their situation. For *Arjuna*, fighting in the battle is his duty, and so Sri: *Krushna* insists that he must fight.

Sri: *Krushna* gives three reasons why *karma* is essential. First, the body can never remain idle. Second, performing *karma* is natural and comfortable for the human condition. Third, it is not harmful when done in the right way. Therefore, instead of engaging in unnecessary activities, one should perform good deeds and transform them into *yajna*. Why *yajna*? Because *yajna* sustains life. The body survives through food. Food is produced through rain. Rain is the result of *yajna*. And *yajna* is performed through *karma*.

A body alone cannot act without the presence of the *ji:va*. Together the body and *a:thma* form what is called a *bhu:tham*. This *bhu:tham* depends on food. Since food ultimately arises from *yajna*, the body is sustained by *yajnas*. When a *yajna* is performed as service to the Lord, it becomes harmless and does not bind a person to the material world.



While one lives a harmonious and meaningful life through *yajna*, it simultaneously leads to self-realization. *Yajna* is also an act of worship of *de:vathas*. Each *de:vatha* is worshipped in their own unique way, yet the *Ve:da* teaches that all *de:vathas* are parts of Lord Sri: *Krushna*, referred to as ***anga:nanya devatha:ha***. Therefore, no matter which *de:vatha* one worships, the benefit ultimately comes from Sri: *Krushna* alone.

Through these actions, you receive their benefits, and in return you continue to perform your duties. By satisfying the *de:vathas*, your actions are transformed into *yajnas*. In this way, activities continue in a cycle of mutual benefit. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains this principle at the beginning of the third chapter. Since *Arjuna* did not fully understand it, Sri Sri: *Krushna* elaborates further.

Sri: *Krushna* explains that one who already possesses *a:thma jna:na* does not require these instructions. However, *Arjuna* does not yet have this knowledge and therefore needs this teaching. Sri: *Krushna* says to *Arjuna* that his sorrow arises because he is worried about killing *Bhi:shma* and *Dro:na*. For



one who has steady *a:thma jna:na*, there is no concern about who *Bhi:shma* or *Dro:na* is. Since *Arjuna* is troubled by these relationships, he must practice the right disciplines until *a:thma jna:na* is attained. In this way, Sri: *Krushna* clarifies the path of *karma yo:ga* to *Arjuna* in the third chapter.

To remove darkness, we need a lamp that gives light. Only then can we see objects clearly. However, a lamp depends on many supporting factors. It requires a wick, oil or ghee, a container, a matchbox, and someone to light it. Unless all these are present and functioning properly, the lamp cannot dispel darkness.

The sun, however, does not depend on any external support. It needs no one to light it and no instruments to sustain it. It shines on its own in the sky and illuminates everything. It is called ***Dyumani***. In the same way, there is a *Dyumani* *within* each of us. Sri Sri: *Krushna* kindles this inner light so that we may remove our inner darkness, which is ignorance, and clearly perceive the inner reality.



Out of boundless compassion, the Lord grants us a precious gem that enables us to recognize the truth and use this human birth for a higher purpose. Just as a gem shines by its own nature without external assistance, the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* reveals our inner reality without dependence on anything else. Sri Sri: *Krushna* bestows this profound teaching upon us as the *Sri:mad Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

We must study these teachings because our purpose is to grow in *jna:na*. We are born with a body to cultivate this knowledge, and this alone is the true purpose of life. Merely being alive does not mean one is truly living. Without *jna:na*, a person is no different from a body lying in a graveyard. The only difference is that the living body consumes resources, while the one in the graveyard does not. A person without *jna:na* experiences pleasure and sorrow and causes both for others, yet does not fulfill the purpose of life.

The enlightened do not consider a person to be truly living unless they are progressing toward the realization of life's purpose, which is to deepen *a:thma jna:na* and ultimately attain self-realization. Sri Sri: *Krushna* gives us the invaluable



gem known as the Sri:mad *Bhagavad Gi:tha* because it clearly reveals the purpose of life.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* is *Kalpavruksha*

Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* did not give the *Gi:tha* because someone asked for it. He bestowed this teaching upon all of humanity out of boundless compassion. Scholars express this mercy of Sri Sri: *Krushna* through a well known verse that is often used to meditate on Him:

prapanna *pa:rija:tha:ya*
tho:thrive:thraikapa:naye: |
jna:na:mudra:ya *Sri:* *Krushna:ya*
gi:tha:mruthaduhe: namaha ||

This verse conveys the following meanings.

For one who has surrendered to Sri Sri: *Krushna*, He is like a *Pa:rija:tha* tree, a divine wish fulfilling tree that grants endlessly to the devotee.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* holds the reins and whip in His hand, standing as *Arjuna's* charioteer, ready to follow the instructions of another, demonstrating supreme humility.

With His right hand, He bestows the *jna:na mudra*, granting the wisdom that liberates.

Sri: *Krushna Parama:thma* offers the nectar called the *Gi:tha*, which is drawn from the *Upanishads*, compared to sacred cows.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* is likened to a *Kalpavruksha*. A *Kalpavruksha* is a divine tree in *svarga* that grants whatever is desired. Like *ka:madhenu*, it gives endlessly without being depleted. However, one must approach the tree and ask in order to receive its blessings.

In the same way, God is like a *Kalpavruksha*. He gives freely to all who ask, without considering who they are, where they come from, their *community*, race, religion, age, gender, wealth, scholarship, or ignorance. The only requirement is to approach Him with a request.



Some ask that if God is all knowing, why should we ask at all. Would He not give even without being asked? Indeed, the Lord is always willing to give. However, if He gives without our asking, there is a risk that we may reject what is offered if it does not align with our likes or expectations. Therefore, the Lord waits for us to ask, so that we are ready to receive.

The Lord has already given us *jna:na*, and *jna:na* naturally seeks a response. Asking is that response. An insentient object does not ask because it lacks awareness. For example, we use a pen whenever we wish, and the pen never questions why or how it is being used. In contrast, when we ask a conscious being to do something, they may question the reason, the method, and the purpose. This ability to question is a sign of *jna:na* and freedom.

For this reason, a person must ask, so that they affirm their distinction from insentient objects. When the Lord wishes to give, we should at least not refuse. Since we possess *jna:na*, we must show that we are ready to receive. When we do so, the Lord gives joyfully, and our lives become meaningful. Although the Lord has the power to give anything and He



knows what is already on our minds, and although nothing can prevent Him from giving, He still waits for human beings to reach out to Him since we possess *jna:na*.

The sages describe this principle as ***raksha:pe:ksham prathi:kshathe***. It means that it is our responsibility to ask the Lord for protection and to seek His grace.

One who surrenders in this manner is called a ***prapanna***. A prapanna is someone who depends entirely on the Lord and declares that there is no savior other than Him. Such a person is also known as a ***sharana:gatha***.

The Lord has promised that He will take care of anyone who surrenders in this way, regardless of who they are. The *ithiha:sas* and *purana:s* stand as testimony to the Lord's unwavering commitment to His *prapannas*. Epics such as the *Bha:ratham*, *Bha:gavatham*, and the Sri *Ra:ma:yan* provide many examples of this truth.

Human beings, sages, tribal people, and even birds such as *Jata:yu*, *va:naras* such as *Sugri:va*, animals such as the squirrel,



and even a *ra:kshasa* king like *Vibhi:shana* all received protection through their surrender to Lord Sri *Ra:ma*.

The Lord never withdraws His grace from *prapannas*, no matter who they are, because all beings are His creation. Therefore, He first removes their obstacles and then grants whatever is necessary for their welfare.

Before blessing *Gaje:ndra*, the king of elephants, the Lord first relieved him from the suffering caused by the crocodile. Only then did He bestow His grace.

Although the Lord is the creator of all, He takes up various instruments and weapons according to the needs of each incarnation. He does so not out of necessity, but to inspire confidence, so that people may approach Him without fear and with trust.

For instance, to protect *Prahla:da*, He sent the Sudarshana disc, and to protect the sages, He held the divine bow. According to the need of each incarnation, the Lord accepts an appropriate instrument.



For example, the Lord used the Sudarshana disc when He chose to protect *Prahla:da* from his father Hiranyakasipu. Yet *Prahla:da* never asked the Lord for protection. He simply surrendered completely and remained a prapanna with unwavering faith. As a result, Lord *Na:ra:yana* removed every obstacle in his path and protected him from all dangers, including water, fire, snakes, and poison that Hiranyakasipu used to kill *Prahla:da*. The Lord protected *Prahla:da* not because he asked, but because it was His own will and joy to do so.

Similarly, history tells us that the Lord protected Emperor *Ambari:sha*. Even in more recent times, He has protected devotees such as *Ramada:su*. The Lord considers it His responsibility to safeguard those who surrender to Him. Therefore, to protect *Arjuna*, He became his charioteer and held the whip, appearing as though He needed it to drive the horses.

Namma:lwar reveals the deeper reason for the whip in Sri: *Krushna*'s hand. If Sri: *Krushna* were to swing it in front, it could destroy the army before Him, and if He swung it behind,



it could destroy the army behind Him. At the same time, that very whip reassures devotees that they can approach Him without fear. *Namma:lwār* emphasizes that Sri: *Krushna* does not truly need a whip, as even the horses and all beings can be directed by His mere will. The whip exists only for the sake of His devotees.

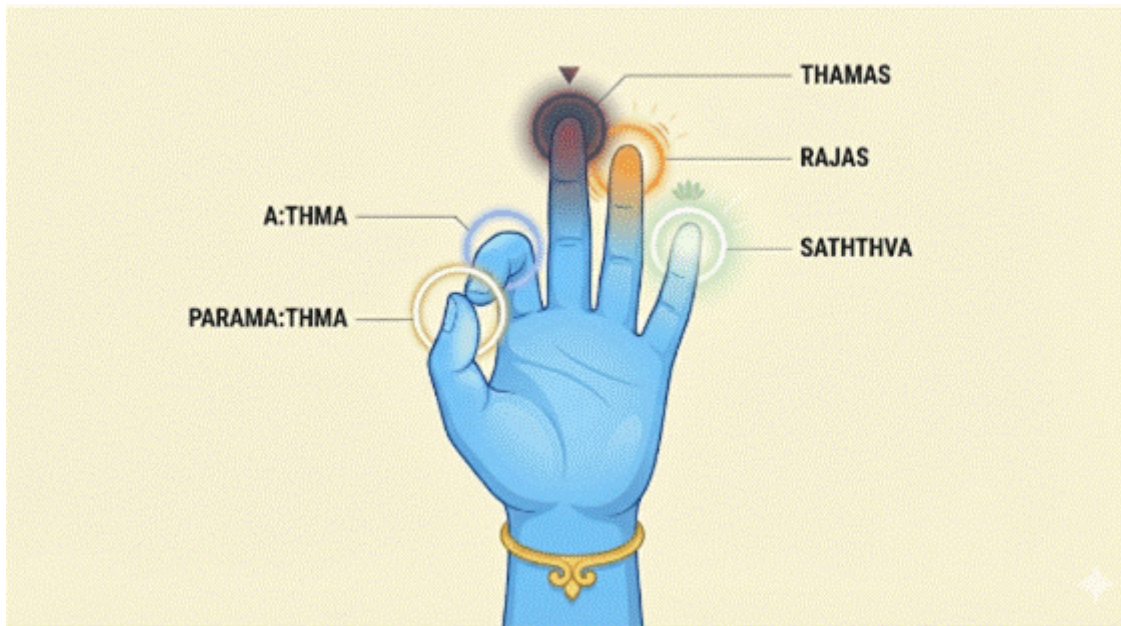
In contrast, the *jna:na mudra* is a promise Sri: *Krushna* makes that He will impart *a:thma jna:na* to us. It is as though He is lighting a lamp *within* us to dispel inner darkness. In fact scholars suggest that the *jna:na mudra* explains the *thathva*, the primordial entities and the relationship between them.

The thumb represents *Parama:thma*, while the pointing finger represents *a:thma*, which is us. The remaining three fingers symbolize the three qualities of *prakruthi*. Among these, the strongest is *thamas*, the quality that causes inertia, ignorance, and laziness, and it is represented by the middle finger. *Rajas*, which gives rise to passion, desire, and competitiveness, is slightly weaker and is represented by the



ring finger. ***satthva***, the quality of clarity and harmony, is the weakest and is represented by the little finger.

A:thma is always associated with these three qualities. Even though ***saththva*** is the most desirable, the ***a:thma*** rarely abides in ***saththva*** and instead tends to dwell predominantly in thamas, the most undesirable quality.



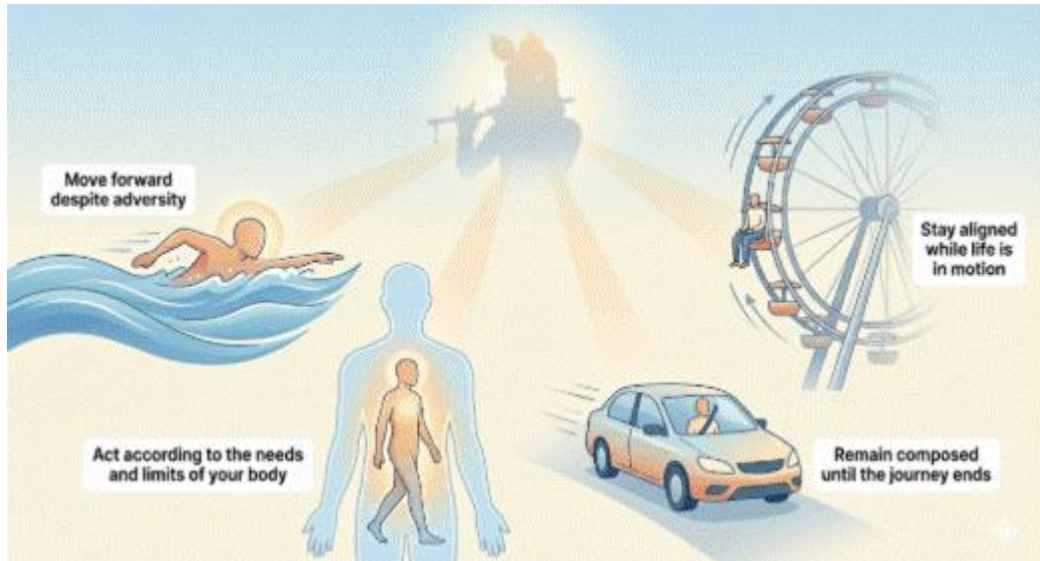
Although the ***a:thma*** is bound by these three qualities, one must consciously strive for ***jna:na*** through appropriate practices. The first and most important step is humility. One must avoid the arrogance that arises from wealth, education, physical strength, or social status and bow before God. This is



symbolized by the pointing finger bending and touching slightly below the tip of the thumb. When we bow before the Lord with our body, mind, and *a:thma*, the Lord, who is untouched by *prakruthi*, ensures that the *a:thma* too is freed from the influence of *prakruthi*.

Thus, the *ji:va* who enters this world along with *prakruthi* must recognize this responsibility and surrender at the feet of the Lord. Through such surrender, one can perform ordained duties without being affected by the undesirable qualities of *prakruthi*. This profound truth is conveyed through the *jna:na mudra*, also known as ***chinmudra*** or *a:thma mudra*.

Lord Sri: *Krushna* blesses us with this wisdom through the teachings of the *Gi:tha*. He teaches that one must perform one's ordained duties as a service to the Lord, with the intent of pleasing Him, rather than viewing them as a burden. When duties are transformed into service, they become *yajna*. Each individual must perform *yajna* through their own dedicated actions as per their capabilities. Performing one's duties in this spirit of *yajna* is among the most important purposes of human life.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* gives an analogy of a person stranded in the middle of the ocean, facing strong winds and towering waves. Even in such harsh conditions, the person must continue moving forward. Similarly, a person seated on a giant ferris wheel must conduct themselves properly as long as the wheel is in motion, and a passenger in a fast moving car must remain seated and composed until the car comes to a stop. In the same way, as long as we inhabit this body, we must behave in accordance with the needs and limitations of the body.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* then presents the image of a wheel that represents life itself. Every living being that is born into this world is bound to this wheel and continues to live as long as



there are unexhausted *karmas*. However, it is essential to understand how to live and act properly while one is on this wheel. In the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains this through the following verse:

***e:vam pravarthitham chakram
na:nuvarthayathi: ha yaha |
agha:yur indriya: ra:mo: mo:gham pa:rttha sa
ji:vathi || 3.16 ||***

Arjuna, this wheel becomes the very basis of life for all living beings.

Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja:charya explains in his commentary on the phrase ***praja:h*** in ***saha yajnaihi praja:h srushtva*** that although the word *praja:h* generally refers to all living beings, it should be understood here as referring specifically to humans. The reason is that only humans possess the capacity to transform their actions into worship of *Parama:thma*. Animals, birds, insects, and other beings lack the awareness required for such conscious offering. Therefore,



Sri Sri: *Krushna* imparts the teaching of the cycle of life specifically to human beings.

To briefly recap this cycle of life, we the *ji:vas* reside *within* the body. The body is sustained by food. Food varies according to different living beings. Animals consume one type of food, while humans consume another. Even among humans, there are many variations in diet. Some individuals engaged in *yo:gic* practices may subsist only on water or even air. Yet, even these are considered forms of food, because the body itself is composed of the five elements and must be sustained as long as life continues.

The body is made of the five elements and depends on each of them. Whatever the body receives from these elements becomes its food, and through this nourishment all bodies continue to live.

The softness and delicacy that make food consumable come from water, which arrives through rain. Rain comes when actions are performed properly and with the right attitude. This is called *yajna*. *Yajna* is not just offering ghee at an altar;



any action done with care and the right intention becomes *yajna*, bringing rain, food, and nourishment.

Action becomes *yajna* when the body, mind, and intellect all work together. The body must act correctly, the mind must cooperate, and the intellect must guide. Then the work of the body transforms into *yajna*, bringing benefits to all.

The actions of the body, called *karma*, help it grow or diminish. Through these actions, conscious beings can gain or lose knowledge. Because the body grows and changes while supporting the self, it is called *Bramha*.

However, bodies differ in their functioning. Some do not engage in any activity. The bodies of insentient beings do not perform actions, whereas sentient beings, by virtue of possessing life, engage in activity. Activity occurs when a living being resides *within* - the *akshara*. This being, endowed with vital energy, inhabits the body and allows it to function. The body is *Bramha*, the being is *akshara*, and together they form a *bhu:tha*.



The *bhu:tha* is sustained by food, which comes from rain and water. Rain arises when actions become *yajna*, which requires the body to act properly.

This is a cycle. As long as one exists in nature, no one can change or escape it, says Sri Sri: *Krushna* to *Arjuna*.

***brahma akshara samudbhavam thasma:th
sarvagatham brahma nithyam yajne:
pratishtitham***

The all-pervading *Brahma*, the body of every active being, is always and eternally established in *yajna* for as long as it exists.

Therefore, our actions should be performed as *yajna*, not as ordinary acts. One may wonder how everyone can perform *yajna*, but we must clearly understand what *yajna* truly means. Often, we remember only its established or conventional meaning, the one associated with rituals. We forget how to apply it in daily life.

A householder can perform *ga:rhasthya dharma*, the householder duties, as *yajna*. An employee can perform the



duties of employment as *yajna*. A farmer ploughing the field, thinking “This too is *Bhagavath se:va*, service to *Bhagava:n*,” performs *yajna*. A cowherd milking cows with the same thought also performs *yajna*.

Whatever your duty, practice seeing every assigned work as worship. Perform each task with the thought, “This is the worship of *Bhagava:n*,” and offer it as an act of devotion.

Therefore, *Arjuna*, transforming action into *yajna* is the main duty of human life. A person who refuses will still live, but that life becomes wasted. Such a life is called *agha a:yuvu*, unproductive life. Though the person lives for some time, that life only accumulates sin. Even if the person appears to do good deeds, without faith in *Bhagava:n* and without turning his duties into worship, his actions only increase sin and bring no lasting benefit.

The human body is given to remove the impurities of the self. These impurities are removed through *Bhagavath anugraha*, the grace of God, when actions are performed as *yajna*. If actions are not transformed in this way, the impurities



grow, and life increases sin instead of goodness, becoming ***agha:yuvu, misused life.***

Such a person continues to engage in activities, work, and travel, but finds no inner joy. He becomes ***indriya:ra:ma***, one who acts only to satisfy the senses, living only for sense pleasure. What then is such a life? ***mo:gham pa:rtha sa ji:vathi***, he lives but his life serves no purpose.”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches the goal of human life in the second chapter through the *slo:ka* beginning with ***anna:th bhavanthi bhu:tha:ni***, from food arise all beings”. After hearing this, *Arjuna* felt sorrow.

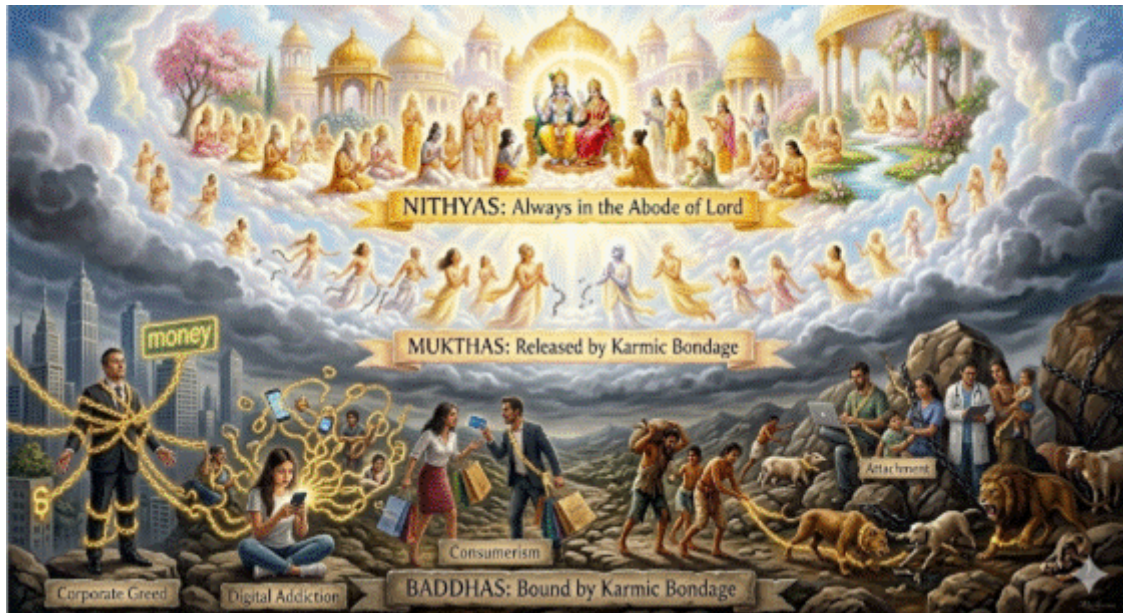
Eligibility to renounce ***karma yo:ga***

With a disheartened tone of voice, *Arjuna* asks, “O Sri: *Krushna*, is it truly impossible to give up *karma*? Must one always keep acting? Even if a person has removed all *karma*



and become a great *jna:ni*, does he still have to act, or can he give up action altogether?”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explained that some beings may be free from the necessity of action. The scriptures describe three kinds of beings. Some are bound by *karma* in this world; they are called ***baddha:s***, *the bound*. Others have transcended all *karma* and exist in their true self, shining only with knowledge; they are called ***muktha:s***, *the liberated*, residing in *kaivalya* or *paramapada*, beyond this material realm.





There is another group of beings who have never been bound by *karma* at any time. For them, *karma-bandha* never arises and never affects them. They are called ***nithyasu:ra:s***, eternally free beings, as stated in the *Ve:da:s*. Unlike *muktha:s*, who were once bound by *karma* and later attained liberation, *nithyasu:ra:s* have never experienced bondage at all.

All beings living in *prakruthi*, the material order, are *baddha:s*, bound by *karma*. This includes humans and beings in higher realms, like the worlds of Indra and Bramha:. Even *Chathurmukha brahma* is subject to *karma-bandha*.

This bondage takes different forms for different beings. Some are influenced more by *thamo: guna*, some by *rajo: guna*, and others by *saththva guna*. In short, the *sa:sthra:s* say that all bondage comes from a mix of the three *gunas* in varying amounts. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains this in greater detail in the seventh and eighth chapters.



All beings bound by *karma* cannot give up action. Only those completely freed from *karma-bandha* may choose to refrain, as they live in another realm. For everyone else, living in this world means performing *karma*. Anyone who says, “I have knowledge, so I do not act,” has not truly realized it and remains in ignorance. Sri Sri: *Krushna* then goes on to explain the nature of the liberated being, who is no longer bound by this necessity to act.

Every human being desires to obtain things, and experiencing them brings satisfaction, with the thought that they have finally attained it. This begins with the food one eats and extends to many other objects. People experience relief or joy through worldly objects. These are generally classified as *dha:rana*, sustaining, *po:shana*, nourishing, and *bho:gyam*, pleasurable.

The *dha:rana* of the body comes from water, which keeps the life energy circulating and sustains the body. The *po:shana* comes from solid food, which nourishes the body and allows



it to grow. Alongside these, there are things taken for pleasure, such as during festivals or visits to relatives. These intermittent indulgences, like chocolates, ice cream, fruits, or other treats, are *bho:gyam*, enjoyable substances that bring comfort but are not essential for survival.

Humans and other beings rely on these three kinds of food to sustain themselves, allowing the body to grow or gradually diminish. Those attached to worldly enjoyments remain bound by *karma*. A person may engage with the world to improve it, gain benefit, or help others, but participating in action makes him subject to *karma-bandha* and requires understanding and performing his *karma*.

***yasthva:thmarathir e:va sya:th a:thma thrupthas
cha ma:navaha |
a:thmanyeva cha santhushtas thasya ka:ryam
na vidyathe: || 3.17 ||***



yasthu - one who **a:thmarathir e:va sya:th** - is devoted solely to the Self; **a:thma thrupthas cha ma:navaha** - is satisfied in the Self; **a:thmanyeva cha santhushtaha** - is content in the Self.

One who is devoted solely to the Self, satisfied in the Self, and content in the Self has no binding duties. Such a person focuses entirely on the Self and the **Parama:thma**, Supreme Self, without attachment to worldly objects, bodies, or minds. True fulfillment and happiness arise only from realizing and dwelling in the Self; anything outside this knowledge feels like a distraction.

It is said that the **go:pika:s'** devotion to the Lord was of that nature. They are described as feeling that even a moment without seeing Sri Sri: **Krushna** was like an eternity. The sages also remark that if they could not contemplate Him even briefly, they would experience great distress, as expressed in the verse:



***yanmuhu:rtham kshanam va:pi vas:sudevo: na
chinthyathe: sa: ha:nisthanmahachhindram sa:
bhra:nthis sa:cha vikriya:***

Sri *Namma:lwa:r*, one of the *a:lwa:rs* is regarded as a great realized soul. He neither ate nor drank for his sustenance. Nor did he consume his mother's milk after birth. His only source of nourishment was the thought of divine, auspicious qualities of the Lord. His *Prabandham*, a *Tamil treatise on the Lord*, shows that the more he could contemplate or speak of the Lord, the more bliss he experienced. He felt joy when others joined him in speaking of the Lord and greater happiness when those who did not moved away from him. Other than the Lord and His divine past times, Sri *Namma:lwa:r* had no other source of sustenance or nourishment, or pleasures.



The source of all three was Sri: *Krushna* for him. He regarded Sri Sri: *Krushna's* divine deeds as *bho:gyam*, that which delights, contemplation of His qualities as *dha:rakam*, that which sustains life, and *kaimkaryam*, service to His form as his *a:ha:ram*, nourishment.

As expressed in his *pa:suram:*
unnum so:ru parakuni:r | thinnum veththilaiyu
mella:mkannan | emberuma:nenrenre:

Whether it was food, water, or other indulgences, all were nothing but Lord Sri: *Krushna*, who shaped and guided him.



Sri:mad Bha:gavatham also records that Sri Suka *Maharshi* shared this same disposition.

Their devotion exemplifies the state of ***a:thmarathi e:va sya:th, a:thmathrupthascha, a:thmanyeva cha santhushtaha*** - being devoted to the Self alone, satisfied in the Self, and content in the Self. Unlike ordinary beings, whose devotion is often mixed with physical comforts, they were fulfilled entirely by the Self. While we may enjoy contemplating the Self for a brief time, we often seek other worldly pleasures soon after, showing that we are not completely interested in the Self alone. Therefore, the intensity of their devotion and contentment in the Self is what sets them apart.

We, on the other hand, cannot hold our attention for long even if a competent person gives a discourse on the divine. In contrast, we are helplessly hooked onto the worldly pleasures and activities despite them being fleeting and temporary. We tirelessly chase worldly pleasures, yet quickly lose interest in spiritual matters, even allowing our attention to drift toward worldly distractions during a divine discourse. This shows that



our sense of satisfaction does not arise from the Self alone, but also depends on external things. When worldly pleasures lose their charm, become tiresome, or cause distress, we turn to the Self only temporarily, not for its own sake, but merely to relieve that discomfort. Often, we listen about the Lord with the expectation of some benefit, rather than out of love for the Lord Himself.

Thus, devotion to the Self, *a:thmarathi*, may be there, yet satisfaction and happiness may still come from other sources. Some may even find satisfaction in the Self, but their happiness continues to depend on external things. But *Arjuna*, for the one whose devotion, satisfaction, and happiness arise solely from the knowledge of the Self, ***thasya karyam na vidyathe: a:thmanyeva cha santhushtaha***, for him no duty exists. This is true only for the *muktha*, the liberated soul.

Such liberated souls do not exist in this world. Anyone who lives in a physical body, however learned or refined, whether



dominated by *rajas* or even **saththva**, is not regarded as liberated.

However, the *Upanishads* reveal that liberated souls in the Supreme Abode, *Paramapadam*, also perform service to the Lord. The *Cha:ndo:gya Upanishad* says:

**sa thathra parye:thi jakshathkri:danRa:ma
ma:naha sthri:bhirva: ya:nairva: jna:thibhirva:
no:pajanasmarannida sari:rasa yatha:
prayo:gya a:charane: yuktha
e:vame:vayamasmin chari:re: pra:no yukthaha**

and further:

**sa e:kadha: bhavathi thridha: bhavathi
panchadha: sapthadha: navadha: chaiva |
punaschaika:dasah smruthag satham cha dasa
chaikascha sahasra:ni cha ||**



Upon seeing the Lord, an overwhelming surge of bliss arises, causing the liberated soul to assume many forms and engage in many kinds of services. When it is said that no duty exists, it does not mean that the soul does nothing. Rather, the actions of the enlightened soul are not driven by compulsion, desire, or personal need, unlike the work we perform in this world, which arises from our urges and desires.

As long as one lives in this world, action is performed to exhaust one's *karma*, and such action remains bound by *karma*. In the Supreme Abode, however, there is no bondage of *karma*. Therefore, whatever such a being does there does not result in fault.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that a person who is ***a:thmanyeva cha santhushtaha***, contented in the Self alone, and detached from all else, is described as one for whom, ***thasya karyam na vidyathe:***, there is no need to perform duty. *Arjuna* has not reached that state yet.



Arjuna's own reflections reveal continued concern with persons, outcomes, and personal loss or gain. His hesitation about fighting *Bhi:shma* and *Dro:na*, fear of sin and hell, anxiety over the loss of heaven, kingdom, relatives, and enjoyment, all indicate persistent identification with worldly relations. Because this attachment remains, renunciation of *karma* is not appropriate for him, and action must be performed.

This teaching is expressed in the verse:

***naiva thasya kruthe:na:rttho: na:kruthe: ne:ha
kaschana |
na cha:sya sarvabhu:the:shu kaschidarttha
vyapa:srayaha || 3.18 ||***

For a liberated one, there is no purpose to be gained by action, nor any loss incurred by inaction, and he has no dependence upon any being for any purpose.

Although addressed to *Arjuna*, this instruction is intended for all humanity, affirming that freedom from action belongs only



to the liberated, for whom action and inaction are equally non-binding.

Just as someone with a home projector can watch a film without going to the theater, a Self-realized person needs no action to achieve anything, while those who haven't realized the Self must keep engaged in their activities.

All beings living in a body depend on the five elements. Space, air, fire, water, and earth must work together for life to continue. This is true not only for ordinary people but even for great *yo:gi:s*. As long as one lives *within* the realm of *prakruthi*, the primordial nature, some dependence still exists, and therefore engaging in duties is necessary.

Only one who has attained direct realization of the Self, without reliance on any other means, stands free from the need for action. Since *Arjuna* has not reached that state, fulfilling his responsibilities is required of him.

What does Self-realization mean?



This was clearly explained in the second chapter. It's not like a bulb lighting up inside. Some say, "I've seen the Self," describing an internal form or vision. But seeing the Self isn't about seeing any form, but a firm establishment in one's own nature.

A:thma has no visible form and is the subtlest of all entities in the universe. Therefore, only one who understands its true nature as formless and supremely subtle can attain the possibility of Self-realization.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* in the second chapter already taught that first one must realize about *a:thma* and then do their activities that are aligned with self-knowledge. However, it is impossible to find such a person in the world, referring to the fact that *Arjuna* has not reached the state of realization. Thus, Sri Sri: *Krushna* tells *Arjuna* that duty is unavoidable for him and must be fulfilled.

***thasma:d asakthas sathatham ka:ryam karma
sama:chara |***



***asaktho:hy a:charan karma param a:pnothi
pu:rushaha || 3.19 ||***

Sri Sri: *Krushna* tells *Arjuna*: “This ***ka:ryam karma*** - work, must be performed. It is not something I can do for you, nor can you avoid it. ***sama:chara*** - continue to act steadily. Only through acting will its meaning become clear to you. ***asaktha*** - act with detachment. There should be no sense of ‘I am the doer,’ ‘I act for myself,’ or ‘this happens because of me.’ Simply do what must be done.”

The sun never acts with such selfish thoughts, nor the moon, the planets, the rivers, or trees that bear fruit. They do not feel that they are helping the world nor they think that the world would stop without them. They carry on with their duties because it is their nature and responsibility.

You should act in a similar way, however, there is a difference. The sun, moon, planets, rivers, trees, etc., are not aware that they are performing their duties as a service. You, on the other hand, possess *jna:na* that must be used while performing your duties. Therefore, perform your duties without attachment,



without possessiveness, without clinging. Act constantly, as long as you remain in this body, until the very last moment. This applies to everyone, whether sage or ordinary person.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches *Arjuna* the result of acting without attachment:

***asaktho:hy a:charan karma param a:pnothi
pu:rushaha***

“*Arjuna*, one who performs *karma asakthah*, without attachment attains ***parama***, the supreme state. This state is beyond the elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space. It is imperishable, unchanging, and eternal. Unlike these, it has no temporary form. It is the highest, divine nature of the *a:thma*. By acting unattached, you will come to recognize, see, and attain this supreme state.”

A person who acts without attachment reaches the supreme goal.

thasma:d asakthas sathatham sama:chara -
Perform action without attachment to it.



asaktho:hy a:charan karma - There is no way to avoid performing *karma*. By continuing to perform it, one attains Self-realization.

Arjuna had assumed that by renouncing action and taking to *jna:na yo:ga* alone, nothing further would be required and the Self would be directly realized; Sri Sri: *Krushna* corrects this misunderstanding.

a:charan karmahi - a:charan hi karma - karmahi a:charan. Action itself is knowledge; by performing action, action is perfected. By performing *karma* in this way, Self-realization is attained while acting.

Realization does not require abandoning action. While remaining in *karma yo:ga* itself, realization can be attained. There is no need to pass through a separate stage in between. From *karma* itself, one can go directly to realization.

There are three reasons for this.



1. *ve:dic* scripture does not forbid action, therefore engaging in ordained duties does not incur sin.
2. Since ordained duties do not arise from personal desire, performing them without attachment to their results does not bind you.
3. These activities are ordained by the Lord; therefore, performing them in the spirit of obedience does not create bondage.

By acting in this manner, the ***ahanka:ra***, the identification of oneself with the body, and the beginningless *ka:rmic* impressions are gradually erased. As a result, *a:thma jna:na* becomes effective and reveals the true nature of the Self as bliss. Hence, one can achieve self-realization while engaging in ordained duties. Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs *Arjuna* to perform his duties while giving up attachment to the fruits of his actions.

Now, there are two paths to Self-realization. One is *karma yo:ga* leading to *jna:na yo:ga* and then to realization; the other is *karma yo:ga* directly leading to realization. The direct path is immediate, natural, and free of delay. Action is essential to



life and cannot be abandoned. Performing it brings ease and harmony.

Acting calmly in accordance with duty, without thoughts of “I am the doer,” “I am killing,” or “I act for victory,” removes the fear of being thrown into hell and concern for the loss of heaven. The true heaven, the supreme state of Self-realization, which grants unsurpassed bliss, is attained in this way.

Practices of the learned and enlightened

Since the practices of the learned and enlightened serve as inspiration to us, Sri Sri: *Krushna* presents examples of such realized individuals and the way they lived. He explains this through the following verse:

***karmana iva hi samsiddhim a:stthitha:
janaka:dayaha |
lo:ka sangraham e:va:pi sampasyan karthum
arhasi || 3.20 ||***



Sri Sri: *Krushna Parama:thma* introduces those whom He considers foremost practitioners, because observing their lives inspires us and motivates us to follow the same path.

The phrase *karmanaiva hi* means only through the practice of *karma*. By stating this, Sri Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes that self-realization is not attained merely through *jna:na* alone.

samsiddhim a:stthitha:h refers to the attainment of the highest fulfillment, namely self-realization. Sri Sri: *Krushna* previously referred to this state as *parama:pnothi*. The phrase *samsiddhim a:stthitha:h janaka:dayaha* indicates that royal sages such as King Janaka attained this supreme state.

Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s use of the term Rajarshi reveals a deeper meaning. Raju refers to a king or ruler. True rulers are magnanimous and broad-hearted, and they are often compared to the ocean. The ocean is exceedingly deep and immensely vast. It holds an enormous volume of water and provides shelter to countless living and nonliving beings. Yet,



it never boasts of its greatness nor does it display itself. This quiet greatness is called magnanimity.

In the same way, a true ruler continually learns and grows, yet does not reveal knowledge indiscriminately. Such a person speaks and acts with intention and discernment, sharing wisdom only when it is appropriate to the time, place, and situation. Only one who possesses this restraint and awareness is worthy of being called a king.

Janaka was one such revered ruler. He attained self-realization by transforming his daily duties into *karma yo:ga*. Moreover, even after attaining realization, he continued to perform his responsibilities, setting an enduring example for the world.

Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* gives the highest priority to protecting the order by which this world functions. His intention for humanity is that people use their lives for the welfare and stability of society as a whole. It is this principle that Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches *Arjuna* in the third chapter.

The Lord makes it clear that humans should neither live with indifference toward the world nor live selfishly, dedicating



their lives solely to personal needs and desires. Instead, Sri: *Krushna* instructs that one must strive to uphold the world's order and continue to act in that spirit, regardless of whether such actions bring pleasure or discomfort. To establish this truth, He presents the example of great paRa:ma *ra:jarshis* such as King Janaka. Even after attaining self realization, *ra:jarshis* continue to practice *karma yo:ga*.

Sri: *Krushna* tells *Arjuna* that although paRa:ma *ra:jarshis* are fully entitled to pursue *jna:na yo:ga*, they still choose to practice *karma yo:ga*. The reason is that if such realized beings were to abandon action, those who are not yet mature would follow their example and also withdraw from their duties, leading to disorder in the world. Therefore, the realized continue to practice *karma yo:ga*, both to set an example and to guide others who are progressing on the path of realization.

A *rushi* is a perceptor, one who has realized the *a:thma*. Though often used interchangeably, there is a subtle difference between a *muni* and a *rushi*. A *muni* has learned about self realization but has not yet realized it. Such a person



remains in a state of contemplation. A *rushi*, on the other hand, is one who has directly realized the Self.

In the second chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* speaks about the stages leading to *stthitha* prajna, using expressions such as ***stthitha prajna thado:chyathe:*** and ***stthitha dhi:hi muniruchyathe:.*** Those who are progressing through these stages are referred to as *munis*, as they are gradually working toward the state of *stthitha* prajna. They have not yet attained self realization but have gained awareness of it and have begun moving toward that goal. In due course of time, with God's grace, they may realize the Self, at which point they become *rushis*.

There are also different categories of *rushis*. A *sa:ma:nya* *rushi* is one who understands the Self indirectly and possesses a certain degree of clarity about its nature and state. A *ra:jarshi* is one who continues to fulfill worldly responsibilities while remaining firmly established in the knowledge of the Self.



With a little effort, a *ra:jarshi* can mature into a *maharshi*, one who has fulfilled worldly responsibilities and has taken conscious steps toward self realization.

A *maharshi* further evolves into a *paramarshi*, one who teaches others so that they too may experience what the sage has realized. *Paramarshis* have completely erased all *ka:rmic* records and are regarded as the preceptors of the *Upanishads*. Out of compassion, they transmit their realizations to others so that all may attain the same inner experience. The *Mundaka Upanishad* expresses this reverence by stating, “*namah paramarushibhyaha*,” acknowledging that we daily prostrate before the *paramarshis* in gratitude.

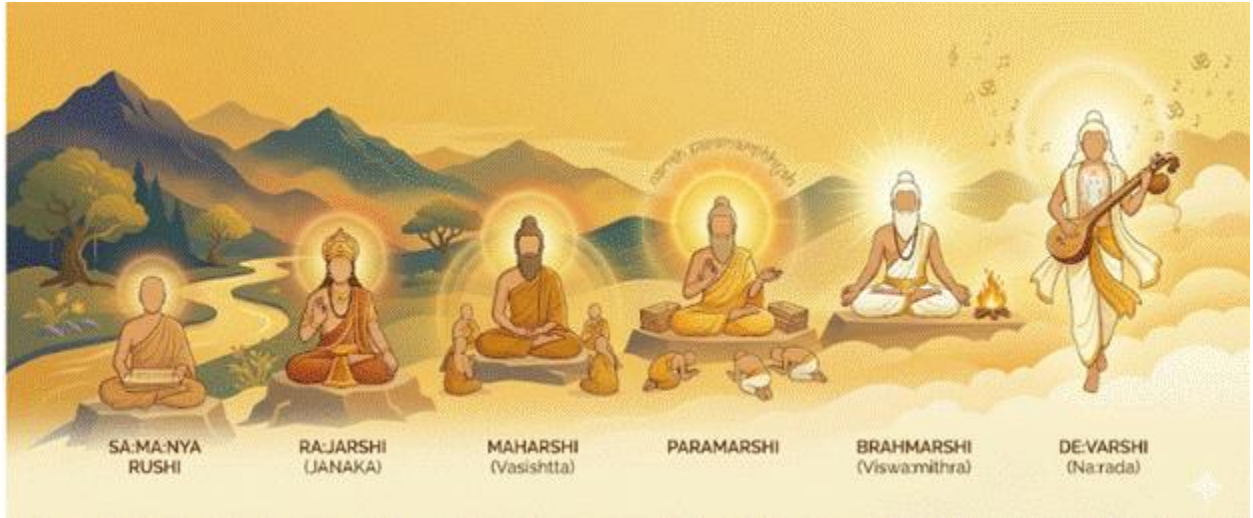
Beyond the *paramarshi* is the state of a *brahmarshi*. A *brahmarshi* supports inner realization with flawless external conduct, strictly aligned with the practices prescribed by the *ve:das*.

The final stage of maturity is that of a *de:varshi*. History records only one *de:varshi*, *Na:rada Bhagava:n*. Having realized God and abiding in divine bliss, *Na:rada* remains



unaffected even while engaging with the worldly realm. A brahmarshi, while interacting with the world, constantly experiences the presence of God *within* himself and himself *within* God. The *Ra:ma:yana* and other itihasas affirm this by declaring, “*de:varshi na:radastthattha.*”

Emperor Janaka was a *ra:jarshi* who, while deeply contemplating the teachings of self realization, flawlessly carried out his duties as a ruler. Janaka therefore stands as an inspiration to all humanity.



Sri: *Krushna* declares that if such an exalted person as Janaka lived and acted in this manner, it naturally follows that ordinary people must emulate him. *Arjuna*, there is no doubt



that you too must practice *karma yo:ga*, for this is the injunction of the *ve:das*.

This leads to the fundamental question. What is the ultimate goal of all spiritual practice?

lo:ka sangraham e:va:pi sampasyan karthum arhasi || 3.20 ||

*yad yad a:charathi sre:shttaha thath thade: ve:tharo:janaha |
sa yath prama:nam kuruthe: lo:kas thad anuvarthathe: || 3.21 ||*

lo:ksangraha - one must pursue *karma* without renouncing it. *jna:na yo:ga* alone is not an option, because the body is inevitably engaged in action. Therefore, one must continue to perform one's duties for the sake of the world.

lo:ksangraham eva a:pi sampasyan - means that one should act with the objective of preserving the order of the world. For this reason, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs *Arjuna* to continue performing his *karma*. If enlightened beings were to abandon action, those who lack maturity would imitate them and renounce their duties as well, leading to disorder.

Whenever there is doubt about which actions should be renounced and which should be pursued, one must observe



the practices of enlightened scholars. The reason is expressed as ***yattha: the: the:shu varthe:ran thattha: the:shu varthe:tha:ha.*** Every action has a proper method of performance. For each activity, there are prerequisites that precede it and follow up actions that complete it. The prerequisites, the main action, and the follow up together are called ***kriya:kala:pam.*** Sri Sri: *Krushna* clarifies that the *Ve:da* instructs us to look to the conduct of scholars whenever there is uncertainty regarding the prerequisites or the follow up of an action.

yadyad a:charathi sreshthaha thatthade:ve:tharo janaha explains this principle further. ***sreshttaha*** refers to a scholar or enlightened person who is an authority in *ve:dic* practices. Whatever such a person practices is what others naturally follow. Three important points must be clearly understood here.

First, the random actions of an unlearned person do not become a standard. For example, when a baby is held in the arms of its parents, the baby may kick them unintentionally.



We cannot treat the baby's actions as authoritative and conclude that it is acceptable to kick one's parents.

Second, there are individuals who possess knowledge of the actions along with their prerequisites and follow up, but who do not put that knowledge into practice themselves. Such individuals also do not qualify as authorities.

Third, there are people who both possess knowledge and practice it sincerely, but remain unknown or unrecognized in society. Even such individuals do not become authorities for others to follow.

Only when knowledge, sustained practice, and recognized authority come together does a person's conduct become a guiding standard for society. Such an individual is generally regarded as a *jna:na yo:gi*. These people naturally inspire the world. However, if they were to renounce *karma*, there is a real danger that ordinary people would also abandon the necessary duties of life.

Whether common people choose to act or to renounce action, a *jna:na yo:gi* must continue to perform *karma* for the sake of



world order. Their primary responsibility is the protection and stability of society. As Sri Sri: *Krushna* states, ***yadyada:charathi*** ***sre:shttaha*** ***thatthade:ve:tharo: jana:ha***—whatever the realized person practices, others follow.

When parents want their children to learn something new, they must first demonstrate it themselves. For example, if a parent wishes to teach a child how to write, the parent must first show how to sit properly, how to hold the pencil, and how to position the notebook. Even though the parent may be capable of writing quickly or even while walking, they deliberately demonstrate the basics slowly and carefully for the child's benefit.

In the same way, parents must demonstrate *ve:dic* practices such as *sandhya:vandanam*, proper eating habits, and the correct way to sit and chant *slo:kas*. Only by practicing first can they effectively teach their children. All auspicious *ve:dic* observances prescribed in the scriptures, such as *e:ka:dashi* fasting, are ultimately meant for the welfare of the next generation. Even if these practices do not yield immediate



benefit to the parents themselves, they must still be observed for the prosperity and well-being of their children.

This is precisely why Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, ***sa yathprama:nam kuruthe lo:kasthadhanuvarthathe:*** — the standard one sets through one's own conduct is what the world follows. In this context, Sri Sri: *Krushna's* use of the words ***sa yathprama:nam kuruthe*** is especially significant.

Bhagavad Ra:m:anuja:cha:rya's great contribution to society lies in the way he reconciled and revealed the profound meanings of the scriptures. He brought to light subtle truths that many could not even perceive. The twenty-first verse of the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is one such verse for which *Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya* offered a remarkable and insightful commentary.

While speaking about the conduct of the learned, Sri Sri: *Krushna* states the verse:

yad yad a:charathi sre:shttaha thath thade: ve:tharo:janaha |



***sa yath prama:nam kuruthe: lo:kas thad
anuvarthathe: || 3.21 ||***

Commonly, scholars explain this verse as meaning, “As the learned act, so do others, and whatever the learned establish as authority, the world accepts.” However, Sri Sri: *Krushna* did not intend the verse to convey this meaning alone. The context in which He uses it points to a deeper and more nuanced understanding.

The *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is regarded as an authoritative text because Sri Sri: *Krushna* simplifies and elucidates the esoteric teachings of the *Ve:das*, enabling us to grasp them properly. The *Ve:das* state that whatever action a person performs, others tend to follow the same. When doubt arises regarding how an action is to be performed, one must learn by observing the practices of the learned. One should imitate the same tools, methods, and procedures used by scholars in various situations.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains this *ve:dic* instruction in the twenty first verse of the third chapter. The phrase



yadyada:charathi sre:shttaha refers to a person who has complete faith in *ve:dic* injunctions, possesses perfect knowledge of actions, and is recognized as a learned authority. Whatever such a person practices, others naturally follow.

For example, in earlier times, learned scholars used to write letters in a particular manner. Before addressing the recipient, they would write expressions such as *Ra:ma jayam*, *Sri Ra:ma*, *Na:ra:yana:ya namaha*, or the name of their *a:cha:rya*. Observing this, others would imitate the same practice. All activities follow a similar pattern. First, one must know what action is to be performed. Next arises the question of how to perform it. When such doubts occur, the scholar demonstrates the process, explaining which object to use first, what follows next, and so on. Every action consists of multiple steps, which together form the limbs of that action.

Therefore, to learn any activity properly, one must understand all its limbs. In this verse, the word *prama:nam* means *avadhi*. When Sri Sri: *Krushna* says ***sa yathprama:nam kuruthe:***, He conveys that just as a scholar performs an



action along with its avadhi, meaning all its limbs, others will perform the same action in the same manner.

Avadhi refers to the final step of an activity, and when it is completed, the whole activity is considered finished.

For instance, if someone decides to do gardening by planting a tree, they may take a crowbar, dig a small hole, and sow the seeds. Does this mean the task of planting a tree is complete? Certainly not. If planting a tree is considered an activity, it includes prerequisites as well as actions that follow the main act. The prerequisites involve removing weeds, cleaning the area, digging a hole of sufficient depth, and setting the soil aside. Then comes the primary act of sowing the seeds, covering them with soil, and watering them. Even then, the activity is not complete until the concluding actions are finished, such as cleaning the crowbar, washing the hands and legs, and returning all the tools to their proper place. Until the avadhi of restoring the tools and cleaning oneself is fulfilled, the activity of gardening cannot be considered complete.



Similarly, if we consider taking food as an activity or a *karma*, it also has prerequisites and follow-up actions. If a person wakes up hungry, grabs food from a packet, eats it in the bedroom, throws away the packet, and merely wipes their hands, it cannot truly be called eating. Animals such as dogs and cats do that. Human beings must understand all the limbs of the activity. Before eating, one must purify the mouth, body, mind, and *jna:nam*. Only after such purification should food be taken. Furthermore, there is an appropriate place, time, and method of eating so that the food nourishes not only the body but also the mind and *jna:na*.



Therefore, before undertaking any *karma*, one must possess complete knowledge of the activity and of all the limbs involved in its proper completion.

In the case of eating, how do we purify ourselves? To purify the mouth, one must brush the teeth, clean the tongue, and follow other basic hygiene practices. Taking a bath purifies the body.

How do we purify the mind? After cleaning the body, one engages in activities such as meditation, contemplation on God, and worship of God in the form of a deity.

To purify *jna:na*, the cooked food is first offered to the deity. After completing the worship, one should sit steadily in a *sukha asa:na* and, while consuming the food, mentally offer it to God who resides as *antharya:mi*. Only then can eating be called a *yajna*.

Even before food is cooked, care must be taken in selecting the right vegetables and ingredients and cleaning them properly. Each ingredient, each vegetable, and each utensil used in cooking has its own method of cleaning. One must



understand both the process of purification and the process of cooking.

Only when food is prepared and consumed in this manner does it truly nourish the body, mind, and *jna:na*. If eating is considered an activity, then it clearly has many limbs that one must understand and follow.

The practices followed by adults in a family naturally influence children. Children observe and imitate what they see. If a father begins the day with bed coffee or smoking, children tend to follow and may even adopt worse habits. In homes where adults do not follow good practices, children often resist discipline despite being instructed to behave well. On the other hand, in families where adults follow good practices, children naturally adopt them. When children observe their father waking up early, brushing, practicing *yo:ga* for strength, taking a bath, worshiping God, and then consuming food, they naturally feel inspired to follow the same way of life.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, “Therefore, *Arjuna*, people naturally imitate the *jna:nis*. Although the *jna:nis* are eligible to renounce *karma* and pursue only *jna:na yo:ga*, they continue to practice *karma yo:ga* for the welfare of the world.”

jna:nis perform *karma* along with all its limbs for the protection of the world order and for *lo:kasangraha*.

lo:kasangraha has two dimensions. One is to transmit right practices to the next generation so that the world order is preserved. The other is to ensure that society as a whole follows these practices in harmony.

Sri *Ra:ma*, for example, was regarded as supremely knowledgeable by the revered *rushis*. Although Sri *Ra:ma* was *Parama:thma* appearing in human form, He performed all His ordained duties along with every required limb. Sage *Valmi:ki* repeatedly notes in the Sri *Ra:ma:yanam* that Sri *Ra:ma* performed sandhya: *vandanam* at the appropriate times and in the proper manner, observing all its limbs.

By citing examples such as Sri *Ra:ma*, King Janaka, and other enlightened beings, Sri Sri: *Krushna* urges *Arjuna* to



rise and perform his prescribed *karma*, which is to fight in the battle. Even if *Arjuna* is inclined toward *jna:na yo:ga*, he must still perform his duty to protect the order of the world.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* then presents Himself as an example, saying that even when ordinary people and enlightened beings like Janaka are set aside, He stands above all. As the *avatha:r* of *Parama:thma*, no one can question His actions, yet He still engages in *karma* for the sake of the world order.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* Himself is a *karma yo:gi*

From time eternal, *Parama:thma* has taken many *avatha:rs* to uplift mankind. Through these divine descents, He has repeatedly come to guide, support, and protect. He has appeared among humans as one of them, and at other times manifested as a *deva:tha*, an animal, a bird, a tree, a mountain, or a river, all for the welfare of the world.

Among all *avatha:rs*, the Sri: *Krushna avatha:r* is revered as *jagadupakruthi marthyaha*, the One who took human

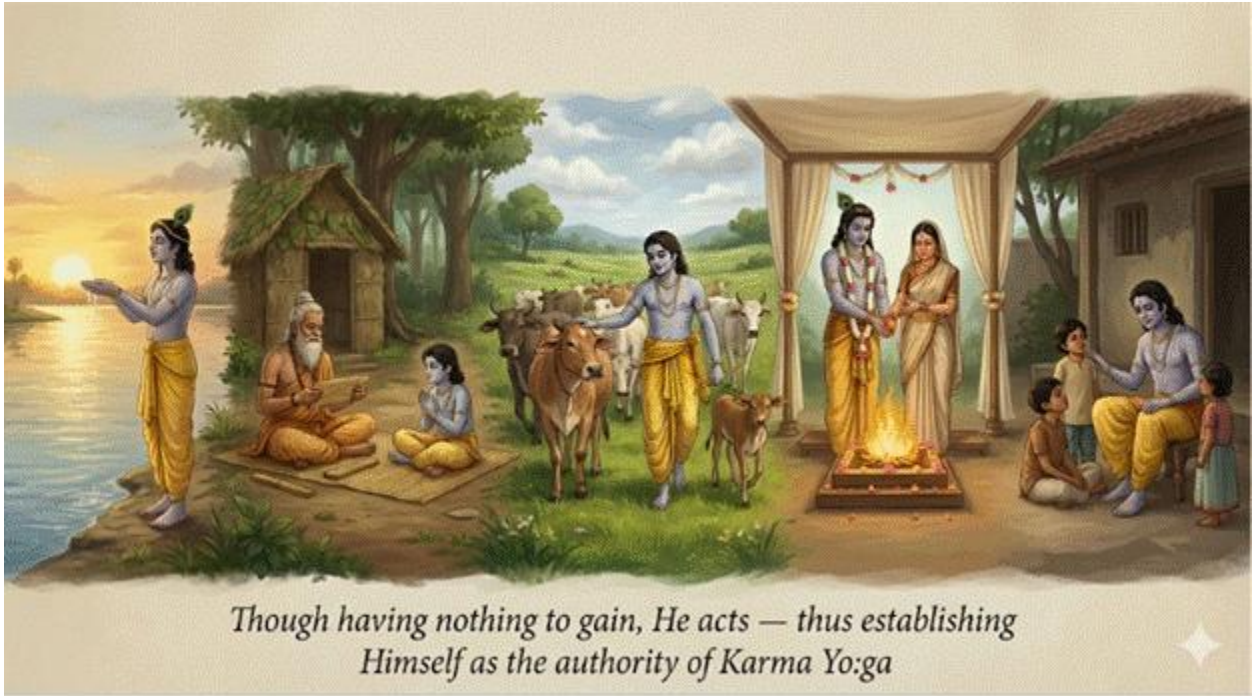


birth for the good of the entire world. *Parama:thma* assumed the form of Sri: *Krushna* solely to uplift humanity. He has no duties to fulfill and nothing to gain. Yet Sri Sri: *Krushna* deliberately engaged in various activities so that people may learn by His example, cultivate noble conduct, reform their lives, realize their true nature, and ultimately attain lasting happiness. In the third chapter, He establishes Himself as the living authority for *karma yo:ga*.

Sri: *Krushna* teaches that every person must perform their actions as *yajna*. Only then can true joy be experienced. To emphasize this, He presents His own life as an example in the twenty second verse:

*na me pa:rtthasthi karthavyam thrishu lo:ke:shu
kinchana* |

*na:n ava:ptham ava:pthavyam vartha e:va cha
karma:ni || 3.22 ||*



Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains the necessity of performing one's duties without fail. *vartha e:va cha karma:ni* means, “*Arjuna*, do you not see that I continue to act even though I have nothing that I must accomplish?”

Arjuna asks, “What actions did You perform?”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* replies, “Even as a child, I went to a teacher for my formal initiation into learning. I was born into a family of cowherds and carried out my responsibilities accordingly. I took the cattle out for grazing and fulfilled my duties with care. Later, I approached *Guru Sa:ndi:pani* and studied many



branches of knowledge. At the completion of my education, I offered *guru dakshina* as an expression of gratitude and reverence.”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* lived in the *ashram* of *Sa:ndi:pani* and mastered all the sixty four *vidya:s* in a short time. When the time came for *guru dakshina*, *Sa:ndi:pani* did not seek wealth or service at the Lord’s feet. Instead, he asked for the return of his departed children, and Sri Sri: *Krushna* fulfilled even that wish.

Lord Sri: *Krushna* is *Parama:thma* Himself, the very cause of the universe. *Guru Sa:ndi:pani* could have asked for liberation or inexhaustible wealth. Instead, he asked for the return of his children. It is surprising that such a rare opportunity was used for something so limited. What lasting happiness can come from children? Children remain affectionate toward their parents only as long as their expectations are fulfilled. When even a small expectation is not met, their attitude may change. They may hurt their parents through words and actions, and in extreme cases even abandon them. History itself gives many examples. Kamsa imprisoned his own father *Ugrase:na*.



Therefore, one should seek the true source of lasting happiness rather than depend on children or worldly relationships for fulfillment.

Due to the force of past *ka:rmic* impressions, *Sa:ndi:pani* could not think beyond this wish. Sri Sri: *Krushna*, however, had resolved to honor His teacher. Since He had given His word, He fulfilled the *guru*'s desire. This episode is described in the great epics Sri:mad *Maha:bha:ratha* and Sri:mad *Bha:gavatha*.

While narrating the history of Emperor Raghu, the great poet Kalidasa tells the story of a disciple named *Kauthsa*. After completing his studies, *Kauthsa* approached his *guru* and said, "Master, I wish to offer *guru dakshina*. Please instruct me what I should give." There is a tradition that offering *guru dakshina* helps preserve the knowledge received and makes it fruitful in life.

The *guru* replied, "My child, I need nothing. You have studied well. Live a life of wisdom and discipline. Conduct yourself in a way that benefits the world. Do not become a burden or a



disturbance to society.” What greater refinement can there be than such a teacher who seeks nothing for himself?

But *Kauthsa* insisted, “No, I must offer something.” Though the *guru* declined several times, the disciple continued to press. Finally, the *guru* became displeased. At that moment he said, “Then bring me fourteen heaps of gold, one for each branch of knowledge you have learned, piled so high that even if a coin is thrown upward while standing on an elephant, it would not rise above them.”

Kauthsa was a poor student who possessed nothing beyond the simple cloth he wore. How could he ever gather such immense wealth? Yet, taking his teacher’s words as a command, he set out in search of help. With faith in his heart, he went to Emperor Raghu.

At that time, King Raghu had just completed the *Sarvasva dakshina yajna*, a sacrifice in which he had given away all his wealth to those who sought it. Nothing remained with him except his kingdom, his family, and himself. When the bramhachari arrived, the king received him with great respect,



though he had only a simple earthen vessel with which to wash the guest's feet.

Seeing this humble welcome, *Kauthsa* felt disheartened. He thought, "I came here to ask for great wealth. When the reception itself is so simple, how can I ask for anything?" He decided to suppress his request.

But King Raghu, understanding the purpose of his visit, said, "You are a brahmachari, and you have come seeking something. Tell me openly, what is it that you desire?"

Raghu *Maharaja* finally persuaded the brahmachari to admit that he had come seeking wealth. The king then requested *Kauthsa* to remain in the kingdom for a few days while he arranged the required amount. Thereafter, with the help of his secret agents, he prepared to wage war against *Kube:ra*, the king of the *Yakshas* and the deity presiding over wealth, treasures, and prosperity.

Kube:ra, fully aware of the king's valor and power, filled Raghu's treasury overnight with abundant heaps of gold, precious gems, and other riches. King Raghu then summoned



Kauthsa and offered him the entire wealth. However, the bramhachari refused to accept even a single coin beyond what was required for his *guru dakshina*. This is the celebrated history of Emperor Raghu.

The essence of this episode is that offering *guru dakshina* is both important and a sacred duty. Since Sri Sri: *Krushna* was fully aware of His obligation toward His *guru*, He fulfilled the wishes of *Sa:ndi:pani* accordingly. At the same time, He upheld other responsibilities such as treating everyone with fairness and equality. He bore no hatred toward His enemies and showed no excessive attachment toward His relatives. He granted a vast army to Duryodhana while offering Himself alone to *Arjuna*. Thus, the Lord remained neutral and impartial, faithfully performing His duty.

The Lord also demonstrated reverence toward elders as a matter of *dharma*. As the saying declares, ***abhiva:dana si:lasya nithyam vruddho:pa se:vinah chathva:ri thasya vardhanthi a:yuh ki:rthih dhanam prajna:ha***. One who respects and serves parents, teachers, and elders is blessed with long life, wisdom, fame, and



prosperity. This is the sense of duty that everyone in the world must observe.

That is why *Dharmara:ja*, after the end of the *Kurukshe:thra* war, built a fine palace and offered it to his elder uncle *Dhruthara:shtra*. In reality, it was *Dhruthara:shtra*'s misguided judgment and excessive attachment to his sons that had led to the great calamity. Yet, moved by compassion for a man who had lost his entire family and was suffering, and out of reverence for one who was like a father, *Dharmara:ja* would go to him every morning after completing his daily rituals and bow at his feet. The *Sri:mad Bha:gavatham* also records that he showed the same reverence to *Ga:ndha:ri*.

Before the end of his life, *Vidura* quietly took *Dhruthara:shtra* away without informing *Dharmara:ja*. When *Dharmara:ja* discovered this, he became deeply distressed and anxiously asked where his father had gone. When questioned why he still needed a father, he replied that he had served him every day and wondered where they had departed.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that such service is necessary for those who are bound by *karma*. For Himself, there is no such need. He declares that He is the greatest and has no obligation to serve or bow to anyone. Yet He continues to honor elders, serve His parents and teachers, bow in reverence, follow the instructions of His preceptors, and perform the duties appropriate to His birth, age, and position. He does so because He has taken birth as a human being in this world.



This establishes an important truth. No embodied human being can abandon responsibility or renounce action. One should not neglect prescribed duties merely because one is



pursuing *jna:na yo:ga*. Whoever one may be, duties must be performed. Sri Sri: *Krushna* firmly establishes this principle.

Who is this Sri: *Krushna* who teaches with such authority?

The learned and the realized describe Him with special attributes. They say He is ***ava:ptha samastha ka:maha***, one who has no desires to begin with; ***sarvajnaha***, the omniscient; ***sarvasakthihi***, the omnipotent; and ***sarve:svaraha***, the supreme controller of all. Ordinary people fall into two categories. Some have desires and strive to fulfill them. Others had desires and have already fulfilled them. Sri Sri: *Krushna* is different from both. He has no desires to begin with.

Even so, He continues to observe all prescribed practices. Just as the poor work to earn wealth and the ignorant act to remove past tendencies and impurities, Sri Sri: *Krushna* performs action to demonstrate that no one is exempt from duty. Those who lack knowledge or clarity must act in accordance with scripture to purify their minds and overcome past impressions.



Although Sri Sri: *Krushna* has no ignorance and no obstacle to knowledge, He still acts.

For any living being to perform action, the body must be sustained and kept fit. For the body to remain conducive, one must follow the discipline appropriate to it. Therefore, engagement in *nithyakarma*, the daily obligatory duties that preserve the health and balance of the body, is necessary.

Thus, Sri Sri: *Krushna* affirms that even though He is omnipotent and complete in Himself, He continues to perform His ordained actions. Through His example, He teaches that action performed in accordance with *dharma* is indispensable for all.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* further says, “If a person has desires to fulfill, then they must engage in actions to accomplish them. In this world, every being, up to Chathumukha Bramha, must perform one activity or another. In contrast, I have no desires to fulfill at all, and therefore there is nothing that I am required to accomplish. *na me pa:rttha:sthi karthavyam thrishu lo:ke:shu kinchana na:navaptham*



avapthavyam vartha e:va cha karma:ni. Even so, see how I continue to engage in actions appropriate to Me.”

Among all living beings, humans possess a unique ability to learn by observation and imitation. Compared to other forms of life, human beings have a greater capacity to watch others carefully and replicate their actions. For this reason, Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches humanity through His own conduct, using *Arjuna* as the medium, so that people may follow His example and rise to a higher spiritual state.

There is a common misconception that those who pursue the path of *jna:na*, the path of knowledge, can abandon their duties. This understanding is incorrect. Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that knowledge alone does not lead to liberation. It is action performed with the integration of knowledge that purifies and elevates a person.

To illustrate this, Sri: *Krushna* gives examples such as King Janaka. Although Janaka had no personal desires and no concern for bodily preservation, he continued to perform his



duties in order to uphold social order and set an example for others.

When actions are performed merely for a specific result, they often lose their depth. For instance, studying only to secure high marks in an examination may not lead to complete understanding. In ancient times, there was no system of formal examinations. A student lived in the *gurukula* for a period of study, and by the end of the training gained thorough, experiential, and well assimilated knowledge.

Exams were introduced to motivate students to study better, but had the opposite effect since students tailored their studies particularly to score the best grades, selectively focusing on the portion of the syllable that has higher likelihood of being tested on. Thus, the quality of knowledge of students and teachers have deteriorated with time. Similarly, in the name of devotion, people perform rituals and rites for a set period of time and have rigid expectations and preferences on what must and must not happen in their lives as a result. They start blaming their actions when an unexpected bad thing happens. As a result they discontinue their efforts. Therefore, if one has



an exception of the results from their actions, then they discontinue their efforts when they are faced with obstacles. Hence, one must always engage in activities without expecting fruits from their actions.

King Janaka is quoted as an example in Chapter three for being devoid of such expectations. When a task is carried out with an end result in mind, one feels impatient to get it done with or wants to abandon it midway and jump to something else, leading to fickleness.

Fixation on results leads to frustration and, over time, to doubt about the very effort itself. Such disappointment makes a person frequently change their course of action. Instead, one should work with steadiness and consistency, because activity is natural to the body. Therefore, it is our duty to remain continuously engaged in the ordained actions.

At the same time, one must recognize *Parama:thma* through true knowledge. With firm conviction, a person should understand that they belong to *Parama:thma* and that He alone is the inner guide and doer. With this understanding,



they accept every outcome, whether success or failure, with equanimity. It is said that King Janaka lived his life in this manner, harmonizing his actions with right knowledge.

King Janaka was known to have perfected both *karma*, the path of action, and *jna:na*, the path of knowledge. His fellow students found it difficult to believe that these seemingly opposing paths could coexist in one person. Since their teacher frequently praised Janaka, they grew resentful and assumed that the praise was due only to his wealth and royal status.

To correct their misunderstanding, the teacher decided to teach them a lesson. He instructed the students to visit King Janaka and learn from him the art of ruling a kingdom. They approached the king and made their request. Janaka told them that he would respond in the evening, as a grand festival was taking place in the palace. There were decorated gateways and performances at the four corners of the palace grounds.

The king then asked them to walk around the palace carrying vessels filled to the brim with water on their heads. Soldiers



stood on either side with drawn swords, and they were warned that if even a single drop were spilled, they would be immediately punished.

The students completed the task successfully, returning with the water intact and their composure steady. King Janaka then asked them whether they had seen the dance performance at the eastern gate. The students replied that they had been so completely focused on preventing even a drop from spilling that they had not noticed anything else.

They had not even noticed the musical performance at the southern gate or the art displays at the western gate. Their entire concern was to save their lives. Though they walked through the streets and passed many sights, nothing truly registered because their attention was fixed elsewhere. Even pleasing sounds and attractive scenes failed to draw their minds. The students remained fully focused on the swords, the pot, and the water *within* it, carefully ensuring that not a single drop spilled.



Through this, King Janaka taught them that his own life as a ruler was no different. While governing the kingdom, he performed his duties with precision, offering praise to the deserving and punishment to the erring, yet remaining inwardly detached from the emotional results. If something was taken away from him, he did not resist; if something was given to him, he did not become elated.

Thus, Sri Sri: *Krushna* cites King Janaka as one who perfected *karma yo:ga* by possessing the right *jna:na* while actively performing his ordained duties. Sri: *Krushna* advises *Arjuna* to follow the path of *karma yo:ga*, for when it is practiced properly, *jna:na* naturally becomes integrated into it. Therefore, there is no need for a *ji:va* to pursue pure knowledge alone while abandoning action. When *karma yo:ga* is lived in the right spirit, knowledge unfolds *within* it and leads to spiritual perfection and realization. *parama:pno:thi pu:rushaha*, even *mo:ksha* arises naturally, without any separate or exclusive effort directed toward it.



After presenting Janaka as an example, Sri: *Krushna* cites Himself as well as one who practices *karma yo:ga*. Our a:charyas explain that Sri: *Krushna* does this because *Arjuna* might have wondered whether, although Janaka's actions were visible, his inner knowledge could not be verified. Actions can be seen, but *jna:na* is an inner state of the mind and cannot be externally confirmed. By offering Himself as the example, Sri: *Krushna* removes even this doubt.

Compared to humans, *Parama:thma* is entirely distinct and beyond comparison. He is omniscient and omnipotent. He has no desires and no needs. Yet, if we turn to Him, He has the power to fulfill all our wishes. He governs and sustains everyone and everything. These are the essential divine qualities of the Lord. Even so, His nature is marked by great gentleness and compassion. He feels joy when we learn from Him, draw inspiration from Him, and elevate ourselves. He regards all *ji:vas* as His own.

Because of this, He cannot bear to see our suffering. Out of boundless mercy, He incarnates again and again in this world to teach what is right and then demonstrates it through His



own life, so that we may follow His example and progress toward a higher state. Whenever He descends, He abides by the order of the world. He appears *within* a family lineage, bears a name, accepts parents, and assumes a role or vocation.

In truth, such conditions are meant for those bound by *ka:rmic* impressions. They require a body, identity, and occupation in order to work through and exhaust their *karma*. None of these limitations apply to Lord Sri: *Krushna*, for He is not bound by any *ka:rmic* residue. The *ve:dic* scriptures declare that although He has no *karma* to overcome, the Lord willingly assumes a form, a name, and a role solely to establish and teach *dharma* for the welfare of humanity.

Our *a:charyas* often recall the period of Sri: *Krushna*'s childhood in *Go:kul*. As a young child, He was first entrusted with small calves. As He grew, He tended larger herds and eventually cows. He would play His flute, and the calves would gather joyfully around Him, absorbed in His music. At times, He would even bend down and bite grass, playfully showing them how to graze, teaching through affection, simplicity, and example.



He would also teach them how to quench their thirst by showing them how to drink from a nearby stream. Entering the water until it reached His knees, He would bend down and sip just as an animal would. Immediately, the calves would follow Him into the stream and drink in the same manner. After they had finished, He would gently lead them back out. In this way, whenever He appeared among any living beings, He became one with them and behaved exactly as they did. He felt it to be His responsibility to guide and nurture all creatures.

For this reason, though incomprehensibly powerful, He incarnated in many forms suited to the needs of the time. He appeared as a warrior in the *Ra:ma avatha:r*, as a brahmin in the *Va:mana avatha:r*, as a wild boar in the *Vara:ha avatha:r*, as a fish in the *Mathsya avatha:r*, and as the half man half lion in the *Narasimha avatha:r*, along with many other *avatha:rs*. Each time, He accepted a particular species, *community*, stage of life, weapons, and the customs of a family lineage appropriate to that form.



Consider a simple example. A person who owns a chessboard and its pieces must still play the game according to its rules. Similarly, the Lord has created this vast universe as His field of play. Yet, when He incarnates as a human, He lives and interacts exactly as a human would. By doing so, He allows others to observe His conduct and learn from His example.

He does not act out of personal need or to accomplish anything for Himself. His very name, ***Bhagava:n***, signifies that He possesses infinite auspicious qualities and lacks nothing. It is not that all His desires are fulfilled, rather He has no desires at all. He is ***ava:pthasamasthaka:ma***. Everything in the universe arises from His divine will, and all remains under His complete control.

The *ve:dic* scriptures lay down commands for all *ji:vas*. Therefore, whoever is embodied is subject to scripture. This is the meaning of ***sa:sana:th sa:sthram***, that which instructs and governs.

Whom does it instruct?



All embodied beings. The Dharma *sa:sthra* applies to all dwellers across all fourteen worlds, from ***Bramhalo:ka***, the realm of *Chathurmukha* Brahma, down to the lower nether regions, ***Adhahpa:tha:lalo:ka***.

However, scripture is meant for *ji:vas* bound by *ka:rmic* impressions. By following it, they gain great benefit; by neglecting it, they lose a precious opportunity. Thus they perform their ordained duties, whether willingly or reluctantly. The Lord, however, is not bound by *karma*, and the scriptures do not exist for His sake. Then why does He act in accordance with *dharma*? So that others may see and learn. There is no personal gain for Him. Indeed, every being in the universe is able to function only because of Him.

The *Upanishads* declare:

bhi:sha:sma:th va:thah pavathe: bhi:sho:de:thi
su:ryaha |

bhi:sha:sma:th agnischa indrascha
mruthyurdha:vathi panchama ithi ||



Because of reverence for Him, the wind blows in proper measure, time, and direction. The wind deity, *Va:yu*, performs his function with care, unwilling to fail the Lord even in the slightest.

In the same way, all deities carry out their duties with utmost precision. Just as a faithful servant acts carefully to avoid displeasing the master, the deities perform their responsibilities in accordance with the command and will of the Lord.

Does the Lord personally supervise and direct each deity?

There is no need for such direct intervention. When a government wishes to *communicate* a rule to the public, a person called “government” does not meet every individual to explain it. Instead, an order or notification is issued, and the system functions accordingly. In the same way, the Lord does not need to personally instruct each being at every moment.

The *Va:yu* deity performs his function properly out of reverence for the Lord. Likewise, ***bhi:sho:de:thi su:ryaha***, the Sun rises unfailingly at every place with



perfect precision, down to the minute and even the second. We never see the Sun delay one day or rise earlier than expected. This accuracy is evident from the calculations of scholars who prepare traditional almanacs. They are able to predict the exact day, hour, minute, and second of sunrise many years in advance.

Similarly, ***bhi:sha:sma:th agnischa***, fire always moves upward in accordance with the Lord's command. ***mruthyurdha:vathi panchama ithi***, even the deity of death functions strictly according to His will, taking life only at the appointed time and of the one whose time has come. No medical effort and no pleading from relatives can prevent death when the Lord has ordained that the time has arrived.

Thus the *ve:dic* scriptures declare that the entire universe functions under the Lord's governance and that none exists to control Him. ***prasa:sitha:ram sarve:sha:m***, He alone is the supreme controller of all *ji:vas*. Therefore, He is not bound by ***sa:sthra***, the authoritative teaching meant to guide understanding and conduct.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* tells *Arjuna*, ***na me partha:sti karthavyam thrishu lo:ke:shu kinchana***. There is nothing for Me to accomplish in the three worlds. There is nothing I need to gain and no one whose favor I must seek. Nor is there anything I must do out of fear or obligation.

He further implies that while a bound *ji:va* incurs consequences by neglecting prescribed duties, no such result applies to Him. There is none to instruct, restrain, or judge Him, for He is the ruler of all and the one who governs the circumstances of everyone.

In this world, the knowledge of bound *ji:vas* remains covered by ignorance. Even when some become liberated and their knowledge shines fully, that awakening occurs only through divine will. Thus even the ***mukthas*** exist under the Lord's authority. Likewise, the ***nithyasu:ris***, those who were never bound by *karma* and who eternally reside in the Lord's abode, also remain under His will.

Since embodied *ji:vas* are bound by *ka:rmic* impressions, they must continue to act in order to exhaust them. For such bound



beings, the practice of *karma yo:ga* is not optional and is unavoidable, for it is the means through which their *ka:rmic* bondage is gradually removed.

Instructions of *karma yo:ga*

Parama:thma is known as ***Sarvajna***, the omniscient. This is not a name given by anyone, but a natural attribute of the Lord.

***para:sya sakthih vividhaiva sru:yathe
sva:bha:vikijna:na bala kriya: cha***

This statement declares that the Lord possesses *jna:na*, bala, and *kriya: sakthi*, and that all three exist naturally in Him. Just as saltiness is inherent in salt, sweetness in jaggery, and warmth in the Sun, the capacity to govern the universe is inherent in the Lord. He never loses this ability.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, “*Arjuna*, observe that although I am powerful, omniscient, and fully capable of controlling the universe, I still perform my ordained duties. Because I possess complete knowledge of all actions, I do not need to make any



special effort to acquire that knowledge. I perform these activities only so that the world may learn from them.” *Arjuna* then asks, “Why is this necessary? Is there any harm if You renounce Your activities?”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* replies,

yadi hyaham na varthe: yam ja: thu karmany athandrithaha |
mama varthma: nuvarthanthe: manushyah pa: rttha! sarvasaha || 3.23 ||

“*Arjuna*, what would happen if I were to stop performing My duties as they ought to be performed, or if I were to neglect them even slightly out of indifference?”

The nature of the world is not to draw inspiration from proper action, but rather to look for excuses to avoid responsibility. People are quick to imitate what is renounced rather than what is diligently performed. If I were to abandon My duties, others would follow that example, and as a result, the order of the world would collapse. Therefore, it is essential for Me to continue practicing *karma yo:ga* for the welfare of the world.

People are constantly seeking ways to avoid responsibility and to obtain results without effort. Sri Sri: *Krushna* clarifies that



one must act without attachment to results. This is the essence of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. The *Gi:tha* is not merely a collection of teachings, but a practical guide on how to perform one's duties. Sri Sri: *Krushna* presents Himself as the example, showing the world what to do and how to do it.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* has no desires and no need to seek results. Even if He were to renounce all action, it would cause Him no loss. Yet, He continues to perform His duties solely for the sake of the world. Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* asserts that it would be improper for *Arjuna* to renounce his duty of fighting the *Kauravas* in the war.

The reason *Arjuna* must continue on the path of *karma* is that he still expects the fruits of his actions. If he were to renounce his ordained duties in such a state, it would result in demerit for him.

While speaking about Himself, Sri Sri: *Krushna* reveals an important insight. He explains that His actions serve as inspiration specifically for human beings, *manushya:h pa:rttha*. In the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri



Sri: *Krushna* describes four categories of *ji:vas*. The first are *manushya:s*, human beings. The second are *de:vathas*, the celestial beings such as air, wind, and the sun. The third are *thiryaks*, which include animals, birds, and insects. The fourth category is *sttha:varas*, beings that are stationary, such as mountains, trees, and stones.

Animals, trees, and other non-human beings do not deviate from their nature or duties. The same is true of the *de:vathas*. *de:vathas* unfailingly perform their responsibilities. Air sustains life without concern for whether it is acknowledged or appreciated. Likewise, water, fire, and earth continuously support living beings, regardless of recognition.



de:vathas, thiryaks, and sttha:varas all perform their duties without exception. It is only human beings who seek ways to avoid their responsibilities.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, “Therefore, *Arjuna*, I continue to engage in action so that human beings may look up to Me and not abandon their prescribed duties. If they renounce action, they will only fall further and accumulate demerits.”

Enlightened beings and scholars generally do not compel us to perform our responsibilities by force. They do not stand with a stick or weapon to drive us into action. Instead, they



themselves act in a righteous manner so that others may be inspired to follow their example. The *ve:das* state,

***na de:va: yashtima:da:ya rakshanthi
pasupa:lavath |
yam yam rakshithumicchanthi buddhya:
samyo:jayanthi tham ||***

de:vathas, enlightened beings, *a:charyas*, and revered scholars do not force people to act, just as a cowherd drives cattle with a stick. Rather, they guide through wisdom and inspiration, awakening right understanding in those whom they wish to protect.

***aka:ryachintha: samaka:lame:va
pra:durbhavamscha:padhara:ha purstha:th -***

Historians describe the way people lived during the reign of *Ka:rthavi:rya:rjuna*. It is said that the very moment a person entertained a thought of wrongdoing, such as stealing or lying, *Ka:rthavi:rya:rjuna* would appear before them with his bow and arrows. He would warn them and prevent the act from taking place. Because of his extraordinary powers, he ruled in



such a way that righteousness prevailed throughout the kingdom.

de:vathas, however, do not govern people in this manner. They do not intervene directly at the moment of wrongdoing. Instead, they inspire noble thoughts in those who possess the inclination to protect the world. As the *Veda* says, ***yam yam rakshithumicchanthi buddhya: samyo:jayanthi tham.*** They awaken the right understanding in such individuals, who then take correct action. Others naturally follow their example, just as children imitate their parents or learn by observing their peers.

What does it mean to protect a person?

Protection does not merely mean rescuing someone after a mistake is made. Preventing a person from making mistakes and guiding them along a disciplined and correct path is also a form of protection. Further, protection is not only about one's personal practice without failure. If a competent and respected practitioner abandons their prescribed activities, those who look up to them will also renounce their duties.



When ordinary people abandon their activities, the resulting demerit accrues to the competent practitioner who set that example. Because the renunciation occurred due to their influence, the practitioner incurs sin.

In other words, when the younger generation behaves improperly, the responsibility lies with the elders. When a child acts wrongly, it is the duty of the parents to correct the behavior. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the learned and competent practitioners to guide and correct the ignorant and the incompetent.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* therefore declares, “*Arjuna!* People regard Me as omniscient, and the *ve:das* describe Me as the protector of the world, one who ensures that people follow the right practices without falling into error. I take avatāras in order to observe and uphold the proper duties appropriate to each stage of life.”

In this verse, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains the danger that would arise if He were to abandon prescribed practices:



***uthside:yur ime: lo:ka:ha na kurya:m karma
che:d aham |***

***sankarasya cha kartha: sya: upahanya:m ima:h
praja:ha || 3.24 ||***

If Sri Sri: *Krushna* were to renounce action, the order of the world would collapse.

na kurya:m karma che:daham – what happens if Sri Sri: *Krushna* renounces His activities? People regarded *Vasude:va*, the father of Sri: *Krushna*, as a highly competent practitioner. Naturally, they would assume that his son, Sri Sri: *Krushna*, would be equally capable and would observe all required duties. If Sri Sri: *Krushna* were to avoid His practices, people might think that even such a competent individual as his father may not be observing duties. Observing that able individuals are renouncing their obligations, others might feel justified in abandoning their own practices. Consequently, the common people would also give up *karma yo:ga*.

Moreover, since the body is always active, abandoning proper practices leads people to pursue inappropriate actions. For



example, squeezing water from a cloth to make it dry causes the water to fall elsewhere, making something else wet.

A similar illustration comes from an incident during a communal meal. A group of people were eating together in rows during summer, enjoying juicy mangoes. Although one should ideally not talk while eating, they were chatting. One person unknowingly squeezed his mango, causing the seed to fly into another person's plate. The incident happened so quickly that neither person noticed. One person assumed their mango had no seed, while the other thought theirs had two seeds. The seed did not disappear; it simply ended up in a different plate. Just as the seed that jumped to another plate or as water squeezed from a cloth makes something else wet, abandoning proper practices leads to consequences elsewhere.



If a river dries up, the water has not disappeared; it has evaporated or eventually flows into the sea. Similarly, if the body is not engaged in the right practices, it naturally pursues improper actions, leading to demerits.

The human body is a rare and precious tool for pursuing good practices and breaking the cycle of life and death. Failing to engage in the right practices means being reborn, with no guarantee of receiving another human body. This is why competent practitioners must never abandon their ordained duties.



Sri Sri: *Krushna's* commitment to righteous conduct is so profound that He expressed displeasure over how His brother *Balarama* once avoided his responsibility and thereby became eligible for demerit. He firmly tells *Arjuna* that one who remains steadfast in fulfilling their ordained duties will eventually attain nobility. In contrast, one who evades responsibility can never prosper. Such a person not only incurs sin but also becomes responsible for the moral decline of society.

Balarama was a warrior, and fighting in battle was his ordained duty. Although one should not actively seek warfare, when a battle arises, a warrior must not withdraw. When injustice exists on both sides and neither cause is fully righteous, a warrior must assess which side represents the lesser evil and support it. A comparable situation arises during political elections. If one is dissatisfied with both parties, it is still improper to abstain from voting. For the welfare of the nation, one must evaluate the options and choose the party that best serves the country. Voting is a civic duty that must be exercised for the common good.



In the same manner, *Balarama* should have chosen a side in the battle of *Kurukshetra*. Despite it being his duty to fight, he instead chose to go on a pilgrimage. By renouncing his responsibility to participate in the battle under the pretext of undertaking a country tour, he abandoned his ordained role. In Sri Sri: *Krishna's* view, *Balarama's* action constitutes a serious moral lapse.

Bhishma pithamaha stood at the forefront of *dharma*. Although he did not approve of the battle of *Kurukshetra* between the *Pandavas* and the *Kauravas*, he understood that avoiding one's duty leads to sin. Therefore, he participated in the war, even while imposing strict moral constraints upon himself.

Bhishma set one such rule for himself. When *Dhuryodhana* enthusiastically approached *Bhishma* to announce that he had obtained an army of ten thousand soldiers in exchange for Sri Sri: *Krishna*, *Bhishma* was deeply disappointed. He said to *Dhuryodhana*, "What a grave mistake. Sri Sri: *Krishna* alone is sufficient to conquer the entire world." Saying this, *Bhishma* extolled the valor of Sri Sri: *Krishna*. At the same



time, he took a vow that he would compel Sri Sri: *Krushna* to take up a weapon in the battle.

On hearing *Bhi:shma*'s vow, *Dhuryo:dhana* was overjoyed. He had long believed that *Bhi:shma* was partial toward the *Pa:ndavas* and feared that appointing him as the commander of the Kaurava army would lead to their destruction, since *Bhi:shma* would never kill the *Pa:ndavas*. *Dhuryo:dhana* also knew that *Bhi:shma* stood on the Kaurava side only because of the promise he had given to his mother to protect the throne and whoever occupied it. Since *Dhuryo:dhana* now sat on the throne, *Bhi:shma* was bound to protect him. However, when *Bhi:shma* vowed to make Sri Sri: *Krushna* take up arms, *Dhuryo:dhana* became convinced that *Bhi:shma* would wage a fierce battle against the *Pa:ndavas*. To him, this vow confirmed that the *Pa:ndavas* would be destroyed and that the *Kauravas* would emerge victorious.

At the same time, *Bhi:shma* placed a moral constraint upon himself. He declared that he would not fight against the five *Pa:ndava* brothers, as they stood on the side of righteousness. He resolved to fight and kill anyone else on the *Pa:ndava* side.



Dhuryo:dhana was pleased by this as well, confident that there were enough warriors in the Kaurava army to defeat the five *Pa:ndavas* while *Bhi:shma* engaged the rest of their forces.

In a similar manner, *Balara:ma* should have taken a vow not to kill *Dhuryo:dhana*, for whom he had a soft corner. While fighting on behalf of the *Pa:ndavas*, *Balara:ma* could have imposed a self constraint not to harm *Dhuryo:dhana* and to fight against others on the Kaurava side.

Knowing *dharma* well, *Bhi:shma* imposed limits upon himself and still chose to fight the war, despite his advanced age and the sorrow of witnessing the younger generation perish before his eyes. He upheld his duty as a warrior and participated in the battle. The same principle applied to *Balara:ma*, and he too should have fought. Renouncing the war under the pretext of not wanting to see his people die is considered cowardice and stands opposed to the *dharma* of war.

Balara:ma's conduct caused a measure of disappointment to Sri Sri: *Krushna*. After renouncing his duty as a warrior, *Balara:ma* did not fully embrace the discipline of ascetic life



either. *Vidura* also renounced his worldly duties, but unlike *Balara:ma*, he sincerely undertook a religious pilgrimage, clearly reflecting his *sa:thvik* nature.

Despite withdrawing from the war, *Balara:ma* continued to display his *ra:jasik* disposition. He was unable to subdue his inherent *ra:jasik* nature and elevate it to a *sa:thvik* state. An incident during his pilgrimage to *Naimisa:ranya* clearly illustrates this.

Ro:maharshana was a revered historian and a direct disciple of Sage *Ve:davya:sa*. *Ve:davya:sa* imparted the various branches of the *Ve:das* to his disciples and entrusted the narration of scriptures such as the *Ra:ma:yana*, the *Ma:habharatha*, and the eighteen *pura:nas* to *Ro:maharshana*. He trained him to be highly accomplished in delivering discourses. When *Balara:ma* arrived at *Naimisa:ranya*, *Ro:maharshana* was engaged in a discourse before an assembly of *maharshis*, including *Saunaka* and others.

Ordinarily, when one delivers a discourse on sacred scriptures, the speaker feels that the *guru* is speaking through them. They



do not claim authorship or authority, nor do they regard the listeners as their own disciples. Instead, they humbly feel that *Ve:davya:sa* himself is manifesting through them. For this reason, the seat of the speaker is known as the ***Ve:davya:sa sttha:nam***, signifying the authority of *Ve:davya:sa*, and the pedestal on which the scripture rests is called the ***Vya:sa pi:ttam***, the stage of *Ve:davya:sa*. During the discourse, the speaker remains wholly absorbed in the subject and unaware of external events. Only after the discourse concludes do they return to ordinary awareness and, along with others, offer prostrations before the *Vya:sa pi:ttam*.

Ro:maharshana, being a direct disciple of *Ve:davya:sa*, was fully aware of this tradition and was completely absorbed in his discourse. When *Balara:ma* entered the assembly, *Ro:maharshana*, immersed in his narration, did not rise to receive him. Saunaka and the other *rishis*, however, stood up and welcomed *Balara:ma*, the brother of Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna*. Enraged by this perceived slight, *Balara:ma* struck *Ro:maharshana*, causing his death.



This incident demonstrates that *Balara:ma* had not truly relinquished his *ra:jasik* warrior nature, even though he had withdrawn from the *Kurukshe:thra* war. He failed to restrain the *ra:jasik* impulse that arose in a moment of anger, yet he avoided the battlefield where such energy was required in the service of *dharma*. In the aftermath, Saunaka and the other *rishis* declared that the act was improper and installed *Ro:maharshana's* son, *Su:tha*, upon the *Ve:davya:sasttha:nam*. Through *Su:tha*, the revered *Sri:mad Bha:gavatham* and other *pura:nas* were transmitted to the world.

Thus, *Balara:ma's* renunciation of his warrior duty deeply pained Sri Sri: *Krushna*. In a similar manner, *Arjuna* too wished to abandon the battle, citing his inability to bear the sight of his grandfather, his teacher, and his cousins facing death.

Arjuna wished to renounce the duty of a warrior and assume the duty of a brahmin. He wanted to abandon the life of a ruler and adopt a life sustained by alms. In this context, Sri Sri: *Krushna* saw no difference between *Arjuna* and *Balara:ma*.



However, *Balarama* neither sought Sri Sri: *Krishna's* guidance nor was willing to listen to Him. Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krishna* did not instruct him. *Arjuna*, on the other hand, prostrated before Sri Sri: *Krishna* and sought His guidance, declaring himself to be His disciple. This humility gave Sri Sri: *Krishna* the opportunity to awaken *Arjuna* to his true responsibilities.

While instructing *Arjuna*, Sri Sri: *Krishna* points out that *Balarama* abandoned his ordained duty and that many who follow *Balarama* would also be inclined to renounce their own duties. Such an outcome would bring sin upon *Balarama*. To prevent this consequence and to protect the order of the world, Sri Sri: *Krishna* Himself unfailingly performs His ordained duties.

In reality, Sri Sri: *Krishna* has no personal need to fight. Yet He does not abandon action, for doing so would be contrary to His nature. Having taken birth as a human being *within* a specific *dharma*, He conducts Himself in accordance with it. Others observe His conduct and model their behavior upon it. Had He been born into a brahmin, *kshatriya*, or *vaishya*



family, the respective *communities* would have followed His example. Likewise, when He appeared as *Vara:ha* swamy, He accepted only the food appropriate to a *vara:ha*, a boar. Through this, Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes that *karma* must be practiced without exception. However, there is a distinction between how *karma* is performed by the learned and by the ignorant.

karma yo:ga as Practiced by the Wise and the Ignorant

karma yo:ga as practiced by the learned and the ordinary differs in intention. The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* uplift humanity in several ways. First, people are inspired by observing the conduct of the learned and enlightened. Second, the learned instruct the ordinary in proper conduct. Third, when the ordinary put these teachings into practice, they too are uplifted. In this manner, all of humanity is elevated. This collective upliftment is known as *lo:kasangraham*.

lo:kasangraham is the central purpose behind the practices of the learned and enlightened. Both the learned and the ordinary are required to perform their ordained duties. The distinction



lies only in motivation. Ordinary people perform *karma* with expectation of results, whereas the learned perform the same *karma* without any expectation in return.

***saktha:h karmanya vidva:mso: yattha: kurvanthi
bha:ratha! |***

***kurya:d vidva:n thattha:sakthaha chiki:rshur
lo:ka sangraham || 3.25 ||***

saktha:h avidva:msaha - Sri Sri: *Krushna* describes ordinary people in two ways.

In the context of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* addresses those who are willing to listen and reflect. Such people are the ordinary seekers who desire progress and are open to instruction. All those who seek improvement are known as ***mumukshus***, meaning those who desire release. This release is not merely freedom from bondage but a transition from one state to a better state. Since we presently inhabit a human body and are certain to die one day, the present body will inevitably be cast aside. A *mumukshu* therefore desires that the next embodiment be superior, even



if it is another human birth. The *Upanishads* repeatedly emphasize that attaining a human body is extremely rare and difficult.

The *Cha:ndogya Upanishad* describes a ***vidya*** known as ***pancha:gnividya***. In the *Upanishadic* context, a ***vidya*** is a systematic spiritual discipline of knowledge that guides the seeker toward the realization of Brahman or ultimate truth. ***pancha:gnividya*** explains the arduous process through which a soul attains a human birth after death. Modern science is unable to explain this process, as it does not recognize the existence of the ***a:thma***, its departure from the body, or its presence *within* the body. The *Upanishads* explain that the ***a:thma*** leaves the body through a specific channel. If *ka:rmic* impressions remain to be experienced, the ***a:thma*** first proceeds to the Sun. From the Sun it travels to *So:ma*, described as a lunar realm, and then to *me:gha*, the region of clouds. From *me:gha*, the ***a:thma*** returns to this world through rain.



The most critical and perilous stage occurs when the *a:thma* descends with the rain. If the rainwater falls into the ocean and is consumed by a fish, the *a:thma* may be born as a fish. If the ocean water turns into salt and that salt is later consumed by humans, there arises a possibility of human birth. If the rain falls upon a desert, the *a:thma* may remain there for a prolonged period. If it falls into impure water, the *a:thma* remains associated with that impurity. If it falls upon paddy or grain, there exists the possibility of becoming food and eventually entering a human body.

Through water, the *a:thma* enters a tree or a plant, then a leaf, a branch, or a fruit, and continues to grow *within* them. When such plant life is consumed by a human, there arises a possibility for the *a:thma* to take a human birth again. If it is consumed by an animal, the *a:thma* may instead obtain an animal body. In this manner, the *a:thma* must cross numerous obstacles. Even after reaching the body of a woman, the *a:thma* must reside there for a long period. If the *a:thma* enters the body of a man and does not become skin, bone, nails, hair, or similar elements, but instead becomes blood,



that embodied cell is considered to possess some accumulated merit.

Among such *ji:vas* that become blood, those that do not perish through bleeding but transform into semen are more fortunate. From among the millions of *ji:vas* present in semen, even more blessed are those that successfully enter the womb of a woman. Only such *ji:vas* have the possibility of assuming a human body.



Thus, out of countless millions of *ji:vas*, only one fortunate *ji:va* succeeds in obtaining a human birth and reentering the world as a human being. Therefore, this human body is



attained as the result of accumulated merit from innumerable past births. For this reason, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs that this body and this life should not be wasted. To use this body properly requires cultivating a strong aspiration to rise toward a higher spiritual state.

Ordinarily, everyone desires progress. However, most seek progress only in the material sphere, such as professional advancement, physical health, bodily strength, wealth, property, or grand possessions. Very few aspire to excellence in knowledge.

Even among those who seek higher knowledge, the pursuit is often limited to worldly matters. It is said that the aspiration for elevated spiritual knowledge and for a state free from *ka:rmic* bondage arises only from ripened merit accumulated over countless lifetimes. Such a person is known as a *mumukshu*.

At some stage, nearly everyone becomes a *mumukshu*. Ordinary seekers who have not yet attained self realization



perform their ordained duties with an expectation of results. Sri Sri: *Krushna* states, ***saktha:h avidva:msaha yattha: kurvanthi***, meaning that just as such *mumukshus* engage in action, so too should a *vidva:n*, a fully realized person, perform action. In truth, a *vidva:n* has nothing to accomplish, for self-realization has removed all desires and personal gain. Yet, even then, the *vidva:n* continues to practice *karma yo:ga* for the sake of the world.

Earlier, this principle was explained using an analogy. When a parent teaches a child how to write properly, the parent sits beside the child and demonstrates the correct method. Although the parent is already proficient in writing, they still hold the pen, sit with proper posture, and write carefully to show the child how it should be done. There is no personal need for the parent to do so, yet the effort is undertaken solely for the child's learning.

A person established in a higher state of spiritual knowledge can remain absorbed in contemplation of God even while moving about. An ordinary seeker, however, cannot do this. For an ordinary seeker to meditate with focus, discipline and



a proper posture are required. A *jna:ni*, though capable of meditating effortlessly, continues to sit still and follow the same discipline. By doing so, the *jna:ni* becomes a living example that inspires the ordinary seeker to practice in the same way. The distinction lies in intention. A *jna:ni* practices without any expectation of results, whereas an ordinary seeker performs the same practices with an expectation of outcome.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* therefore insists that a *jna:ni* must continue to perform duties with the purpose of uplifting society. He uses the expression **yattha: thattha:** to convey that the *jna:ni* should act in a manner that naturally inspires ordinary seekers to follow.

Suppose *Arjuna* were already self-realized. In that case, there would be no personal necessity for him to fight in the war. Even so, he would still need to participate, encouraging others through his example. Although he would gain nothing from fighting and would hold no expectation of results, he must act as though he expects victory, so that those who are not yet realized are motivated to perform their duties.



This is a subtle and demanding principle. Acting with expectations often brings stress and anxiety, whereas fulfilling one's responsibilities without expectation leads to inner joy. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains this distinction through the example of war. *Arjuna* must fight as though he seeks the outcome of victory, while inwardly remaining free from desire, thereby inspiring others to act responsibly while progressing toward inner freedom.

The essential distinction is that *Arjuna* does not seek the fruits of action, yet he does not abandon action itself. What is relinquished is only the outcome, not the performance of *karma*. Negligence applies solely to the results and never to the practice of action. While performing *karma*, one must exercise the utmost care in every aspect of the act, including its prerequisites as well as its completion.

Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja:charya establishes the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* as a *ve:dic* scripture uniquely suited to guiding righteous conduct. There exists a widespread but misguided notion regarding *ve:dic* teachings that suggests all worldly activities are unworthy and must therefore be renounced. This



misunderstanding has led many to equate spirituality with withdrawal from life.

The true essence of *Ve:dantha* lies in realizing the purpose of human life and demonstrating that purpose to society. A human being must learn how to live rightly and also guide others toward a proper way of life. Teaching how to live well is the central principle of *ve:dic* scripture. Among the many sacred texts, our *a:charyas* have accepted the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* as the foremost guide in this regard.

In the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* clearly explains the proper approach to practice. He declares that everyone must follow *karma yo:ga*, both the learned and the ordinary seeker. In fact, it is even more critical for the learned to practice than for the seeker. If the learned abandon practice, these righteous ways will gradually disappear from the world. The sole difference lies in intention. The learned perform *karma* without expectation of results, while the ignorant perform the same actions with attachment to outcomes. This can be explained with another analogy of a novice type writer and an expert. The expert type writer must practice starting with



basics so the novice learns from them. The expert does it without any personal benefit whereas the novice practices to pass the exam with flying colors.

Moreover, Sri Sri: *Krushna* uses the terms ***vidva:n*** and ***avidva:msaha*** in the singular form. The reason is that a *vidva:n*, by virtue of deep understanding and mastery, may sometimes omit certain steps in action without causing harm. For example, the owner of a farmland, the chief executive of a large corporation, or an experienced tour guide possesses expertise in their respective fields. Such experts may occasionally bypass specific procedures and still achieve successful results.

However, an *avidva:msaha*, a novice or one without insight, may attempt to imitate the expert's conduct and thereby invite difficulty. While an expert who encounters trouble can readily recover due to knowledge and experience, a novice lacks that capacity. If a novice follows the same shortcuts, they may become trapped and suffer serious harm. Therefore, what is permissible for a *vidva:n* is often dangerous for an



avidva:msaha, which is why Sri Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes careful distinction between the two.

An expert must not withdraw from action. For this reason, Sri Sri: *Krushna* urges *Arjuna* to continue performing his duty. Since novices perform their actions with an expectation of results, while *Arjuna* has nothing personal to gain, *Arjuna* should not tell them, “You must act without expecting results, and if you cannot do so, you should abandon action altogether.” Such words would discourage them. Instead of demotivating novices, *Arjuna* must inspire and encourage them.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains this principle beautifully through the verse

*na buddhibhe:dam janaye:th ajna:na:m karma
sangina:m |
jo:shaye:th sarvakarma:ni vidva:n yukthas
sama:charan || 3.26 ||*

How does an expert diligently perform duties while also motivating others? Novices have not yet developed proper



understanding. They engage in *karma* with a strong desire for the fruits of their actions. Compared to experts, they stand at an earlier stage. Yet, they still possess a genuine longing for self-realization. If experts insist that novices must act without expecting results, there is a real danger that novices may abandon their responsibilities altogether. In such a case, the expert becomes responsible for causing that withdrawal from duty.

In effect, the expert would be discouraging novices from engaging in *karma* as a means of gaining knowledge, while also being unable to directly bestow self-realization upon them. As a result, the novice becomes confused and loses the opportunity for gradual progress.

An example illustrates this point. A *guru* advised his disciple to chant the ***Sri Vishnusahasrana:ma stho:thram***, a hymn containing one thousand auspicious names of Lord *Na:ra:yana*. The *guru* explained that this practice brings prosperity and mental peace.



Out of reverence for his *guru*, the disciple began chanting the hymn daily without fail. He was not well learned and therefore relied on a book while chanting, occasionally making mistakes. One day, a learned scholar visited his home and listened as the disciple chanted. While chanting, the disciple experienced deep joy and happiness, and in that state, he chanted with great enthusiasm and a loud voice.

At the beginning of the Sri *Vishnusahasrana:ma* appear two names, ***padmana:bhaha*** and ***amaraprabhuhu***. According to grammatical rules, when these two words are combined, the initial letter *a* of ***amaraprabhuhu*** is omitted in recitation. Since the discipline followed by the disciple was to read directly from the text and he was unaware of these grammatical conventions, he initially chanted the word incorrectly as *maraprabhu*. Over time, this further transformed in his chanting to *morriprabhuhu*. He became accustomed to this pronunciation, and whenever he uttered the name, his body would be filled with goosebumps and his heart would overflow with joy. Tears would roll down his cheeks whenever he said *morri prabhu*.



The reason for this deep emotion lay in the confidence the word gave him. In his house, there was a stone cup used for storing salt and similar items, and this cup was called morri. Over time, a small hole appeared in the cup. When the name morriprabhuhu arose during the chanting, he would think, “How wonderful. This cup has no awareness and no ability to show gratitude. It has no intelligence. Yet, O Lord, You are the master even of such a worthless object. Compared to that, I possess intelligence. Therefore, I have no doubt that You will surely protect me.” With such thoughts, his heart would overflow with joy.

When the learned scholar listened to this chanting, he immediately realized that the disciple was pronouncing the word incorrectly. Correcting the disciple itself is not wrong. However, such correction must be done without damaging the disciple’s faith. If guidance is offered gently and without harming devotion, the disciple’s *jna:nam* will grow. Unfortunately, the scholar failed in this regard. He harshly rebuked the disciple and insisted that the correct word was ***amaraprabhuhu***. When the disciple asked what it meant,



the scholar replied, “Amaras are *de:vathas*, celestial beings. The Lord is the master of these celestial beings and not to your worthless cup.”

Hearing this, the disciple reflected, “If the Lord descended even to the level of my worthless cup, I believed He would protect me, since I am superior to the morri. But if He is the master of celestial beings, why would He concern Himself with people like us. Perhaps He will not even look at us.” This thought introduced doubt into his mind. From that moment onward, whenever he chanted the word, his heart remained dry. There was no joy, no tears, and no goosebumps.

Thus, the scholar became responsible for destroying the disciple’s concentration and love for the Lord. Instead of nurturing devotion and guiding understanding, he disrupted the discipline and damaged the disciple’s inner connection. This was a serious error, for a teacher must guide learning without disturbing devotion. It is therefore said that the Lord later appeared in the scholar’s dream and reprimanded him.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* states in the third chapter, ***na buddhibhe:dam janaye:th ajna:na:m karmasangina:m***, meaning that one should not disturb the minds of those who are sincerely engaged in action. He further says, ***jo:shaye:thsarvakarma:ni***, indicating that such people should be encouraged to continue their ordained duties.

The *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is an extraordinary *ve:dic* treatise consisting of seven hundred verses. Many of these verses appear to admit multiple interpretations. Based on their individual perspectives, numerous scholars have offered different commentaries. However, interpretations that ignore the immediate and broader context of what is stated before and after a verse often lead to misunderstanding. The twenty sixth verse of the third chapter is one such case, where several commentaries are inconsistent with Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s overall teaching.

The true meaning of this verse is that one should not create confusion in the minds of ordinary ***mumukshus*** and



ignorant seekers who are sincerely engaged in the practice of *karma*. At the same time, the learned and enlightened must themselves continue to perform *karma*, while encouraging ordinary *mumukshus*. Scholars should not disparage such seekers for imperfections in their practice.

Some commentators claim that once a seeker develops love and devotion toward God, it no longer matters what actions they perform or how they perform them, and that they should simply be allowed to act as they wish. This view, however, is not supported by Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s words.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* never states that seekers are free to act in any manner they choose. In this verse, He specifically addresses ordinary *mumukshus* who remain at an earlier stage when compared to the realized. *Arjuna* himself sought upliftment. He surrendered to Sri Sri: *Krushna* and earnestly asked Him to instruct him on the correct path.

In response, Sri Sri: *Krushna* asked *Arjuna* to fight without attachment to the fruits of action. Yet, He also assured *Arjuna* that by fighting he would attain victory and enjoy the rewards



that come with it. Sri Sri: *Krushna* did not instruct *Arjuna* to renounce enjoyment, nor did He demand the elimination of desire. Rather, His intent was to clarify the proper understanding *Arjuna* needed in order to act rightly.

As stated earlier, several commentaries incorrectly interpret this verse to mean that as long as a person wishes to practice, any form of action is acceptable. This is a serious misreading of the text. For example, if a person is thirsty, one may argue that drinking anything will quench thirst, regardless of what is consumed or how it is consumed. By this logic, even drinking sewage would be considered acceptable, and objecting to it would be deemed wrong.

The question then arises whether people should be allowed to engage even in activities that are prohibited by *ve:dic* scripture. Should scholars remain indifferent when ordinary *mumukshus* perform non-*ve:dic* actions.

In the twenty sixth verse, Sri Sri: *Krushna* states that seekers should be encouraged to act, never discouraged, and never diverted from the path of *karma*. A natural follow up question



is, encouraged to perform what kind of action. The answer is actions prescribed by the *Ve:das*. Seekers who engage in such actions should not be discouraged, even if they initially perform them with attachment to results. As long as they continue to act, scholars through their own conduct must demonstrate the correct way to perform action. Over time, this guidance enables seekers to mature into a state where they can act without desire for the fruits of action.

For example, when a child scribbles while attempting to write letters, a parent does not simply praise the child and walk away. Instead, while encouraging the effort, the parent patiently demonstrates how to write each letter correctly. The parent slowly writes and shows, “This is how to write A, this is how to write B, this is how to write C.”

Some people argue that if a person has even a small amount of devotion toward God, then it does not matter how they worship or whom they worship. They claim that it does not matter what one wears while worshiping, whether one observes traditional marks, or even whether one enters a temple wearing shoes, dismissing all concerns by saying that



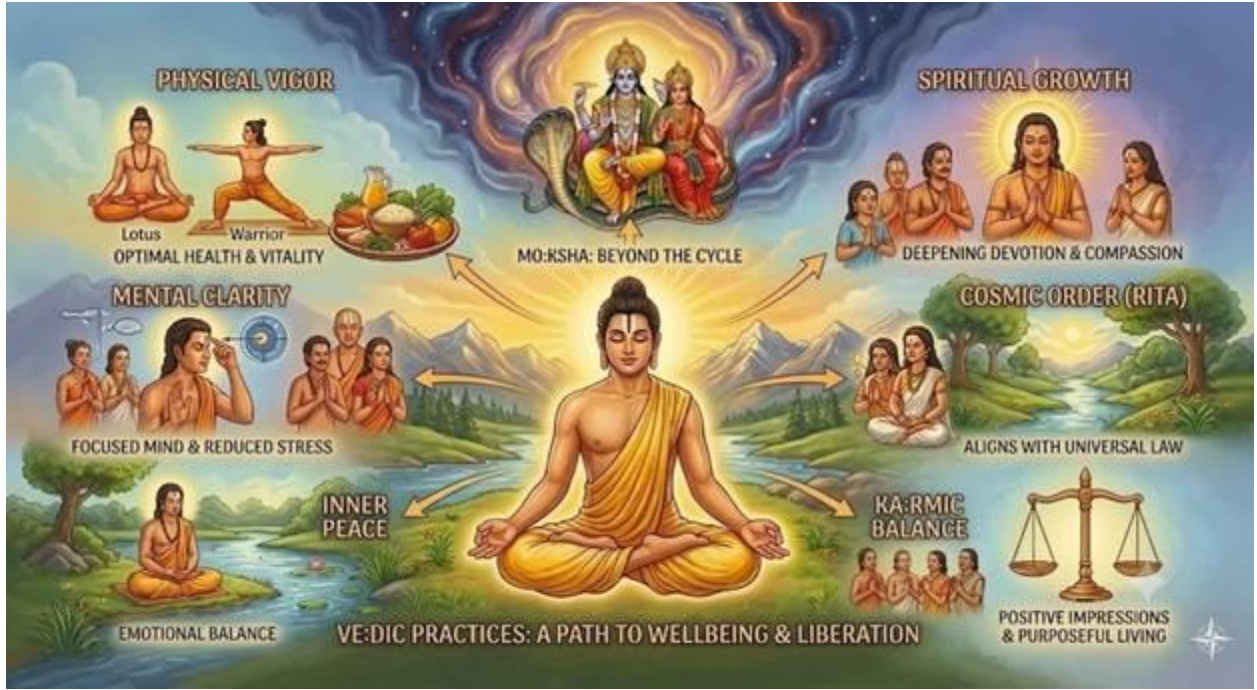
God will not be angered. Such views gradually erode *ve:dic* practices.

A scholar must descend to the level of the seeker in order to uplift them by demonstrating the proper way of practice. Both scholars and ordinary seekers perform the same actions. The difference is that the scholar descends by conscious choice, whereas the ordinary seeker has fell due to ignorance. Scholars can easily rise again, but ordinary seekers cannot elevate themselves without guidance. Therefore, they look to the conduct of scholars as their model and learn by imitation.

Once a person begins to fall from grace, the decline rarely stops on its own. They gradually degrade to a point where rehabilitation becomes extremely difficult. Those who drift away from proper practices find it increasingly hard to return to discipline. The *Ve:das*, however, do prescribe methods to make an earnest attempt to return to the righteous path. One must follow the *ve:dic* way shown there, not act according to personal preference.



Those who initially embark on the *ve:dic* path with discernment, believing it to be beneficial, but later abandon it are called *vive:ka bhrashta*.



vive:ka bhrashta:na:m bhavathi vinipa:thaha sathamukhaha. When a person of good conduct becomes wayward, the first lapse marks the beginning of decline from the *ve:dic* path. Over time, such a person strays from all discipline and eventually becomes a *bhrashta*, one devoid of practice altogether. This is like a fruit that remains on a tree as long as the vine is intact. Once the vine is severed, the fruit



inevitably falls to the ground. Even a single neglected practice can set the stage for complete downfall.

This progression can be observed in the practices of temple priests. *ve:dic* scripture prescribes that priests wear dhotis, maintain a shikha, remain clean shaven, and wear tilak. In recent times, however, some priests began growing mustaches. As they drifted from prescribed practices, the decline continued, eventually leading to the adoption of pants and shirts and other departures from traditional discipline.

ve:dic practices and disciplines were established and refined over millennia, yet they can be destroyed in a very short time. The danger of abandoning age-old traditions is not immediately apparent.

When one believes that they are following practices as prescribed by the *Ve:da*, it instills confidence and a sense of assurance. It reduces the arrogance of thinking that one alone is the doer or that the activity is solely for personal benefit. Instead, it helps place responsibility upon the authority of



scripture. Such an outlook fosters respect for scholars and the learned and cultivates humility before the Lord.

On the other hand, when one performs service in a temple according to personal preference rather than scriptural guidance, it breeds arrogance under the guise of freedom. This marks the beginning of decline.

People often become wayward because there is no immediate scientific method to demonstrate the benefits of disciplined practices. For example, there is neither a logical explanation nor a scientific instrument capable of measuring the effects of ***japam***, the contemplative chanting of the Lord's name. Nevertheless, the absence of measurable proof does not negate its value. Japam bestows subtle inner benefits, and until such instruments or methods are discovered, one should continue to uphold *ve:dic* practices without being swayed by fallacious arguments that advocate abandoning them.



Attribute doership to Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna*

Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* makes it clear in the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* what kind of understanding one must cultivate while engaging in spiritual practice. Thought is a mental activity, whereas practice is a physical activity. He explains how thought should be properly channeled and how a seeker must gradually train the mind in that direction.

The body is formed under the influence of *prakruthi* and naturally behaves in ways that are favorable to it. It instinctively avoids what is inconvenient or uncomfortable. This is a natural process, as the five elements that constitute the body are drawn toward their corresponding elements in *prakruthi*. They accept what is agreeable and reject what is detrimental.

In addition to the five elements, *prakruthi* is characterized by three *gunas*, namely *satthva*, *rajas*, and *thamas*. *satthva* allows *a:thma jna:na* to function clearly and enables perception of reality as it truly is. It is comparable to a transparent glass that allows light to pass through without distortion. *satthva* also



promotes good health, inner joy, positive thinking, and a compassionate disposition.

Rajas generates competitiveness and the urge to excel or dominate. It gives rise to desires, which transform into anger when unfulfilled. When desires are obstructed, *rajas* drives one toward action, often seeking to suppress others in order to establish superiority.

thamas causes extreme distortion in perception. It presents what is beneficial as undesirable and what is harmful as attractive. thamas completely obstructs the functioning of *a:thma jna:na*.

satthva is like a clear, transparent glass through which *a:thma jna:na* passes unhindered, revealing the true nature of objects. *Rajas* resembles a colored glass that distorts perception as knowledge passes through it. thamas is like a glass coated with thick soot, preventing any transmission of *a:thma jna:na*. As these three *gunas* influence the *a:thma jna:na* of the *ji:va*, the body composed of the five elements behaves accordingly.



In addition, the body's actions are shaped by the *ka:rmic* records carried by the *ji:va*.

In essence, the three *gunas* of *prakruthi* influence *a:thma jna:na*, and this conditioned knowledge activates corresponding *ka:rmic* impressions *within* the *ji:va*, compelling the body and senses into action. Sri Sri: *Krushna* urges us to recognize this mechanism by which the body functions.

However, out of ignorance, the *ji:va* assumes that these actions belong to itself rather than to the body. In reality, the *ji:va* does not act but merely resides *within* the body. All actions are performed by *prakruthi*, influenced by the *gunas* and directed by accumulated *ka:rmic* records. Sri: *Krushna* asks us to acknowledge this truth. While it is easy to understand in theory, it is extremely difficult to practice.



When a mirror is covered with soot, the reflection appears dark, and one may become irritated with the mirror itself. Similarly, because the *ji:va* resides *within* the body, it mistakenly identifies the body's attributes and actions as its own.

When *a:thma jna:na* is obstructed by *ahanka:ra*, the sense of ego that identifies the self with the body, the *ji:va* begins to believe that he himself performs all actions. This condition is described as ***ahanka:ra vimu:dha:thma:***, a state in which one is deluded by ego.



prakruthe:h kriyama:na:ni gunaih karma:ni sarvasaha |

ahanka:ra vimu:dha:thma: kartha:ham ithi manyathe: || 3.27 ||

ahanka:ra vimu:dha:thma: means that when the *ji:va*'s *a:thma jna:na* is veiled by *ahanka:ra*, the mistaken notion that one is the body and not distinct from it, ***kartha:hamithi manyathe:***, the *ji:va* assumes that he is the doer of actions. Sri Sri: *Krushna* clearly tells *Arjuna* that this assumption is false. In reality, the *ji:va* is not the doer at all.

Then who performs the actions? ***prakruthe:h gunaih kriyama:na:ni***. All actions are carried out under the influence of *prakruthi*, which operates through the three *gunas*, *satthva*, *rajas*, and *thamas*. Due to ignorance, we perceive this process in a distorted way and attribute doership to ourselves.

Out of ignorance, we superimpose the idea of I onto something that is not I. I am not the body. The body is mine.



I reside *within* the body as the *ji:va*, and the body belongs to the *ji:va*.

For example, if a stick is thrown into a fire and begins to burn, and someone cries out, “Oh my God, I am burning,” others would consider that person insane. The reason is obvious. The burning stick is separate from the person. The person is not burning. In the same way, the body is distinct from the *ji:va*. The body performs actions, while the *ji:va* merely resides *within* it and animates it. Thus, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains in *sa:nkhya yo:ga* that the true doer of actions is the body, not the *ji:va*.

The body is the immediate agent of all actions. The *ji:va* stands behind the body motivating it. A well known illustration of delusion is seen when *Duryo:dhana* entered the Mayasabha. He walked straight into a wall thinking there was no wall, and cautiously stepped where there was no obstruction. He slipped into a pool mistaking it for solid ground and held onto imaginary railings where there was no water. His actions appeared foolish because he was caught in an illusion.



Similarly, when the *ji:va* enters the body, ***ahanka:ra vimu:dha:thma:*** arises. The *ji:va* becomes deluded into thinking that he is the body and begins to attribute all doership to himself. This delusion arises from foolishness, infatuation, and dullness of understanding. As a result, the *ji:va* claims the pleasures and pains of the body as his own. Sri Sri: *Krushna* calls this a grave error.

There is a section in the *Maha:bha:ratha* known as *Yaksha's* Trial. In this episode, the *Yaksha* asks *Dharmara:ja* a profound question. He asks, ***ka: va:rtha:?*** What is *va:rtha:?* In common usage, *va:rtha* means news. Yesterday's news is of no use today, and today's news loses relevance tomorrow. The *Yaksha* asks whether there exists any *va:rtha* that never becomes stale with time. After deep contemplation, *Dharmara:ja* replies that he has indeed discovered such a ***va:rtha.***

***asmin maha:mohamaye: kata:he: su:rya:gnina:
ra:thrdiva:ndhane:na |***



ma:sarthudarvi:parighattame:na

bhu:tha:ni

ka:laha pachathi:tha va:rtha: ||

This is the hottest news.



“Sir, there is a huge frying pan placed on a blazing stove. The fire beneath it is fierce, fed by burning sticks. Upon this pan, all living beings are placed to be cooked. Ladles are constantly used to stir them, ensuring that they cook evenly and do not stick to the pan.”



The ladles represent months, seasons, years, fortnights, days, and hours. With steady motion, they stir all beings, making sure the process continues uniformly.

Who is cooking, and who is being cooked?

bhu:tha:ni ka:laha pachathi. Time, called *ka:la*, is cooking all living beings. That is the news. ***Asmin maha:mohamaye kata:he***, all beings are immersed in a vast cauldron of delusion.

What is this delusion? It is the overpowering influence of *prakruthi* that clouds all living beings.

What intensifies this ignorance? Time itself is steadily slipping away. Every being is bound to a body, and life moves relentlessly forward. ***ra:thridive:ndhane:na***, night and day are the sticks that fuel the fire.

What is the fire? The sun. Sunlight governs the flow of time, creating day and night. As the ladles of hours, days, fortnights, months, and years stir the pan, bodies grow, age, and move toward their end.



Within this framework of time, we draw boundaries for ourselves. We plan what to do, when to do it, how much to earn, and how to earn it. While the ladles keep stirring, we are slowly cooked in ignorance.

When did this begin? Long ago.

When will it end? No one knows. It continues without pause.

Enveloped by ignorance, *within* this vast cauldron, this solar system, this Earth, all beings are being cooked. Not only on Earth, but throughout the universe, this remains the hottest news, a news that never becomes stale.

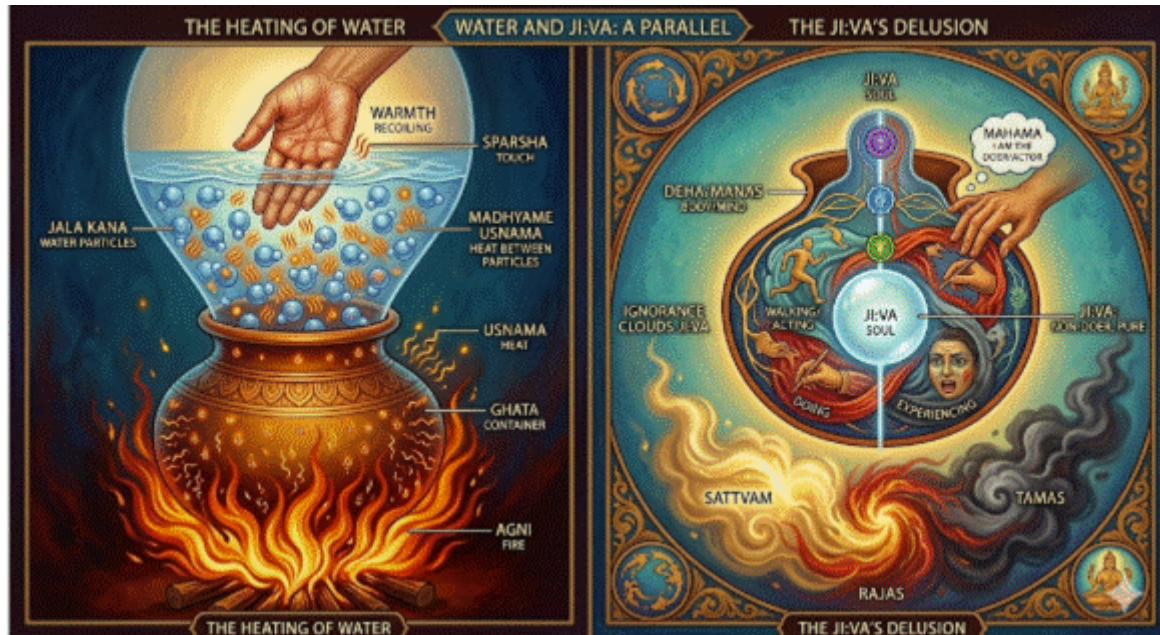
Thus spoke *Dharmara:ja* in response to *Yaksha's* question. Such is the profound ignorance that envelops the entire living world.

For instance, when traveling by train, as we look out of the window, it appears as though the outside world is moving backward. Trees, mountains, houses, and towns all seem to rush past us in reverse. In reality, they are not moving at all. It



is we who are moving along with the train. Although we fully understand this phenomenon, we still cannot help but feel that the outside world is moving backward.

Similarly, a person with an eye defect sees two images of everything. Even though they know they have such a defect, they still see two people or two moons. In the same way, *ji:vas* are clouded by infatuation. Again and again, they fall into confusion, as the *sattva*, *rajas*, and *thamas* qualities of the body obstruct the proper use of *jna:na*.



Water is naturally cold. When water is poured into a container and heated, the fire heats the container first, and the container



then transfers heat to the water. Although we say that the water has become warm, in reality, water itself remains cold. The heat exists in between the water particles. When we touch the water, the warmth we feel is actually the heat residing between those particles. If the fire is turned off and the container is left undisturbed, the heat gradually dissipates, leaving the water as it truly is.

In the same manner, the *ji:va* is influenced by the *gunas* of *prakruthi*. Under their influence, the *ji:va* ignorantly assumes the *gunas* to be his own, thinking that he is growing, walking, experiencing, and acting. He mistakes what is not himself to be himself. Due to ignorance, the *ji:va* believes that he is the doer of all actions. The truth, however, is that he is not the doer.

Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains how one can develop the habit of realizing that one is not the doer. Once this truth is accepted, doership must be relinquished. The moment doership is given up, the expectation of personal results from actions also falls away naturally.



The first step, therefore, is to begin thinking that one is not the doer.

“You reside *within* the body. The body, which is made of *prakruthi*, performs the actions. Since *prakruthi* carries out the actions, leave the fruits of those actions also to *prakruthi*.”

This is what Sri Sri: *Krushna* intends to teach *Arjuna*. Sri Sri: *Krushna* now explains what to think and how to think.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* is imparting the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. Sri: *Krushna* means one who possesses bliss. What benefit would it be to us if He alone possessed bliss? He bestows that bliss upon all who desire it. ***Krush*** means boundless, and ***Na*** means bliss. He not only possesses bliss but graciously shares it with all who surrender to Him. Hence, His name is Sri: *Krushna*. The *Ve:da* declares this clearly: ***a:nando: brahme:thivya:ja:na:th***.

Brahma is the one who is without blemish and who possesses pure bliss. Not only that, Brumhayathi means that He elevates the bliss of those who surrender to Him to the same level as



His own bliss. Hence, He is called Brahma, the one who elevates.

“Is this interpretation purely literal, or is it also stated in the *Ve:das*? The *Ve:das* indeed declare, ***e:shadye:va:nandaya:thi***, meaning that He grants bliss to all who seek it. Moreover, He gives whenever He wills and in whatever measure He chooses. Since He Himself is the embodiment of bliss, there is neither scarcity nor limitation in His ability to bestow bliss upon whomever He desires.

Wind is ever present and accessible to everyone. Even when one attempts to create a vacuum, traces of wind still remain. Just as wind cannot be completely eliminated, God, who is far more powerful than wind, is always present. His support for all beings is continuously available to everyone.



However, since the *ji:va* possesses its own *jna:na*, there arises the possibility of considering oneself independent, believing that one can act entirely on one's own and that everything belongs to oneself. When *jna:na* is misused in this manner and turns into arrogance, it creates a significant obstacle that prevents God's grace from reaching the individual. The Sun spreads its light everywhere. Yet, if one opens an umbrella, remains under a covering, or stays inside a large house, the Sun's rays do not reach that person. Still, the Sun continues to shine and its rays remain ever present.

In the same way, God's grace is always ready to descend upon us. He is described as an ocean of mercy. However, when



jna:na transforms into arrogance or false pride, it obstructs that mercy from reaching us. Therefore, all that is required is the correction and purification of *jna:na*, and Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs us on the means by which this purification can be attained.”

Such means include the teachings of our *maharshis*, the elevated practices established by our *a:charyas*, the divine pastimes of the Lord in His various *avatha:rs*, and the instructions He imparted, each suited to the respective *avatha:rs*.

Among all these teachings, the most essential is the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. Both *maharshis* and *a:charyas* have regarded the *Gi:tha* as the very support of their lives and have consistently treated it as the primary authority in their teachings.

Gi:tha teaches that the goal of human life is to attain a higher state by intelligently utilizing both *jna:na* and the body. The body is not meant merely for the pursuit of pleasure. It is a remarkable instrument designed to accomplish a noble and elevated goal.



Consider the example of an airplane. Its purpose is to reach a distant destination safely, comfortably, and in far less time than other modes of travel. If one wishes to travel from San Francisco to Hyderabad, it is theoretically possible to go by ship, or by a combination of bus and ship, or even by walking and swimming. However, flying is clearly the best option. If one has the means, air travel allows the journey to be completed safely and quickly. No one purchases a flight ticket merely to look at the seats or eat the onboard food, which can be obtained at a much lower cost in a restaurant. The real reason for buying an expensive ticket is to reach the destination faster. Just as air travel is a privilege available to those with resources, the human body is a valuable asset that can be used to reach a higher state. This body is therefore called ***de:hasampada***, or physical wealth.

Vichithra: de:hasampatthi refers to the body as a wondrous form of wealth, one that does not diminish even when used extensively. Sri Sri: *Krushna* advises us to employ this extraordinary wealth as a vehicle for our journey, since it is a superior means of progress. However, one should not



spend one's entire life merely maintaining the body, chasing pleasures, avoiding discomfort, and forgetting the greater purpose altogether.

A person who forgets the higher goal of life and lives only for pleasure is described as an *ahanka:ri*, one driven by arrogance. Aham means I. This I refers to the *ji:va* that resides *within* the body, not the body itself. This is evident because when a person dies, the body is taken and either cremated or buried. In either case, the body remains silent and unresponsive, showing that it was never the true self.

When alive, he would have cried aloud if we placed fire or water on him. Yet, at another time, he spoke, interacted with others, and displayed a wide range of behaviors. This shows that the one who has departed is different from the body, which merely possesses observable characteristics such as color, weight, and form. The one *within* the body says “aham,” “I.” He is the *ji:va*, endowed with self awareness, and he uses the body as an instrument for a specific purpose.



When the *ji:va* mistakes the instrument for himself, it is ignorance. This ignorance, by which the *ji:va* identifies himself as the body, is called ***ahanmka:ra***. It is like a person seated in an airplane thinking, “I am the airplane.” In the same way, the *ji:va* thinks, “I am the body. I weigh this much. I am of a certain color. I am of a certain height. I studied this.” Such ignorance prevents the *ji:va* from recognizing what he is meant to realize.

One who perfectly understands what is to be known is called a ***kruthsnavith***. Kruthsna means perfectly, and vith means one who understands. To understand perfectly is to know an object along with its constituent parts.

Consider a pen. It consists of several parts: the outer shell that we hold, the refill, and the ink *within* the refill. When the ink is exhausted, the pen no longer writes. At that point, we no longer treat it as a pen. We either replace the refill or discard it. This shows that it is the ink that enables the pen to write, not the outer shell.



In the case of a pen, one who knows where the ink resides, how it flows, how it writes, for what purpose it is used, how to use it, and when to use it is called a *kruthsnavith* with respect to the pen. The same applies to knowing a book, a fruit, a car, or clothes. Likewise, it applies to knowing the body. One who perfectly understands the body is called a *kruthsnavith*. One who is ignorant of how the body works and it is intended for is called an *akruthsnavith*.

Why is it that some people realize the true nature of the body and its constituents, while others do not?

It is possible that something obstructs this understanding, just as a covering blocks sunlight. For *kruthsnaviths*, knowledge is clear and unobstructed, whereas *akruthsnaviths* possess a veil that keeps them in ignorance. What is this covering over knowledge? It is the thought that “I am the body.” This is called *ahanka:ra*.

Sri: *Krushna* teaches *Arjuna*, “*ahanka:ra vimu:dha:thma: kartha:hamithi manyathe:*”. *ahanka:ra* acts as a covering over knowledge and makes a



person believe that they themselves are the doer of all actions. They think, “I am doing,” “I am fat,” “I am thin,” and so on. In this way, the attributes of the body are imposed upon the self, leading one to identify with what one is not. This mistaken notion of “I am the body” causes one to believe that every action is performed by the self.

One should not think in this manner. Since it is the body that performs all activities, one must cultivate the habit of attributing doership to the body. One must never forget that the body alone is responsible for actions.

However, the *jīva* does have one responsibility that must be clearly understood. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explained this in the second chapter and reiterates it in the third chapter through different means.

Among all living beings on Earth, humans alone possess the ability to understand the true nature of the world. Animals do not have this capacity, nor do they attempt to inquire. Their concern is limited to food and survival. They find food, eat, and continue to roam. Although animals perceive many



things, they do not feel the urge to ask why things are the way they are or what their purpose is. When threatened, they attempt to escape solely to protect their bodies.

When hungry, animals hunt only what is necessary and ignore everything else. They coexist with other animals in harmony. They procreate, raise their young, and eventually die. Humans, however, are not satisfied with this alone. They seek to understand more. Humans explore the world to learn its deeper nature and meaning. They are endowed with immense intellectual power to observe, inquire, and understand the true form of this world.

Sri *Para:sara maharshi* explains why we have been given this intellectual capacity. “***vichithra de:hasampatthi i:svara:ya ni:ve:dithum.***” There is One who has placed us here in this condition, and we must offer this intellectual power back to that one.

The One is called *I:svara*, the controller. He governs us out of boundless mercy. His mercy arises from His all knowing nature. He showers compassion upon us because we too



possess the capacity to become all knowing, though we have forgotten it.

He looks upon the *ji:va* and feels compassion, thinking, “Just like Me, this *ji:va* is entitled to exist in a blissful state, free from struggle and grief. Yet, though worthy of joy, this *ji:va* has fallen into suffering, forgetting his true nature and mistaking sorrow to be his own.” With such concern, He uplifts the *ji:va*. In doing so, He gains no personal benefit. His sole purpose is to uplift the *ji:vas* and help them expand their *jna:na*.

In the process of uplifting the *ji:va*, He gives many teachings to the world. Among all these teachings, the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* stands out as an illustrious and authoritative teaching. In the *Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains the reason for a *ji:va*’s fall.

He states that a *ji:va* becomes bound in the world because he does not know how to use the body that has been given to him.

Consider an example. If a car is fitted with an engine whose maximum speed is only five miles per hour, the driver would naturally not attempt to go faster. However, if another car is equipped with a powerful sports engine capable of reaching



two hundred miles per hour, yet the driver still drives at five miles per hour, it would disappoint both the driver and the onlookers. Even the car manufacturer would feel let down, knowing the effort and care taken to install such a powerful engine, only for its potential to remain unused.

Similarly, on highways, speed limits are imposed. Vehicles are required to operate *within* a prescribed range, such as forty five to seventy miles per hour. When a driver uses the highway, they must adhere to these limits. The highway is meant to be used in a particular way, and the vehicle must function accordingly.

Just as a car is an amazing vehicle that runs on a highway, the human body is also an extraordinary vehicle. Traveling *within* this vehicle is the *ji:va*. Unlike animal bodies, the human body is highly powerful and capable of moving at great speed, known as human speed. This speed is far greater than animal speed, bird speed, insect speed, or tree speed. Just as a sports car should not be driven slowly, a *ji:va* in a human body should move at human speed.



Moreover, just as a car on a highway should not go below the minimum speed limit, human beings should not live their lives below a certain level. Humans are expected to elevate their thinking and operate at a higher level of awareness. There is a clear necessity for humans to refine and enhance their thought process.

Humans must become ***thathva ve:thas*** by elevating their knowledge and understanding.

What does it mean to become a ***thathva ve:tha***? *Thathva* means recognizing all existing entities. One who recognizes them is called a ***thathva ve:tha***. Beyond mere recognition, one must also understand the true nature of these entities.

What are these entities, and what is their nature? The first is the physical body that we can directly perceive. The second is the diverse and dynamic world, along with its behaviors and interactions. The third is an understanding of how this world came into existence, when it was created, why it was created, and for what purpose. It is the responsibility of human beings to understand all three.



The human body is not given merely to feed the stomach and drift through life. It is like a sports car designed to travel on a highway at a speed no less than forty five miles per hour. Just as a sports car serves no purpose for someone who does not intend to drive on a highway, a human body is wasted if one makes no effort to understand entities and their nature. Those who do not attempt to learn about these realities may live no differently from animals, birds, trees, or even stones, a comparison most people would find unacceptable.

Once a person acknowledges that they are human, they naturally pursue various goals. They strive to achieve, establish themselves, and sustain their capabilities. Remaining on a path of achievement is commendable. Just as some drivers on a highway push their sports cars far beyond the minimum speed limit, human beings must aim much higher than basic survival. This higher pursuit involves understanding the reality of the body, the world, and the nature of both. The human body is a powerful instrument given for this very purpose, and humans possess both the right and the authority to pursue such knowledge.



In contrast, animals such as cats, dogs, and cows are not equipped for such inquiry. No matter how much one tries to explain, they cannot understand. Their bodies are not designed for the highway, let alone for high speed. Similarly, their capacity for knowledge is limited by their form.

What happens when humans learn in this way? It enables them to make better use of the wealth they have been given.

***thatthvavitthu maha:ba:ho: guna karma
vibha:gayo:h |***

***guna: gune:shu varthanthe: ithi mathva: na
sajjathe: || 3.28 ||***

He becomes aware of the ***gunakarmavibha:gaha***, the way this world is divided. This visible world is made of ***prakruthi***, composed of five elements—earth, water, fire, wind, and space. These are called the ***panchabhu:thas***, the five elements. When these elements combine in different proportions, they give rise to the wide variety of colors we see in the world.



Earth naturally reveals fragrance, water reveals taste, fire reveals form, wind reveals touch, and space reveals sound. As the five elements mix, match, and transform in countless combinations, they give rise to a variety of fragrances, tastes, colors, sensations, and sounds. The natural color of earth is black, water is white, and fire is red. From these fundamental colors, millions and billions of other colors emerge. In the same way, taste, touch, and fragrance are created.

All of this arises from the *ka:rmic* records of the *ji:vas*, for the *ji:vas* to experience. The purpose of creating this colorful world is for the *ji:vas* to enjoy it while simultaneously reducing



the burden of *karma*. To serve this purpose, *prakruthi* is constantly changing. Without the presence of *ji:va*, *prakruthi* does not transform. The key point is that *prakruthi*, presided over by *ji:va*, evolves for the benefit of the *ji:va*. Sri Sri: *Krushna* says that one must realize how *prakruthi* evolves for the sake of *ji:va* and, as a result, learn to manage prakruti so that it becomes favorable to them.

Real joy arises when everything becomes favorable to us. One should grow in a way that aligns everything in their favor. Furthermore, the *ve:dic* scriptures teach that *prakruthi* has three *gunas*, which produce a variety of experiences. These experiences include sleep, laziness, anger, desire, jealousy, and sometimes peace. Joy, favorable thoughts, and other positive experiences also arise from the different proportions of the three *gunas*.

Just as our body is made up of five elements, all the objects we see around us are also composed of the same five elements. As a result, the elements *within* every object continuously absorb



and merge with their corresponding elements in *prakruthi*. For instance, the water in a river flows into the seas and oceans. The ocean water evaporates and becomes clouds, which in turn give rain and eventually return the water back to the rivers. We are all familiar with this cycle.

Similarly, earth follows its own cycle. Soil becomes a tree, trees produce fruits, fruits are consumed by the body and turn into waste, and waste once again becomes soil. In the same way, air and space also function in cyclic processes. All five elements were created based on their corresponding *gunas*, and therefore each element interacts only with its corresponding element in other objects.

One must remember that the *ji:va* is only a traveller residing in the body. One should not impose the sense of doership upon oneself. ***Guna: gune:shu varthanthe: ithi mathva:*** means that the *gunas* interact with their corresponding *gunas*, and the elements interact with their corresponding elements, thereby generating experiences. As a result of these interactions, *karmas* are experienced.



Ithi mathva: means one who understands this truth. ***Na sajjathe:*** means such a person does not get attached or take responsibility. For example, when travelling by plane, sometimes the flight proceeds smoothly, and at other times it may be delayed or cancelled due to technical issues. When a technical problem occurs, the traveller does not become dejected thinking something personal has happened to them. Instead, they either take another flight or cancel their travel plans. The traveller never takes responsibility for the technical problems of the plane. Similarly, human beings should not impose or take responsibility for the joy and sorrow



experienced by the body. The reason is that joy and sorrow arise due to the interaction of *gunas* and the five elements, ***guna: gune:shu varthanthē:***.

Continuing with the travel analogy, if the journey is successful, the passenger does not take credit for the smooth travel either. Therefore, whether one experiences joy or sorrow, whether conditions are favourable or adverse, one should not take ownership of them but attribute them to *prakruthi*. A person who is not attached to outcomes because they understand the reality of *prakruthi*, *gunas*, and elements is called a ***thathvave:ttha***.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, “*Arjuna*, become a *thathvave:ttha*, for it will liberate you immediately. Only then is there an opportunity to gradually remove the veil of ignorance.” Not only does *Arjuna* attain liberation, but he also carries responsibility toward his fellow beings. Sri Sri: *Krushna* reminds *Arjuna* of this responsibility. Among all living beings, only humans make an effort to understand the true nature of this world as it is. Animals and other beings do not.



We must realize that the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, graced by Sri Sri: *Krushna*, is a noble teaching meant to be practiced in our daily lives. If we truly absorb its insights and live by them, we will no longer experience sorrow.

Humans often take full credit when something favourable happens or when they experience success. They rejoice, believing that success is solely due to their own actions, and this often leads to arrogance. On the other hand, when they face failure, they blame others and sink into dejection and depression. At times, we even see people losing their lives due to excessive joy after winning political elections or lotteries. Likewise, we also see people losing their lives due to uncontrollable grief when they lose elections or suffer heavy financial losses in business.

Such individuals, who are easily swayed by joy and sorrow and are unable to handle either appropriately, are called *manda buddhis*, the dull witted. They lack knowledge of reality.

Kruthsnavith refers to one who understands reality clearly and completely. *Akruthsnavith* refers to one who does not



understand reality. An *Akruthsnavith* believes that everything that happens directly affects them personally. For example, if a car breaks down, an *Akruthsnavith* becomes depressed and continues to lament, instead of seeking a practical solution such as arranging another car or cancelling their travel plans. In contrast, a *Kruthsnavith* understands the situation as it is and makes the right decision, whether that means waiting for the car to be repaired, taking another car, or cancelling the journey altogether. One must continue moving forward until the destination is reached.

A true human being is one who recognizes the *ji:va*, *prakruthi*, and the *parama:thma* who governs and directs both. Such a person also carries the responsibility of guiding those who remain ignorant. Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that such a person should never criticize or insult the ignorant, but should instead help them take steps toward realization.

It is the responsibility of a knowledgeable person to lead society forward, and it is not proper to condemn others as ignorant or criticize their efforts. Sri Krishna explains this to *Arjuna* in the third chapter.



The wealth of the body and the wealth of nature are meant to be dedicated to the *Parama:thma*. Guided by this truth, as taught by the *paramarushi:s*, one helps others follow the same path.

This, Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, is how every person should act.

prakruthe:r guna sammu:dha:ha sajjanthe: guna karmasu |

tha:n akruthsna vido: manda:n kruthsnavi nna vicha:laye:th || 3.29 ||

Even when people, out of ignorance, face delays or obstacles, such as a car or train being late or broken down, it is not right for them to give up or sit stubbornly. They should be encouraged to keep moving toward their goal, just as someone seeking a job must reach their destination.

Similarly, a *mumukshu*, seeker of liberation, a *thatthvave:ththa*, philosopher, or a *krithsnavith*, wise person, even if they do not personally require certain guidance, should not assume others do not need it and remain



silent. Knowledge is meant to be shared, enabling people to lead those around them forward.

Sri: *Krushna* calls this ***lo:kasangraham*** - walking together with society, taking others along while advancing on the path. It is not proper to abandon others or sit idle and discourage them. One must lead them, ensuring progress and protection for the world, *lo:karaksha*.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that such conduct supports the welfare of the world and is the way everyone should strive to act.

Arjuna, on the contrary, declared that he would not fight, fearing loss to the army and the kingdom. Sri Sri: *Krushna* had to teach him the path of duty, which is to establish good and restrain evil. Since *Arjuna* was reluctant, Sri: *Krushna* encouraged him by walking himself, showing how the journey should be undertaken. The difference was that Sri: *Krushna* did not need to walk, but *Arjuna* did. Even if the act is unnecessary for the wise, they perform it to demonstrate the proper way and help those who need it move toward the goal.



Some children take time to learn to walk. They may drag their feet or lift them too high. Instead of scolding or hitting them, elders gently show the right way, encourage them, and guide their steps until they can walk properly. This patient guidance helps them learn to walk confidently and steadily.

In the same way, a knowledgeable person guides society with wisdom. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that because the Lord is compassionate, if teaching does not succeed or no divine *avatara* appears, He sends a person to show the right way.

Bali Chakravarthi, a great donor, was known for his generosity but also had an ego, thinking “I alone must give to everyone.” He even took the kingdom of Indra and the glory of other *de:vathas*. *Parama:thma* observed this and tried to guide him through advisors, but Bali did not listen. Finally, to set him on the right path, the Lord Himself, the master of prosperity, *Lakshmina:tha*, appeared as a beggar, requested three steps of land, and ensured that Bali received the proper knowledge he needed.



God descends to teach what is right, demonstrating exactly how to act. At other times, He sends wise people to guide others, thereby ensuring the welfare and well-being of humanity.

kruthsnavith na vicha:laye:th manda:n - A wise person, ***kruthsnavith***, should not upset or harshly criticize the ignorant, nor should they encourage those who act with excessive attachment. Their role is to guide others gently along the right path. In instructing this duty, Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* guides humanity on how to perform *karma yo:ga* without holding on to the feeling of “I am the doer.”

The third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, titled *karma yo:ga*, emphasizes the uniqueness and importance of this path. Its essence is that humans should practice *karma yo:ga*, which is the highest and most suitable path for them. Every human being, regardless of personal necessity, must fulfill the responsibilities assigned by birth and prescribed by the scriptures. By doing so, they set an example for others, ensuring that society does not become careless or spoiled.



Actions should be performed with care and responsibility, seeking the welfare of others rather than personal gain.

While others may pursue results, a practitioner of *karma yo:ga* acts without attachment to outcomes. Profits and losses may arise, but they remain unconcerned. The essence of *karma yo:ga* is to lead others so that they too learn to act without worry for results. Through this teaching, *Arjuna* was encouraged to perform his duty in battle without attachment to happiness, sorrow, gain, or loss. This instruction extends to all of humanity, showing that even when an action does not directly benefit oneself, it may still be a responsibility for the welfare of the world.

Even if a person expects some benefit from their actions, if the work is prescribed by the scriptures and not forbidden, it should be encouraged. When done sincerely, such actions are good and beneficial.

The *Upanishads* illustrate this with the story of *Ja:nasruthi*, a wealthy and virtuous man who regularly fed thousands. Through this generosity, he developed a brilliant aura,



recognized by the world as carrying out great donations of food. He also attained a kind of **siddhi**, a significant spiritual accomplishment. However, *Ja:nasruthi* felt that he earned greatness because he carried out such a great charitable deed; he donated food daily; and that they ate from his offerings. He convinced himself that he was the doer, making him egoistic.

ahanka:ra vimu:dha:thma kartha:ham ithi manyathe: - *Ja:nasruthi* ended up falling into the category of egoistic people that Sri: *Krushna* mentions in the third chapter. Donating food is a virtuous activity, however, he did not create the food himself. The earth provided it, the people were part of the world, and his body, through which he gave, was also of the earth. He had undertaken this *karma* temporarily to fulfill his role in the world. If he had thought, “God is making me do this” or “This benefits nature,” the donation would have brought true welfare and upliftment of the soul, **a:thmo:ddha:ram**. Instead, the thought “I am doing all this; this is my wealth” turned the action into ego. Just as a drop of poison spoils pure milk, even a single sense



of doership can cloud all knowledge gained through virtuous acts.

Stopping his donations was not the answer, as it was a scripturally prescribed act, ***sa:sthravihitha ka:ryam***. Rather, his pride had to be corrected while encouraging him to continue *dha:rmic* action. Lacking understanding of ***saththva guna***, he became dull-witted and entangled in ***prakruthi***.

A person renting a house must care for it while living there, keeping it clean and in good condition. But if he focuses only on the house and neglects his other duties, such as going to work, the purpose of living there is lost. The house provides shelter for his needs, and once his work is done, he leaves it. Similarly, the human body is a temporary home. It can be used to perform good actions that reduce *karma*, and it may also experience suffering that serves the same purpose. One should use the body wisely and let go of it without attachment.



Ja:nasruthi, not knowing this, believed that all the honor and welfare from his food donation belonged to him, and ego arose. To correct him, *Agni* and Indra were sent. One evening, as *Ja:nasruthi* lay on his terrace with his radiance rising upward, the two appeared as birds flying above. The bird behind noticed the brilliance and advised the one in front to fly around it. The front bird asked why, and the other explained that the brilliance was so intense it could burn them. Observing this, the front bird inquired whether the person below was Raikva. Hearing this, *Ja:nasruthi* realized that someone greater existed than himself, and his pride and ego were humbled.

Ja:nasruthi's ego was challenged by the words of the birds. When ego takes hold, one is never satisfied with one's own greatness and cannot bear the thought of another being greater. This is what unfolded in *Ja:nasruthi*. Curious about Raikva's knowledge and fame, he wondered whether it came from deeds like his own food donations or something else. Eager to achieve similar renown, he sent his servants across



towns, villages, and cities. They eventually found Raikva under a cart in a forest, tending to his own physical ailment.

Ja:nasruthi summons Raikva to see him, offering wealth, chariots, horses, elephants, half his kingdom, and even his entire kingdom, yet Raikva refused every offer. Recognizing that Raikva possessed something far greater than all material wealth, *Ja:nasruthi* went personally, bowed to him, and offered to serve him. Raikva remained unmoved. Eventually, overcome with emotion, *Ja:nasruthi* wept. In that moment, his pride fell away, and he became aware of his own ignorance and Raikva's true wisdom. Seeing this change, Raikva consoled him and agreed to impart the real knowledge.

The *Upanishad* explains that Raikva then imparted ***thatthvajna:nam***, the true knowledge of nature, ***prakruthi***; the individual soul, ***ji:va***; and the Supreme Soul, ***Parama:thma***. Although the king had practiced feeding others in search of fame, circumstances led him to Raikva while seeking recognition in another form. Through Raikva's teaching, he gained genuine knowledge and was shaped into



one who understood how good deeds such as charity and generosity should be performed, free from ego and the desire for honor.

Initially, *Ja:nasruthi* was engaged in the distribution of food, a *dha:rmic* activity upheld by the *ve:dic* scriptures. When people perform actions that are sanctioned by the scriptures, or refrain from those that are prohibited, they are moving in the right direction. Even when such actions are performed with motives such as gaining fame, honor, or other personal benefits, realized and mature scholars should encourage them to continue on this path. At the same time, the learned should gradually help remove the egoistic and self-centered motives, rather than discouraging the righteous actions themselves.

The reason for not discouraging such activities is that, if they are stopped, people may become uncertain about what they should pursue. In that confusion, they may turn toward actions that are forbidden by the *Ve:das*. Through such conduct, they may fall into degraded states of existence. Moreover, the one who prevents them from performing righteous actions may also share in the resulting



consequences. Therefore, the wise should continue to encourage engagement in *dha:rmic* activities, while gently guiding individuals toward proper understanding and purity of intention. In this spirit, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs *Arjuna* in the third chapter: ***tha:n akruthsnavidah manda:n kruthsnavith na vicha:laye:th jo:shaye:th sarvakarma:ni vidva:nyukthaha sama:charan.***

Keeping *Arjuna* as the occasion, Sri Sri: *Krushna* imparts ***yuktha ayuktha vive:ka*** to humanity while teaching *karma yo:ga*. ***yuktha ayuktha vive:ka*** refers to the discernment regarding who is truly the doer of actions. We observe that activities performed through the senses continue only as long as the body exists and remains capable. If the body is absent or not functional, the activities cease. This raises the question: who is performing the actions? Is it the one who possesses knowledge, the *ji:va*, or is it the body that actually carries them out?

This can be understood through an analogy. A flashlight consists of a bulb, a battery, and a switch. Although the battery



supplies the power, it is the bulb that has the mechanism to emit light. Without the bulb, the battery cannot produce illumination. Similarly, appliances such as a radio, television, or fan function according to their own structure. Even if electrical power is available, without the appropriate device the function cannot be performed. Therefore, the activity is attributed to the appliance, even though power operates behind it.

In the same way, although the *jī:va* possesses *jna:na* and knowledge, the body is the instrument through which actions take place. The *jī:va*'s knowledge in relation to the body is like electrical power in relation to an appliance.

One who understands and analyzes in this manner as to why even an advanced practitioner experiences pleasure and pain is called a ***Kruthsnavith***, a knower of truth. One who does not see in this way is called an ***Akruthsnavith***, a person of limited understanding, and remains a ***karma sangi***, bound by *ka:rmic* impressions.



Children, out of a lack of understanding of how a television works, often believe that the screen itself produces the picture. When the television stops functioning, they may try to wipe or tap the screen, thinking that this will restore the image. An adult who understands the real cause of the problem does not scold them, but instead guides them to another working television or shows them another way to watch.

In the same way, a *jna:ni*, who understands the relationship between the body and the *a:thma*, must guide ordinary people who act through the body without proper knowledge. Such a person should encourage them to engage in the right practices while gradually imparting the necessary understanding.

Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs us in practices that are supported by right knowledge. He explains that actions are carried out through the body, and therefore the body is the apparent doer. One should not assume the burden of doership. ***guna: gune:shu varthantha ithi mathva: na sajjathe*** - The body functions as it is impelled by the ***gunas***, the three qualities of ***prakruthi***. When doership is attributed to the *gunas*, a person remains free from inner



disturbance. Whatever the body experiences, whether pleasure or pain, one neither swells with pride nor sinks into dejection.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* further clarifies to *Arjuna* the discrimination between the body and the *a:thma*, and who truly performs the activities. Only through this understanding can one avoid accumulating *ka:rmic* impressions and gradually become free from bondage. The body, along with its ordained duties, then becomes a means to attain the highest goal. Simply abandoning action while claiming to follow *jna:na yo:ga* is meaningless, because the body was not created for inactivity.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* has already stated that *jna:na yo:ga* is for the liberated, while human beings must attain spiritual maturity through *karma yo:ga*. He teaches us to place doership on *prakruthi* and to perform actions without desire for their results. The expectation of results arises from the thought, “I have done this, therefore I deserve the outcome”.

When someone becomes wealthy through their own effort and intelligence, you recognize their success but do not feel entitled to enjoy their wealth. You remain detached, knowing



that the enjoyment belongs to the one who earned it. In the same way, freedom from expectation of results arises only when there is a firm understanding that the Self is not the doer.

Thus, in the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches *Arjuna* and all humanity to attribute doership to *prakruthi*, recognizing that actions belong to the body while the Self remains unattached.

After listening to Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s instruction, *Arjuna* became convinced that *prakruthi* was driving the entire world. Yet, true to his nature as a valiant warrior, he resolved to bring *prakruthi* under his control.

To begin with, *prakruthi* is insentient. Though it consists of the three ***gunas***, ***saththva***, ***rajas***, and ***thamas***, and contains the sense objects of sound, touch, form, taste, and smell that give rise to various experiences, *prakruthi* itself possesses neither intellect nor awareness. Knowledge, consciousness, and power belong only to the *ji:va*, the living self.



Therefore, *Arjuna* reasons, “I am a *ji:va* endowed with knowledge and power, whereas *prakruthi* is an insentient entity without awareness. How then can *prakruthi* control me? Even if *prakruthi* appears to be the doer, I will not submit to it. I will restrain it and ensure that I am not influenced by it.”

However, if *Arjuna* attempts to control *prakruthi* through his own effort alone, such an attempt reflects subtle arrogance.

The reality is that *Arjuna*, like all living beings, is functioning *within prakruthi* because of accumulated *ka:rmic* impressions. *karma* does not operate according to our present preference. It functions according to the condition in which it exists.

For example, regardless of how skillfully or forcefully one drives a car, it can never be made to fly. The car is not designed for flight and lacks the mechanism required to lift and remain in the air. In the same way, the body we possess is structured to provide specific types of experiences and to perform particular kinds of actions, in accordance with our *karma*.

These *ka:rmic* impressions are subtle and invisible. They are stored in a layer associated with the *ji:va*, known as the



su:kshma sari:ra, the subtle body. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains the nature of the subtle body in detail in the second and third ***shatkas*** of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. A ***shatka*** is a group of six chapters, and the *Gi:tha* is traditionally understood as three such groups.

The *ji:va* itself is extremely minute. Surrounding it is the subtle body, which includes the five ***jna:ne:ndriyas***, the mind, the subtle aspects of the five elements, and the five ***thanma:thras***, the seed forms of the elements. This subtle body acts like a sheath that *accompanies* the *ji:va* as it moves from one gross body to another.

The mind serves as a repository of beginningless *ka:rmic* impressions, and similar impressions accumulate in the senses as well. Consequently, the *ji:va* functions according to the tendencies created by these accumulated impressions. This is like a passenger traveling in a car. As long as the passenger remains inside, they move wherever the car moves, whether it turns, stops, or accelerates. They cannot move independently of the vehicle.



In the same way, as long as a person is bound by *karma*, their actions are directed by it. Without the support of underlying *karma*, no action is possible.

Therefore, contrary to *Arjuna's* initial resolve, no one who remains bound by *karma* can, by one's own effort alone, suppress *prakruthi*.

There is indeed a possibility for a *ji:va* to become arrogant and attempt to suppress *prakruthi*. This tendency arises because the *ji:va* possesses knowledge and power, whereas *prakruthi* by itself has neither awareness nor intelligence. Anticipating this, Sri Krishna prevents *Arjuna* from attempting to control *prakruthi* by first teaching him that he is not the doer. *Arjuna* must first understand that his actions arise from *karma* and not from independent personal authorship. Once he becomes convinced that he is not the doer, the next step is to understand where the true doership belongs, whether to *prakruthi* or to a higher principle.

At this point, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs *Arjuna*: “*Arjuna*, if you are not inclined to attribute doership to *prakruthi*, then do not



do so. Instead, understand why *prakruthi* manifests and why you have entered into it. ***The reason is Me. I cause prakruthi to manifest through your body so that it functions for your welfare. Therefore, surrender the sense of doership to Me.***” Saying so, Sri Sri: *Krushna* now enters the scene.

mayi sarva:ni karma:ni sannyasy a:dhya:thma che:thasa: |

nira:si:r nirmamo: bhu:thva: yudhyasva vigatha jvaraha || 3.30 ||

From this point onward, Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches *Arjuna*, and through him all humanity, to dedicate the sense of doership to the Lord.

The *ji:va* should never assume personal doership. One may attribute actions either to *prakruthi* or to the Lord. Since *prakruthi* is visible, it is often easier to assign doership to it. *Parama:thma*, being invisible, may seem more difficult to relate to in this way. However, as one gains a deeper understanding of *Parama:thma*, it becomes natural to



surrender doership to Him. In this verse, the Lord clearly explains His role and His function.

The purpose of renouncing doership is profound. When a person no longer considers themselves the author of actions, the desire for the fruits of action naturally weakens. When duties are performed without expectation of results, such actions do not create bondage. Moreover, actions performed in this spirit gradually exhaust past *ka:rmic* impressions and lead one toward liberation.

Attachment to the results of action is the primary cause of bondage in this world. Actions performed without desire for personal gain are never harmful. Performing duties enjoined by the *ve:dic* scriptures is always beneficial, but attachment to the outcomes generates new *ka:rmic* impressions. These impressions bind the *ji:va* to the cycle of worldly existence, making it a ***baddha***, one bound by *prakruthi*.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* wants *Arjuna* to clearly understand this truth. As a warrior, *Arjuna*'s duty is to fight. Out of fear of incurring sin, he hesitates and questions whether he should act at all.



For *Arjuna*, engaging in battle is not wrong. What would be wrong is fighting with the desire for victory, power, or fame. Since warfare is his *dharma*, his ordained duty, he must perform it, but without attachment to the results.

karma yo:ga is the essence of *Upanishads*

One may doubt that even if we do not desire the fruits of our actions, actions will nevertheless produce results. If so, where should the fruits of action be placed? If one considers oneself to be the doer, then it naturally follows that one must also own the fruits. If one considers *prakruthi* to be the doer, then the fruits of action are credited to *prakruthi*. If one considers *parama:thma* to be the doer, then *parama:thma* alone becomes the enjoyer of the fruits. Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* seeks to clarify who the direct doer is and who the indirect doer is.

Ve:da:ntha makes this distinction clear. In one of the *su:thras*, *Ve:davya:sa* states that the *ji:va* is the direct doer. The reason is that for *sa:sthra* to be coherent and meaningful, *ji:va* must be accepted as the doer.



sa:sthra, or the *ve:dic* scripture, prescribes which actions are to be performed and which are to be avoided. These injunctions are addressed to the *ji:va* and not to *prakruthi*. If a tree or a stone obstructs our path, we cannot ask it to move aside. It cannot comprehend an instruction. Only one endowed with *jna:na* can understand and act. *prakruthi* does not possess *jna:na*.

The *Ve:das* state that *prakruthi* is constituted of twenty four entities, none of which possess *jna:na*. The *ji:va*, who owns and presides over these twenty four entities, alone possesses *jna:na*. Since only *ji:va* has *jna:na*, only *ji:va* can comprehend the instructions of the scripture and act upon them. Therefore, doership is attributed to the *ji:va* and not to *prakruthi*.

However, for *ji:va* to act, a body is required. *ji:va* employs *jna:na* to activate and coordinate the functions of the body. Though actions are executed through the body, the body functions under the direction of *ji:va*. In this sense, while *ji:va* is the responsible agent, the actions occur at the level of *prakruthi*, as expressed in the statement ***guna: gune:shu varthanthe***. Thus, *ji:va* does not possess absolute doership.



The next question is how does *ji:va* becomes aware of doership and from where it derives the capacity to comprehend *ve:dic* instruction. Although *ji:va* inherently possesses *jna:na*, it lacks the independent ability to deploy that *jna:na*. This can be compared to a battery in a flashlight. The battery has power, but it cannot illuminate the bulb by itself. A switch must be turned on to channel the power. Moreover, a person with *jna:na* must turn on the switch.

Similarly, though *ji:va* possesses *jna:na*, it cannot activate it independently. *Ve:davya:sa* explains that the capacity to employ *jna:na* comes from *parama:thma*. *Parama:thma* supports the *ji:va*, is free from *ka:rmic* records, acts independently, and fully wields *jna:na*. Therefore, while *ji:va* is the direct doer for the purposes of *sa:sthra*, the enabling and ultimate doership belongs to *parama:thma*.



Therefore, *parama:thma* is the instigator of action, and *jiva:thma* is the knower. The actual execution of actions is carried out by insentient *prakruthi* alone. All the varieties of actions that *prakruthi* performs and imposes upon the *ji:va* are driven directly by the intention of *Parama:thma*. Therefore, when the *ji:va* attributes the responsibility of all actions to *Parama:thma*, the *ji:va* becomes free from *ka:rmic* bondage.

On the other hand, even if the *ji:va* attributes actions to *prakruthi*, understanding that *prakruthi* functions only through the faculties granted by *Parama:thma* and in accordance with *ve:dic* injunctions, this attitude is also



beneficial. Such understanding likewise releases the *ji:va* from *ka:rmic* entanglement.

This outlook, however, is extremely difficult to cultivate. Even when we hear or read about it repeatedly and intellectually agree with it, the moment we engage with the world we instinctively assume doership and seek to enjoy the fruits of action. This arises from the inherent nature of *prakruthi* and from our ignorance.

Prahla:da realized this truth. That is why, despite the many hardships inflicted upon him by his father Hiranyakashipu, *Prahla:da* never blamed his father, nor did he fall into despair thinking that *Parama:thma* was being cruel. He understood that everything occurred according to the needs of the body and that he, as the *ji:va*, had no real involvement.

When Hiranyakashipu ordered elephants to trample Prahla:da, he reflected that this body is composed of *prakruthi* and the elephant too is composed of *prakruthi*. *prakruthi* was interacting with *prakruthi*, and there was no reason for him to identify with it. Remaining indifferent in this understanding,



he was unharmed. Swords could not cut him, fire could not burn him, and neither sea, mountains, nor stones could cause him harm.

The reason was that *Prahla:da* never assumed doership for himself. At the same time, he did not assign doership to *prakruthi* either. Instead, he placed doership entirely upon *Parama:thma*, who operates through *prakruthi* and directs it.

Prahla:da firmly believed that the owner, the doer, and the enjoyer of all actions is Sri Hari alone.





Consequently, since *Parama:thma* Sri Hari is the controller of *prakruthi*, He ensured that *prakruthi* became favorable to *Prahla:da*. *Prahla:da*, absorbed in constant remembrance of the Lord, became exceedingly dear to Him compelling the Lord to protect *Prahla:da* as His own.

Yet *Prahla:da* did not withdraw from action or remain in passive meditation. When his father sent him to school, he attended his classes, sat with his teacher, listened to the lessons, took notes, answered questions, and memorized what was taught. He interacted with his parents as any ordinary child would. He neither criticized nor hated anyone. He never resisted when asked to perform a duty, nor did he claim to renounce action in the name of meditation.

Why surrender to Sri: *Krushna*?

Thus, while fully engaged in the world, *Prahla:da* remained untouched by it, having mentally surrendered all doership, ownership, and enjoyment to Lord Sri Hari alone. He fulfilled his responsibilities through the body, while his mind remained



constantly absorbed in the Lord. Because of this inner surrender, none of his actions created *ka:rmic* records. The more we trust this principle and deepen our faith in it, the more capable we become of practicing *karma yo:ga*, gradually transforming into true *karma yo:gis*.

To understand and accept *karma yo:ga*, *Arjuna* had to receive eighteen chapters of direct instruction from Lord Sri: *Krushna*. Even then, it is difficult to say how deeply *Arjuna* had internalized the teachings. While Sri: *Krushna* was instructing him, *Arjuna* listened attentively, nodded in agreement, and asked questions whenever clarification was needed. At the conclusion of the discourse, *Arjuna* even declared, “*sthitho:smi gatha sandehaha*,” stating that his doubts were resolved.

However, during the battle, when the *Kauravas* killed his son Abhimanyu, *Arjuna* was overcome with grief. This shows that although he had listened to and intellectually understood the teachings, he was unable to keep the knowledge steady in the face of intense emotion. *prakruthi* swayed *Arjuna*, just as it continues to sway all of us.



At the same time, one should never attempt to control *prakruthi* with the belief that, since *prakruthi* performs actions, it can be dictated by individual effort. *prakruthi* is insentient and cannot be governed by anyone other than *Parama:thma*. When we relinquish the urge to control *prakruthi* and instead surrender doership, ownership, and enjoyment to *Parama:thma*, He ensures that *prakruthi* becomes favorable and that life unfolds smoothly according to His will.

**“mayi sarva:ni karma:ni sanyasya
a:dhya:thmache:thasa:”**

adhya:thmache:thasa means keeping the mind firmly established in the knowledge of *a:thma*. Knowledge of *a:thma* includes understanding its true nature, the nature of *Parama:thma* who governs *a:thma*, and the relationship between *a:thma* and *Parama:thma*. It also includes understanding the nature of *prakruthi*, the relationship between *Parama:thma* and *prakruthi*, and how *Parama:thma* directs both *a:thma* and *prakruthi*. The *ve:dic* scriptures illuminate these truths. One must keep this knowledge steady



and then engage with the world. This state is called *adhya:thmache:thasa*.

When one offers all actions to *Parama:thma* and relinquishes the fruits of action to Him, one becomes ***nira:shih*** and ***nirmamah bhu:thva***. Such a person remains free from anxiety and possessiveness, experiences inner peace, and lives with joy. Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* assures *Arjuna* that prosperity and contentment naturally follow this path. This is why He instructs *Arjuna* to attribute all responsibility to *Parama:thma* while practicing *karma yo:ga*.

Ultimately, responsibilities must be surrendered to *Parama:thma* because He alone is

- the ***Bhagava:n***, master of all beings
- He is ***Purusho:tthama***, One who gives everything for no-end
- and He is ***sarva:thmabhu:tha***, the indwelling Self of all beings.

When powerful individuals or groups attempt to control or suppress those they perceive as weaker, it is natural for the



weaker side to respond with resistance, sometimes even seeking to eliminate the source of oppression. In a similar way, once *Arjuna* learns that *prakruthi* is influencing him, there arises the possibility that he may try to suppress or oppose it. Sri Sri: *Krushna*, perceiving this inner tendency, compassionately redirects *Arjuna's* attention by affirming that even *prakruthi* is under His complete control and functions strictly according to His command.

Sri: *Krushna* observes all our thoughts, and therefore He alone is the true doer of all actions. Through *Arjuna*, the Lord conveys this profound truth to the world. *prakruthi* cannot act independently even for a moment without the Lord's consent. As the saying goes, without the Lord's permission, not even an ant can move.

From time immemorial, many questions arise when one learns that the Lord is the sole controller of everything. If He alone governs all, why does sorrow befall some while others enjoy happiness? Why are some born wealthy while others remain poor, some blessed with beauty while others face physical limitations?



The response to these persistent questions is that although the Lord is indeed the sole controller, He does not act arbitrarily or according to personal preference. Instead, He governs bodies in the same way a skilled surgeon uses instruments during an operation. A competent surgeon employs tools and machines according to their specific capabilities, using each appropriately so that the operation succeeds and benefits the patient. In the same manner, the Lord employs the bodies, which function like instruments, according to their capacity and competence, always for the greater welfare of society.

ji:vas are unique in that they possess awareness and the ability to recognize that the Lord is the driver of everything. Because of this awareness, the Lord uses *ji:vas* as conscious instruments, engaging them in action according to their understanding. He also provides them with instructions and teachings. Having received this guidance, *ji:vas* are expected to act in harmony with the Lord's will. When the Lord directs them to move in one direction, they should not choose the opposite path.



Because *ji:vas* possess their own *jna:na*, they also have the freedom to act in ways that contradict the Lord's intentions. When they do so, they inevitably experience struggle and grief. Repeatedly acting against the Lord's will entangles them further in *ka:rmic* bondage. For this reason, Lord Sri Krishna seeks to instruct *Arjuna*, and through *Arjuna*, the entire world, on the importance of acting in alignment with the Lord's intentions while remaining completely dependent on Him.

Anyone who believes that they can control the Lord is deluded. The Lord alone is the absolute controller of everything.

Asserting this truth, the Lord created a situation in the *Ra:ma avatha:r* to demonstrate that no one can dare to oppose Him. *Dasarattha's* plan to coronate *Ra:ma* was completely overturned, and *Ra:ma* was instead sent on a fourteen year exile to the forest. His brother *Lakshmana*, His mother *Kausalya*, and the entire city of *Ayo:dhya* could not bear the thought of *Ra:ma* leaving. Among them all, *Kausalya* was the most grief stricken, for He was her own beloved son.



Seeing her unbearable sorrow, *Lakshmana* swamy tried to console Kausalya and began arguing with *Ra:ma*, urging Him to withdraw from the decision to go into exile. *Ra:ma* responded patiently, explaining in many ways that this was their father's intention and that it had to be fulfilled. He then instructed *Lakshmana*, saying, "Dear brother, we can never alter God's plan."

Lakshmana, filled with intense self-confidence, retorted that he would reject and suppress even God's intention and insisted that *Ra:ma* should ascend the throne. He assured *Ra:ma* that no one could stop him. At this point, *Ra:ma* clarified to *Lakshmana* how self-confidence must be properly directed, rather than turned against God.

Ra:ma said, "There is nothing wrong with having self-confidence. However, there is more to it. Even self-confidence cannot act independently. God is not something that can be perceived by our eyes. No one can revolt against God. Everyone, including you and me, must bow our heads before Him. You must certainly use your self-confidence, but with complete faith in God, and in a manner that does not



contradict His intention. Only then will you receive true well being.”

To this, *Lakshmana* insisted, “Why can I not suppress God?”

Ra:ma replied, “Because God is invisible. A wise person never fights with God.”

kaschiddaive:na

saumithre:

yo:ddhumuthsahathe: puma:n - A wise man never attempts to fight with the invisible God. Just as it is impossible to control the wind or pull the sky down, it is even more impossible to suppress God, who controls the invisible wind and the sky.

yasya na grahanam kinthith karmano:nyathra drusyathe: - The only way to recognize the presence of God is through His effects. When the invisible God acts, we experience the results of those actions. God never appears before us to reveal His plans. He gives as He wills, and only after receiving do we infer His actions.



Ra:ma continues, “*Lakshmana*, until sunrise today, all of us believed that the kingdom would be ours. The entire world was rejoicing. Yet, in a single moment, everything was overturned. We were meant to receive the kingdom, but instead we are going into exile. Who is responsible for this? It is neither you nor me. No one planned it, and no one even knew it would happen until it did. When events unfold in such an unexpected way, we must recognize them as divine intervention. Every outcome must have a doer, and here the doer is the divine.”

Ra:ma further explains, “*Lakshmana*, you may think that mother Kaikayi is to be blamed. But the whole world knows that her love and affection toward Me were even greater than those of mother Kausalya. I have personally witnessed her affection many times. The very fact that mother Kaikayi loved Me so deeply proves that sending Me to exile was never her intention. It was the divine will acting through her. That divine action is not visible to us. We must accept it as divine because what occurred completely contradicts the known reality. A mother who loved Me would never consciously wish for My



exile, yet it happened. The divine is invisible and acts according to its own will. The wise do not struggle against it instead they accept God's plan."

Sri Sri: *Krushna* conveys the same truth to *Arjuna*, saying, "*Arjuna*, I am the divine, and I govern everything from behind the scenes. Surrender all actions to Me. Only then will you be able to perform your duties with happiness, free from worry and stress. If you believe that you alone are the doer and that everything belongs to you, your actions will inevitably lead to grief. When you release the burden of doership, life flows smoothly. Courage arises, and enthusiasm for duty follows. Anxiety begins only when you believe that the results of action bind you. Therefore, ***vigathajvaraha yudhyasva***. Step forward and fight, free from inner turmoil."

Through these words, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs *Arjuna* on the right approach to *karma*:

<i>mayi</i>	<i>sarva:ni</i>	<i>karma:ni</i>
<i>sanyasya:dhya:thmache:thasa:</i>		



***nira:si:nirmamo: bhu:thva: yuddhyasva
vigathajvaraha || 3.30 ||***

“Fix your mind on Me and on *a:thma jna:na*. Relinquish the sense of doership and perform your duties joyfully. Do not renounce action itself.”

In essence, scholars and learned teachers summarize Sri Sri: *Krushna*’s message as follows: it is the renunciation of attachment in thought, not the renunciation of action, that leads to freedom.

Why then must we renounce doership to the Divine? Is remaining unseen while orchestrating actions the only power of God, or is He capable of much more?

Our *a:charyas* used specific sacred terms to explain the Lord’s infinite capabilities and to clarify what Sri Krishna means when He says, “leave everything unto Me.” Throughout the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, our *a:charyas* draw attention to the deliberate use of the word ***Bhagava:n*** when referring to Sri Sri: *Krushna*. In the *Gi:tha*, the speaker is usually identified by name, such as *Arjuna uva:cha*, *Sanjaya uva:cha*, or



Dhruthara:shtra uva:cha. However, when Sri Sri: *Krushna* speaks, the text consistently states ***Bhagava:n uva:cha*** and never Sri: *Krushna uva:cha*. This distinction is intentional, for Sri Sri: *Krushna* is God, and ***Bhagava:n*** is a unique word that reveals the very nature of divinity.

What does the word *Bhagava:n* mean? When analyzed, it consists of four components. The syllable ***bha*** signifies two auspicious qualities of the Lord, ***ga*** signifies two more, and ***va*** signifies another two auspicious qualities. The final component, ***un***, is a grammatical construct in Sanskrit that implies negation, meaning the absence of what should not exist. Thus, ***Bhagava:n*** denotes one who possesses all six categories of auspicious qualities and who is entirely free from any qualities that contradict them. God has no defects, no limitations, and no ordinary attributes. In contrast, we possess no innate auspicious qualities and are burdened with many faults.

The word *Bhagava:n* therefore establishes that God embodies only auspicious qualities and is completely devoid of any



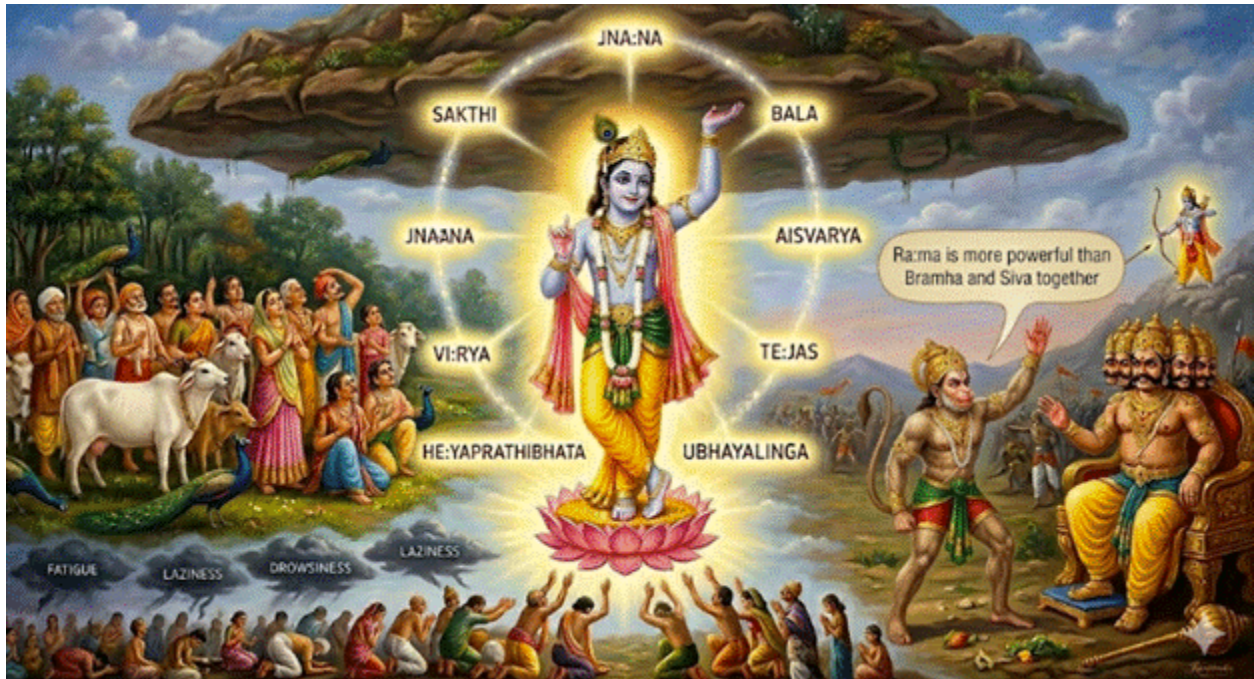
imperfections. In addition to being ***Bhagava:n***, Sri Sri: ***Krushna*** is also ***Purusho:tthama*** and ***sarvasari:ri***, also called ***sarva:thmabhu:tha***. When we understand these three truths together, we gain the confidence to perform our prescribed duties without fear or hesitation. At the same time, we are able to experience the results of our actions without anxiety about *ka:rmic* bondage.

“mayi sarva:ni karma:ni sanyasya adhyathma-che:thasa” – “Leave all your activities unto Me,” says Sri Krishna. Activities are not like small balls or boxes, or lumps of clay that we can place on Sri: ***Krushna***. Rather, they are the actions we perform with our bodies.

To truly leave our activities unto Him, we need to be aware of two things. First, we must perform our actions with the understanding that they are for His purpose. Second, we must recognize that He supports all our actions from the background. Since He is responsible for all activities, the fruits of our actions also belong to Him. The enjoyer, the doer, and



the owner—all three must be dedicated to Sri: *Krushna* while we carry out our ordained duties.



Moreover, Sri: *Krushna* uses the word ‘mayi’ to refer to Himself. He shows us that He is the *Bhagava:n*, possessing six groups of auspicious qualities: *jna:na*, *sakthi*, *bala*, *aisvarya*, *vi:rya*, and *te:jas*. The six qualities demonstrate that He has no faults or inferior qualities. He presides over everything and everyone. He is all-knowing, capable of accomplishing anything without any obstacle. He controls all beings and remains unfazed regardless of His actions. Even as a child, lifting the *Go:vardhana* hill on His fingernail and



standing for seven days, He displayed His immense strength while playing as a child. If He intends to act in a certain way, no one can obstruct Him.

Among His infinite auspicious qualities, the Lord demonstrated one during the *Ra:ma avatha:r* when He appeared as the perfect human.

***brahma: svayambhu:scha thura:nano: va: |
rudrasthrine:thrasthrripura:nthako: va: |
indro: mahe:ndrassurana:yako: va: | thrathum
na saktha yudhi ra:mavadhyam ||***

While speaking to *Ra:va:na:sura*, *Hanuma:n* describes *Ra:ma*'s power: "Hey *Ra:van*, why this arrogance? You believe that you have suppressed *Chathurmukha* Bramha, appeased Siva, and enslaved Indra, and thus feel proud. Remember, none of them can withstand *Ra:ma*'s arrow. If *Ra:ma* decides to strike you, neither individually nor together can they protect you. Stop thinking that they are behind you." *Hanuma:n*'s words convey the immense strength and authority of the Lord



The Lord possesses infinitely more auspicious qualities than the combined qualities of all *avatha:rs*. Such a complete and perfect *avatha:r* is the Sri Sri: *Krushna avatha:r*. **Sri: Krushnasthu bhagava:n svayam.** Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* holds absolute authority over everyone and everything. No matter how many activities the Lord engages in, His abilities never diminish nor undergo any change. When the world realizes His divine strength, it will inevitably fall at His Feet. Just as a lamp loses its luster before the Sun, the entire world, no matter how great it may seem, is reduced to a mere firefly in front of Lord Sri: *Krushna*. He is the ***Bhagava:n***.

The One who possesses the six auspicious qualities known as ***jna:na, sakthi, bala, aisvarya, vi:rya, and the:jas*** is the true ***Bhagava:n***. The *ji:vas* also possess these six qualities, but only in a limited manner. Moreover, along with these qualities, the *ji:vas* are burdened with unwanted faults. Weaknesses such as fatigue, drowsiness, and laziness arise in us repeatedly. The suffix ‘un’ conveys the absence of such faults in God. Therefore, He is called ***he:yaprabhibhata,***



meaning that faults and weaknesses can never approach Him, just as darkness can never envelop a lamp. He is the eternal abode of all auspicious qualities.



The combination of possessing all auspicious qualities and being completely free from faults is known as ***Ubhayalinga***. Sri Sri: *Krushna* declares that He Himself embodies this Ubhayalinga. By doing so, He clarifies to



Arjuna that the entire world is under His control. Since He is the all-knowing doer, anyone with a need must pray to Him, seek Him, or meditate upon Him. Through this declaration, the Lord assures us that when we pray to Him, He Himself will create the means for our fulfillment. Sri: *Krushna* consoles *Arjuna* by affirming that He has the power to turn all circumstances in *Arjuna*'s favor, leaving no reason for anxiety.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* also possesses another essential quality known as ***upa:syathvam***, meaning He alone is fit to be worshiped. Not only is Sri: *Krushna* the sole object worthy of worship, but He is also capable of granting whatever is sought from Him. He further reinforces this truth in the seventh chapter.

Regardless of which *de:vatha* one worships for boons, it is not the *de:vatha* who truly grants them. It is only Sri: *Krushna* who bestows grace through the *de:vathas*. If Sri: *Krushna* does not empower a *de:vatha*, that *de:vatha* cannot grant anything to the devotee. Whether the desire is small or great, it is Sri: *Krushna* alone who fulfills it through the respective *de:vathas*. By establishing this truth, Sri: *Krushna* uses the name



Bhagava:n to reveal His supreme and all encompassing nature.

As mentioned earlier, this is the first one that we must be aware to truly leave our activities unto Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna*.

The second truth we must be aware of is that the Lord is called *Purusho:tthama*. When *Arjuna* inquires about the meaning of *Purusho:tthama*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that *Purusho:tthama* signifies the One who governs two entities and yet remains untouched by the faults that bind them. Sri Sri: *Krushna* elaborates on the true meaning of *Purusho:tthama* in the fifteenth chapter. Since *Arjuna* had already witnessed the *vira:dru:pam* of Sri Sri: *Krushna* in the eleventh chapter, *viswaru:pa Darsana yo:ga*, he had no doubt that Sri Sri: *Krushna* is indeed *Purusho:tthama*.

The term *Purusho:tthama* is composed of two words, *Purusha* and *Utthama*. *Utthama* denotes the superlative or the highest degree of excellence. Where there is a superlative, there must also be the positive and comparative degrees. These are



known as ***uth*** and ***utthara***. Sri Sri: *Krushna* clarifies their meanings in the fifteenth chapter.

In this world, sentient and insentient entities together form a wide variety of bodies such as humans, *de:vathas*, animals, birds, trees, mountains, stones, gravel, water, fire, and others. All these bodies arise in accordance with their respective *ka:rmic* records.

Focusing on human beings, they are referred to as *purushas*. Both men and women are called *purushas*. The term *purusha* signifies a *ji:va* residing in a body. Since all such beings are bound by their *ka:rmic* records, they are classified as baddha *purushas*, meaning bound living beings. The bodies of baddha *purushas* constantly undergo change. They begin small, grow over time, and eventually perish, only for the *ji:va* to assume another body. Because the *ji:vas* continually change their bodies, they are called *Kshara purushas*.

When such *ji:vas* receive the grace of God and their *ka:rmic* records are completely exhausted, they transcend *prakruthi* and enter the divine realm. There, they are bestowed with a



divine body that neither changes nor deteriorates. *Purushas* who possess such imperishable bodies are known as *akshara purushas*.

Thus, *Kshara purushas* are those with perishable bodies, while *akshara purushas* are those with eternal bodies. ***sa e:kadha: bhavathi thridha: bhavathi panchadha: sapthadha: navadha: chaiva | punaschaika:dasaha smruthaha satham cha dasa chaikascha sahara:ni cha*** | The *mukthas* and *nithyas* who reside in the abode of the Lord are *akshara purushas*. These *akshara purushas* are referred to as *Utthapurushas*. One who surpasses even them is called the *Uttamapurusha*, the supreme and superlative being.

In the entire creation, there exists only one *Uttamapurusha*, and that is God Himself. While there are countless *purushas* bound by *karma* and many *Utthapurushas* who have been liberated from *karma*, there is only one supreme *Uttamapurusha*, the Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna*.



***yasma:th ksharamathi:tho:ham akshara:dapi
cha utthamaha |***

***atho:smi lo:ke: ve:de: cha pratthithah
purusho:tthamaha || 15.18 ||***

Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, “*Arjuna*, I reside in both *Kshara* and *akshara purushas*. Yet, despite residing in them, I am not affected by their faults or shortcomings. I remain completely non-attached to them. Just as mercury does not adhere to the vessel into which it is poured, I dwell *within* them without being tainted. Even when I walk through mud, it does not cling to Me. However, when you walk in the same mud, it sticks to you.”

We understand this well because we are born into this *prakruthi*. Being constantly influenced by it, we develop ignorance such as identifying ourselves with the body and its limitations.

Sri: *Krushna* further explains, “Unlike you, even if I enter *prakruthi*, it cannot influence Me. Therefore, whether I reside in *Kshara* or *akshara purushas*, I remain eternally non-



attached. For this very reason, I am known as *Purusho:tthama*.” The scripture declares, “***Utthamah purushasthvanyaha parama:thme:thyudha:hruthaha***.” Thus, He is called *Parama:thma*, as aptly described by the *Ve:das*, Smruthis, *ithiha:sas*, *purana:s* and other scriptures.

The scriptures further state, “***yo: lo:kathrayama:visya bibharthi avyaya i:svarah***.” The Lord pervades all the three worlds and simultaneously bears them. While doing so, He does not experience fatigue. He rules, sustains, and controls all the worlds. Hence, He resides *within* all sentient and insentient beings while governing, sustaining, and ruling them, which establishes Him as *Purusho:tthama*.

Sri: *Krushna* urges *Arjuna*, “Since I am not attached to *prakruthi*, if you leave the responsibility of your actions unto Me, I will ensure that *prakruthi* does not cause you any harm.”

He further assures, “Therefore, since I am the *Parama:thma*, you may joyfully leave the results of your actions to Me without



fear. I alone am the ruler of the world. I alone am worthy of worship. I alone bestow the fruits of all actions.”

Hence, Sri Sri: *Krushna* uses the word ‘mayi’ to refer to Himself, thereby revealing His intrinsic nature and boundless capabilities. Because the Lord possesses such absolute independence and supremacy, surrendering the sense of doership, ownership, and enjoyment to Him does not cause any loss to us. Keeping this truth in mind, we should perform our prescribed duties with complete confidence and without fear.

For example, a baby moves forward with complete confidence and assurance, knowing that its mother is behind it. In the same way, we must perform our *karmas* with the confidence and assurance that the Lord is behind us. Once we firmly establish in our minds that the Lord, who possesses innumerable auspicious qualities such as *sakthi* and *bala*, stands behind us, all our actions become free from faults. With such assurance, we are able to move forward steadily in life.



Within our hearts, we must cultivate an unshakable faith that arises from a true understanding of the nature of *Parama:thma* and the relationship between *jiva:thma*, or simply *a:thma*, and *Parama:thma*. We must keep *a:thma jna:na*, the knowledge of the relationship between *a:thma* and *Parama:thma*, steady and unwavering in our hearts. A mind that is firmly rooted in such *a:thma jna:na* is called ***adhya:thmache:thana***. The Lord instructs that while keeping the mind established in this knowledge, one should offer the sense of doership unto Him.

The Lord says, ***sanyasya adhya:thma che:thasa***. The *Ve:das* describe the nature of the Lord so that we may develop unwavering faith in Him. The *Ve:das* declare, ***anthapraavishtaha sa:stha janana:m sarva:thma***, meaning that He is the indweller of all sentient beings. The reason He resides *within* them is because He functions as the ruler, *sa:stha*. Without His indwelling presence, the world cannot function. He abides *within* beings to grant them strength and to sustain their very existence.

The *Bruhada:ranyaka Upanishad* explains that the Lord is the indweller of all beings, ruling them, directing them, and



establishing their existence. Although He resides *within* the *ji:vas*, the *ji:vas* are never directly aware of the indwelling Lord. He remains unseen and anonymous while governing them from *within*. We know of His existence only because the *Bruhada:ranyaka Upanishad* reveals this truth.

Not only the scriptures, but our paramarushis and enlightened sages also affirm this. They declare, ***prasa:sitha:ram sarvesha:mani:ya:msamano:rapi***, meaning that He rules all beings as their inner governor. Furthermore, Sri Sri: *Krushna*, the *Parama:thma* Himself, states this clearly in the fifteenth chapter.

“Arjuna, sarvasya cha:ham hrudi sannivishtah, matthah smruthih jna:nam apo:hanamcha. I am the indweller of all beings. I reside in the most vital center *within* every *ji:va*. From Me arise knowledge and remembrance. Wherever and whenever anyone gains new understanding or recollects past knowledge, it is by My presence alone.”



“Even the analysis you perform based on recollected knowledge, and the decisions you arrive at through that analysis, occur solely because of My presence.”

This is so because He is the indweller. The Lord declares, ***aham a:thma guda:ke:sa sarvabho:tha a:saya sthithaha***. Sri Sri: *Krushna* wished to ensure that *Arjuna* fully understood this truth and, as a result, developed unwavering faith in Him. For this reason, Sri Sri: *Krushna* reveals His *Vira:t*, the omnipresent form, in the eleventh chapter.

Before revealing the omnipresent form, the Lord explains His nature in the tenth chapter. In every category of existence, one entity stands out as possessing exceptional greatness. Among trees, one tree is considered great. Among animals, one animal is distinguished. Among birds, one bird is exalted. Among seasons, one is celebrated as supreme. Such greatness arises solely due to the presence of the Lord *within* them.

In this world, an object becomes great, *magnificent*, and worthy of praise simply by receiving a minute fraction of the



Lord's power. If the Lord's qualities are compared to the vast waters of an ocean, then even a millionth part of a single drop from that ocean is enough to make an object extraordinary. Affirming this truth, Sri: *Krushna* declares, ***mama the:jo:msa sambhavam.***

When we tell a child that we have candy, the child immediately asks to see it. This reflects a lack of complete trust and a desire for confirmation. In a similar manner, even the great *Arjuna* expressed a subtle doubt when Sri Sri: *Krushna* spoke extensively about His greatness.

After listening to Sri: *Krushna* describe His divine attributes, *Arjuna* humbly requests, "Sri: *Krushna*, if You consider me worthy of beholding Your nature, if Your nature can be perceived by someone like me, and if You are willing to bestow that grace upon me, then please show me Your *viswaru:pa*, the omnipresent form." Unlike a child who demands to see the candy, *Arjuna* makes his request with deep reverence and humility.



Moved by *Arjuna's* sincerity and compassion for his limited understanding, Sri Sri: *Krushna* consents and reveals His omnipresent form in the eleventh chapter of the *Gi:tha*. Throughout the *Gi:tha*, in many places, Sri Sri: *Krushna* firmly establishes that He is the indwelling ruler, the *prasa:sitha*. Elsewhere, He further declares this truth explicitly with the verse:

***i:svarah sarvabhu:tha:na:m hrudd:se:rjuna
thishta:thi |
bhra:mayassarvabhu:tha:ni yanthra:ru:da:ni
ma:yaya: || 18.61 ||***

Sri Sri: *Krushna* clarifies in many places throughout the *Gi:tha* that He is like the controller of a giant wheel. A person seated in one of the chairs of a giant wheel has no control over its movement, whereas the operator has complete freedom to run it as he wishes. In the same way, Sri: *Krushna* possesses the power to move the entire universe at will. While residing *within* all beings, He governs both the sentient and the insentient. Therefore, He is *I:svara*, the supreme controller.



First, we must develop staunch faith. When *a:thma jna:na* remains steady and unwavering in our mind, it is called ***adhya:thmache:thana***. Faith united with *a:thma jna:na* means holding firm knowledge that He resides *within* me as the ruler. He is the inner dweller of the *a:thma*, sustaining it at every moment. I am ruled, supported, and held by Him alone.

Sri: *Krushna* then says that with such unwavering faith, one must reconcile all activities accordingly. When activities are reconciled in this manner, you become the ***sari:ram***, the body, and I become the ***sari:ri***, the indwelling *a:thma* to you. I will take responsibility for everything. Just as a body cannot take care of itself and depends entirely on the person inhabiting it, I take responsibility for every object in the universe. I take special care of those who accept Me as their savior. This is the meaning of ***mayi sarva:ni karma:ni sanyasya adhya:thma che:thasa***, performing all actions after reconciling them with *a:thma jna:na*.

He further declares ***yudhyasva vigathajvaraha***. Even if you engage in battle, you will remain ***vigathajvaraha***,



untouched by **jvara**ha. *Jvara*ha refers to mental disturbance, hesitation, anxiety, or inner tension.

The reason such freedom from mental turmoil arises is because one becomes **nira:si:h** and **nirmama**ha. When responsibility is surrendered to Me, *nira:si:h* means giving up expectation for the fruits of action. One develops firm faith that He alone will take care of the outcome. *Nirmama*ha means possessing the strong resolve that all actions are carried out strictly according to His will and His command. To avoid claiming credit for actions, one relinquishes doership by offering every activity unto Him.

This is known as **thrividha** **thya:ga**m, the threefold sacrifice. Renouncing doership, enjoyership, and ownership while performing actions is called **karthruthva phala sanga** **thya:ga**. Through this teaching, Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains the true method of performing *karma yo:ga*. When actions prescribed by the *Ve:das* are performed with the renunciation of doership, enjoyership, and ownership, they lead to joy alone and never result in harm.



Nine distinct types of relationships between us and God

By declaring that He is in everyone and that everyone is in Him, Sri Sri: *Krushna* makes it clear that He shares every possible relationship with us. Further, by affirming that He is the indweller of all beings, He reassures us that He alone bears responsibility for everyone. Therefore, there is no need for individuals to burden themselves with the responsibility for the outcomes of actions.

The one who resides *within* is called ***se:shi***, and the one who is sustained is called ***se:sha***. The relationship between *se:shi* and *se:sha* is known as ***se:sha se:shi bha:va sambandha***. This is an eternal and unchanging relationship between *Parama:thma* and the *a:thma*, as well as between *Parama:thma* and the entire world. When we become aware of this relationship, we naturally gain inner strength and confidence.

In worldly life, we experience many kinds of relationships such as those between mother and child, husband and wife, and employer and employee. Depending on the nature of each



relationship, a corresponding sense of attachment, affection, and responsibility develops between the individuals involved.

In the same way, when we recognize that multiple relationships exist between us and *Parama:thma*, affection towards God arises naturally. Our *a:charyas* understand that whatever we do for those we love is done with the intention of pleasing them. Similarly, when we cultivate love for God, all our actions become offerings meant to bring joy to Him. With this understanding, our *a:charyas* strive to help us realize our relationship with God.

They teach that there are nine distinct types of relationships between us and God.

1. ***Pitha/Puthra:*** A father and child relationship exists between God and the world.
2. ***Rakshya/Rakshaka:*** He is the *rakshaka* of the world.
3. ***Se:sha/se:shi:*** The entire world belongs to Him. He is the owner of the world, including *ji:vas* and *prakruthi*.
4. ***bha:rya/Bharthru:*** He bears and supports the entire universe.



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5. ***jne:ya/jna:tha***: The sole purpose of *ji:va*'s *jna:na* is to know God. He is the known, and the *ji:va* is the knower.
6. ***Sva/sva:mi***: He is the master of all that exists. This is known as the *svasva:mi bha:va* sambandha.
7. ***A:dha:ra/A:dhe:ya***: He sustains the world and enables it to function in an orderly manner. This is called the *a:dha:ra* and *a:dhe:ya* relationship. Just as a chair supports the person sitting on it, the chair becomes the *a:dha:ra* and the person becomes the *a:dhe:ya*. Similarly, a table is the *a:dha:ra* for the books placed upon it, and a hand holding a book becomes the *a:dha:ra* for the book, which is the *a:dhe:ya*. The whole world is functioning orderly as per a system controlled by Him as *a:dha:ra*. This world depends on Him, hence it becomes *a:dhe:ya*. It is called *a:dha:ra, a:dhe:ya* sambandha.
8. ***A:thma/sari:ra***: He is indweller to the entire universe. The one that drives as an indweller is called *a:thma* and the one that is driven is called *sa:ri:ri*. It is called *a:thma sa:ri:ri* sambandha.



9. **bho:ktha/bho:kthru:** He is the enjoyer of all the activities carried out by *ji:va*. When we take food, the body is not satisfied. Instead, it is the Lord who is satisfied. If we inject food to someone in a coma, the body does not respond saying it is satisfied. Only the *Parama:thma* responds if He is satisfied.



Hence, *Parama:thma* drives the *ji:va* in the same manner that the *a:thma* governs the *sari:ra*, the body. To understand this,



one must have clear discrimination between what is *a:thma* and what is the body. *A:thma* is that which controls an object either from *within* as the indweller or from outside as the supervisor. The object is sustained solely by the *a:thma*, and the fruits of all actions performed by the object are experienced only by the *a:thma*. Such an object is called the *sari:ra* or body in relation to the *a:thma*.

This *a:thma* body relationship is directly evident in our own experience. The body does not function independently. It exists, acts, and is sustained only because we reside *within* it. We are the cause for all the activities performed by our body. Furthermore, the body has no freedom to act according to its own will, because we are its rulers. Whether we lift our hand, keep it still, or move it sideways happens only because of our intention.

Moreover, the hand moves solely for our purpose and never for its own sake. We use the hand for our enjoyment and for our benefit. Since the body is sustained by us, acts only for us, and functions entirely under our control, it is therefore called the



sari:ra or body. The one who resides *within* and governs it is called the *a:thma*.

No matter what happens to the body, it bears no responsibility for its condition. Caring for the body is the responsibility of the *a:thma*. When the body is exposed to fire or comes into contact with something cold, the body itself does not experience burning or cold. Rather, it is the *a:thma* that experiences heat and cold. This is because the body exists, is directed, and functions solely for the sake of the *a:thma*. The body has no freedom to function independently. Freedom belongs only to the *a:thma*, and therefore the experience of pleasure and pain belongs to the *a:thma* alone.

When we wear a beautiful ring, the finger does not jump with joy. Instead, we feel happiness. Likewise, when the finger is injured, the finger itself does not experience pain. The experience belongs to the one who owns and uses the body. Therefore, the body does not experience pleasure or pain; the one associated with the body experiences them. That experiencer is the *sari:ri*, the *a:thma*.



This understanding can be extended further.

The *a:thma* or *ji:va* itself has an indweller who sustains, drives, and supports its very existence. From this standpoint, the indweller assumes the role of the *a:thma*, and the *ji:va* becomes analogous to the body. Consequently, joy and sorrow are now experienced by the indweller and not by the *ji:va*. Just as pain, pleasure, heat, and cold are not experienced by the physical body but by the *ji:va*, in the same way these changes at the level of the *ji:va* are experienced by its indweller.

We experience pain, pleasure, heat, and cold due to attachment and aversion, desire and anger, which arise from our binding with *prakruthi*. These feelings bring about modifications in *a:thma jna:na*. The changes in *a:thma jna:na* are in turn experienced by the indweller of the *a:thma*, the *Parama:thma*. Not merely from one or two *ji:vas*, but from all *ji:vas* in the universe, the *Parama:thma* experiences these modifications. Hence, He is called *sarva:thma*.

We know that there are more than a trillion living cells in the human body. Each of these cells has an *a:thma* residing in it.



This can even be observed experimentally, as more than a million living cells exist in a single drop of blood. Although each of these trillions of cells has its own *ji:va*, all of them function *within* the same body. In certain regions, they act collectively and contribute to specific sensory experiences. Yet, all these *ji:vas* serve the one *ji:va* that owns the entire body, the one that says ‘I,’ ‘me,’ and ‘mine.’ All other *ji:vas* function under the command of this central *ji:va* and exist solely for its purpose.

For this reason, the *ji:vas* in individual cells do not claim experiences such as stomach pain, leg pain, strength, or weakness. Only the commanding *ji:va* experiences these conditions. The others remain as the body to the commanding *ji:va*, just as the body remains an instrument to the *a:thma*.

The commanding *ji:va* employs its *a:thma jna:na* to encompass all other *ji:vas* and thereby experience sensory perceptions through them. It continually strives to keep these *ji:vas* free from hardship, because their well-being directly supports its own comfort and prosperity. In truth, this commanding *ji:va* is none other than us. We naturally attempt



to keep our bodies comfortable because we derive benefit from them.

While it is appropriate to care for the body, awareness must ultimately extend to the indweller of the *ji:va* itself. Just as the commanding *ji:va* takes care of its body, God takes care of the entire universe. Therefore, He is rightly called *sarva:thma*, the indweller of all.

If we extend the analogy of the human body, which consists of trillions of living cells, to the entire world, we see a striking parallel. The world is composed of billions of living beings such as humans, animals, birds, insects, and worms. God is the indweller of all these beings. Just as a single commanding *ji:va* governs the trillions of cells *within* a body, He governs the entire universe from *within* as the indweller. Therefore, He is called *sarva:thma* or *Parama:thma*. He is *Bhagava:n*, the Supreme Lord, Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna*.

When the Lord directs the activities of various creatures, He does so solely for His own purpose and not for the independent benefit of the creatures. All beings are sustained



only by Him and not by themselves. The fruits of all activities performed by creatures ultimately belong to and are enjoyed by the Lord alone. However, due to ignorance, the *jīva* occasionally mistakes itself as the enjoyer of these results.

If a living cell *within* our body were to declare independence and begin functioning according to its own will, the body would be considered diseased. Health is restored only when such a cell is restrained, corrected, or made conducive to the well being of the whole. We seek the help of a doctor to determine whether that cell can continue to exist *within* the body.

In the same manner, it is a grave error for living beings who are meant to remain subservient to the Lord and serve Him alone to reject that role or to declare independence from Him. When, out of ignorance, they assume doership and ownership of their actions, such beings are considered spiritually diseased.

In response, the Lord endeavors to correct such beings. Instead of relying on an external healer, He Himself



undertakes the task of guiding them back to the right understanding. He does this by descending in various *avathars*, by imparting teachings through enlightened *a:charyas*, or by personally demonstrating ideal conduct to set an example and place them back on the proper path.

The Lord is the ***anthara:thma***, the indweller of all *ji:vas*, and thus He experiences their joy and grief. For this reason, He is known as ***sarvasari:ri***. Both *ji:vas* and *prakruthi* function as bodies of *Parama:thma*, through which He only experiences pleasure and pain.

Even though the body bears no responsibility for its actions and transfers that responsibility to the *a:thma*, it continues to perform its functions with diligence and precision. Similarly, we, the *ji:vas*, must perform our prescribed duties sincerely and carefully, while mentally attributing the responsibility of those actions to God. As stated, ***mayi sanyasya nira:si:hi nirmamaha***. When one performs duties without expectation of results, without the sense of personal doership, and without ownership of actions, such actions do



not give rise to anxiety or sorrow. In this way, one remains ever joyful while engaged in the practice of *karma*.

karma yo:ga - Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s Command Rooted in the *Ve:das*

To recap, in the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that a *mumukshu*, one who seeks freedom from *ka:rmic* bondage, must continue to perform their ordained duties while renouncing the sense of doership, ownership, and enjoyership to *Parama:thma*. He declares, ***mayi sarva:ni karma:ni sannyasya adhya:thma chethasa nira:si:h nirmamo: bhu:thva yudhyasva***. The instruction is to dedicate all actions to Him, give up attachment to their results, and relinquish the notion of personal ownership. At first glance, this may appear contradictory, because the Lord asks one to remain active while simultaneously renouncing.

The statement ***mayi sannyasya yudhyasva*** means, “Surrender to Me and yet engage in action.” This raises a natural question. If doership is surrendered to the Lord, why



should one continue to act? And if the Lord assumes responsibility for all actions, why does He prompt us to perform them?

Further, He says ***nira:si:h nirmamo: bhu:thva.*** ***nira:si:h*** means do not be attached to the fruits of action. ***nirmamah*** means give up the sense that the action or its results belong to you. *Arjuna* may then wonder what motivation remains for action if there is no personal ownership or expectation of benefit.

To address this doubt, Sri Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes the significance of the word ***mayi***. He reveals His nature as ***Purusho:tthama***. He is the Supreme Being, beyond both bound *ji:vas* and liberated *ji:vas*. He is ***Sarve:svara***, the Lord who governs the universe, and ***sarvasva:mi***, the true owner of all that exists. The right to enjoy the benefit of any object belongs only to its owner. Likewise, whatever belongs to the owner must function for the owner's purpose.

Since the Lord is our master and we belong to Him, our actions are meant for His satisfaction. Renouncing action



would contradict our very nature, because our existence itself is meant for His service. Therefore, one must continue to perform one's ordained duties as an offering to Him.

This relationship may be understood through a simple example. A garland placed on a doorway does not enhance its own beauty; it is meant to adorn the doorway. When the same garland is worn by a person, it is meant to enhance the wearer, not itself. The garland is an insentient object that exists for the sake of another. In this relationship, the dependent entity is called **se:sha**, and the one who derives the benefit is the **se:shi**.

We often spend time choosing the best garment to wear. Even if the garment is attractive and fashionable, its purpose is not to look good by itself. Its purpose is to enhance our appearance and make us look good. The same applies to any ornament we wear. An ornament does not exist for its own beauty; it exists to increase our beauty and bring us satisfaction. Thus, the purpose of any object we possess is not for its own sake, but to serve us. Such an object is called a **se:sha**, and we, who enjoy its benefit, are the **se:shi**.



In the same way, this entire world is *se:sha* to *Bhagava:n*, and He alone is the *se:shi*. Therefore, the purpose of every object and every being in this world is to bring delight to the Lord and to be used as an offering to Him.

At the very beginning of the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* introduces the principle that all actions of the *ji:va* should be transformed into *yajna*. *Yajna* is the central teaching. He explains that the cycle of life itself is established upon *yajna*, and that when all actions are performed in this spirit, they lead to lasting well being and inner fulfillment.

What then is *yajna*? The word comes from the root *yaja* *de:va pu:ja:ya:m*, which means worship or reverential



offering. *Yajna* therefore means performing one's actions as an act of worship to the Divine. All actions are to be done in this spirit.

Which deity is to be worshipped through action? Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that He Himself is the Supreme Lord and the inner Self of all deities. Therefore, all actions should be performed as His worship. Since He is the *Paramapurusha*, one should engage only in actions that are pleasing to Him.

For *Arjuna*, his present duty is to fight, and therefore he must engage in battle. In the same way, each of us has duties assigned by *Bhagava:n* according to our role and nature. When these duties are performed as worship, they become offerings that delight the Lord.

Just as we understood the relationship between *se:sha* and *se:shi* in the example of garments and ornaments, so too *Bhagava:n* alone is the true enjoyer, the *se:shi*. The *ji:va* exists only to act for His pleasure and in His service. This is the true nature of the self. Therefore, one cannot abandon the duty entrusted by the Lord.



In addition, insentient objects such as garments and ornaments do not possess *jna:na*. They remain wherever they are placed by their owners and never complain if they are not used. *ji:vas* too must remain in the same spirit. Whether *Parama:thma* employs a *ji:va* for a purpose or leaves it unused, the *ji:va* should neither resist nor assert independence, even though it possesses knowledge. The only difference is this: insentient objects remain where they are with their bodies, whereas *ji:vas* remain where they are through inner resolve.

Let us understand this further with an example - When a lady wearing a beautiful garment wins the Miss Universe title, the garment neither claims the credit nor seeks the prize. In the same way, we as *ji:vas* must perform our ordained duties as service and worship to the Lord, without demanding the fruits. Fulfilling our responsibilities is our true nature and must be carried out without fail.

What happens if duties are renounced? It contradicts our very nature. Activity is natural to us, just as a tree grows, clouds give rain, and a lion roars. To withdraw from rightful action is to deny what we truly are and to become unfit to remain the



Lord's *se:sha*. Then there is no purpose in retaining a human birth. The Lord may grant a birth as a log, a stone, or a garment, forms that do not resist or assert themselves. A ring does not protest about where it is worn. Likewise, the Lord grants us such forms that do not oppose Him.

Having attained this rare human birth after passing through lower forms, one should not wish to fall but strive to rise toward liberation in the presence of *Bhagava:n*. Therefore, one must perform all duties as *Bhagavad ara:dhana*, worship, that pleases Him. *Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja* teaches that this spirit of service is the true nature of the *a:thma*. Daily duties must therefore be continued as worship. That is why the Lord commands ***yudhyasva, to engage in the battle***. One should not seek the fruits but offer all actions to Him, as taught in ***mayi sarva:ni***, the essence of the *Upanishads*. Sri: *Krushna* further clarifies this teaching in the following verse so that it is understood with due seriousness.

***ye: me: matham idam nithyam anuthishttanthi
ma:nava:ha |***



***sraddha:vantho:nasu:yantho: muchyanthe:
the:pi karmabhihi || 3.31 ||***

“ye: me: matham idam nithyam” — Sri Sri: *Krushna* tells *Arjuna*, “This is My *matham*. ”

The word ***matham*** is often misunderstood. It does not mean a sect or religion. ***matham*** truly means an opinion, a considered view, or a conclusion based on authority and reasoning. Throughout the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* uses this word to indicate that His teaching is not a personal invention. The *Gi:tha* conveys the very principles of the *Ve:das* and *Upanishads*. By using the word ***matham***, He affirms, “This is in agreement with what the *Ve:das* teach.”

In the context of the third chapter, His conclusion is this: all ordained duties must be performed as worship of *Bhagava:n*, in obedience to His command, offering the fruits to Him and giving up the sense of doership, with the intention of pleasing Him. Since the *Upanishads* teach the same, Sri: *Krushna* declares this as His ***matham***. Therefore, one must engage in ordained duties without fail and practice this consistently



throughout life. It is not a discipline to be followed temporarily and then abandoned. Those who live in this spirit become free from the bondage of *karma*.

Even if one is not able to fully practice *karma yo:ga*, having ***sraddha*** toward it is itself a means for spiritual growth. ***Sraddha*** means a sincere appreciation and an eagerness to live according to Sri: *Krushna*'s teaching. It is an inner conviction that says, "This is true, and I too must strive to live this way." Such an attitude gradually elevates a person even when practice is incomplete.

Further, even if a person is unable to practice and does not yet have strong ***sraddha***, but at least does not mock, criticize, or resent the teaching, and instead acknowledges the truth and goodness in Sri: *Krushna*'s words, that attitude too helps purify the mind and reduces *ka:rmic* impressions.

Thus, the path unfolds progressively. First is the practice of *karma yo:ga*. If practice is not possible, one must at least cultivate ***sraddha*** toward it. If even that is not strong, one should at least remain free from fault finding toward the



teaching. Any one of these attitudes opens the way to inner purification and ultimately to liberation.

There is a beautiful verse in the *Mahabharata* about *dharma* that expresses this spirit.

***dharmah srutho: va: drushto: va: kathitho: va:
krutho:pi va: |***

***anumo:ditho: va: ra:je:ndra nayathi:ndra padam
naram ||***

dharmaha means right conduct and the natural disposition of a virtuous person who lives according to the *Ve:das*. ***srutho: va:*** means that one becomes purified even by hearing about the noble conduct of such a ***Vaidika***. The ideal is to practice *karma yo:ga* oneself. If that is not yet possible, one should at least make the effort to hear about it and learn how it is lived. The first step is attentive listening to discourses that describe how a virtuous person performs *karma yo:ga*. Awareness of the noble ways of the learned and the enlightened gradually inspires us to follow the same path.



Even if actual practice does not arise immediately, a sincere resolve to practice will take shape.

drushto: va:, observing the conduct of a ***Vaidika***, leaves a deep impression and hastens our inner transformation. If such noble persons are not physically present, then recalling their lives and actions, ***smarana***, itself becomes purifying. In times of doubt, remembering how the great lived, narrating their conduct, ***kathitho: va:***, or even attempting to imitate their actions, ***krutho: api va:***, elevates and refines us.

If direct contact with such exemplars is not possible, one should at least listen to sacred accounts such as the life of Sri ***Ra:machandra***, how He ruled ***Ayo:dhya***, how He served the sages, and how He lived in exile. The least that one can do is ***sravanam***, to listen with openness and without resistance. Even such listening, done with receptivity, is enough to place one on the path toward liberation.

Therefore, never resist listening to noble practitioners, nor try to keep them away from you. ***anumo:ditho: va:*** means that at the very least, one must not obstruct anyone who is



practicing, speaking about, listening to, or even thinking about the noble practices of those who follow the *Ve:das*.

There are cynical and even malicious people who cannot tolerate others engaged in uplifting activities. They discourage and prevent others from speaking about or even thinking of doing good, as though they wish to police the minds of others. Sri Sri: *Krushna* warns us not to become such small minded people. Even if one is indifferent to the good practices of others, simply refraining from interfering with them creates inner refinement. Such tolerance itself gradually transforms a person and eventually inspires them to engage in good actions.

An episode from Sri Sri: *Krushna's avatha:r* illustrates the mindset of one who cannot tolerate the goodness of others. Kamsa ruled the great city of *Mathura*, with the river Yamuna separating it from Gokul, the small village where Sri: *Krushna* was growing joyfully among cows, *go:pas*, and *go:pis*. Though Sri: *Krushna* lived peacefully, Kamsa could not tolerate His very existence. Driven by fear and malice, he repeatedly sent demons to spy on and kill Him. Even after each demon was



destroyed, Kamsa failed to understand the danger he himself faced. Unable to bear Sri: *Krushna*'s presence, he finally invited Him to *Mathura* on the pretext of the *Dhanur ya:ga*, an act that ultimately led to his own death.

In the *Thiruppa:vai*, *A:nda:l* addresses Sri: *Krushna* in the twentyfifth *pa:sura*:

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:!

She implies that had Kamsa simply left Sri: *Krushna* alone, the Lord might have ignored him and spared his life. But Kamsa could not tolerate Sri: *Krushna*'s existence. Because of his hostile intent and actions, he brought about his own destruction. This episode clearly shows that harboring ill will toward the virtuous ultimately harms the one who holds such intentions. In this *pa:sura*, *Go:da:de:vi* extols Sri Sri: *Krushna*



as *jagathswa:mi*, the master of universe, and as the One with *di:rghavya:mo:ha*, incurable blind attachment towards His devotees. Due to His extreme affection towards the people of *Go:kul*, Sri: *Krushna* made sure Kamsa fell prey to his own evil intent that he had towards Sri: *Krushna*. In the end, Kamsa died just the way a cotton swab vaporizes when thrown into a furnace.

Therefore, even leaving those who practice good undisturbed is itself a form of service that uplifts us. *anumo:ditho va:ra:je:ndra* means that at the very least, if we appreciate *ve:dic* practices and the people who follow them, then those practices will gradually refine us and place us on the right path. The ability to appreciate goodness is called *adhve:sha*, the absence of hatred toward what is noble. *adhve:sha* is the first and essential quality for self improvement. When a person is free from hostility toward the good, interest in right practice slowly arises, and in time such a person is transformed into one of virtuous conduct.

In the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches the way of *dharma* and *karma yo:ga*. He explains that even



approving His teaching or at least refraining from criticizing it will eventually uplift a person. However, there are some who criticize His teachings. *Sisupa:la* belongs to that category.

Sisupa:la spoke ill of Sri: *Krushna*'s virtues, misrepresenting His auspicious qualities and attempting to diminish His greatness. Yet the very words he uttered became the one hundred and eight divine names that devotees chant with love. What devotees recite with devotion, *Sisupa:la* spoke with hatred. For example, devotees lovingly say, “**Om Sri: Krushna:ya namaha**” or “**Om Go:pijanavallabha:ya namaha.**” *Sisupa:la*, however, spoke the same descriptions with sarcasm, saying, “He is the beloved of the *go:pis*. He is unworthy of worship.” Devotees worship Sri: *Krushna* with flowers out of love and gratitude for His playful acts such as stealing butter. *Sisupa:la* looked at the same acts and called Him a mere thief unfit for worship. Where devotees saw divine qualities in every action, *Sisupa:la* saw faults. His vision was distorted by malice.



When two people look at the same reality and perceive it differently, the error lies not in the object but in the eye that sees it. A faulty vision alone turns virtue into fault.

A conch is naturally white. If someone insists that it appears yellow, the fault does not lie with the conch but with the person's vision, perhaps affected by jaundice. In the same way, when the Lord teaches the essence of the *Ve:da*, one should recognize that His teaching is wholesome and beneficial for the world. If instead one begins to find faults in it, the problem lies not in the teaching but in the mind afflicted by envy or jealousy, the inability to tolerate the goodness, success, or happiness of others. When jealousy intensifies, the mind begins to project defects even where none exist. For example, when a person prospers, the envious mind assumes dishonesty, even if that prosperity was earned righteously.

Freedom from envy is essential for inner growth. Only such a person becomes fit for upliftment and gradually rises above the influence of the three *gunas* of *prakruthi*. The well known couple *Anasu:ya* and Athri symbolically illustrate this truth. *Anasu:ya* represents freedom from envy, while Athri



represents the three *gunas*. One who is free from jealousy is no longer bound by their influence.

Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* concludes, “*Arjuna*, even one who simply appreciates these teachings without envy is freed from the bondage of *karma*.”

A noble person is one who is ready to receive goodness wherever it is found. *anasu:yavaḥ*, the disposition to acknowledge and appreciate good without fault finding, is the fundamental qualification for spiritual progress. Sri Sri: *Krushna* makes it clear that even one who merely appreciates *karma yo:ga* without envy is released from *ka:rmic* bondage.

At the very least, if a person does not resist *karma yo:ga*, interest will arise over time. With the Lord’s compassion and the grace of the *a:cha:rya*, that interest matures into sincere practice. In the beginning, mistakes may occur. But when the effort arises from genuine willingness, the person seeks guidance from the learned and the wise, who help correct and refine the practice. Gradually, through such guidance, the seeker gains clarity and ultimately attains true knowledge.



Therefore, one who acknowledges Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s teachings and His intent, and either practices *karma yo:ga*, develops interest in it, or at least maintains a positive attitude toward it, will gradually become free from *ka:rmic* bondage. On the other hand, there is no liberation for those who neither practice *karma yo:ga* nor show any interest in learning it, nor appreciate its value. The basic qualification for liberation is faith in Sri Sri: *Krushna* and His teaching.

What does it mean to have faith in Sri: *Krushna*?

Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that this entire universe, consisting of sentient and insentient beings, functions because the Lord dwells in everything. Therefore, the universe belongs to Him. It is the *se:sha* and He is the *se:shi*. Since He abides in all and sustains their functioning, He is the inner Self of the universe. This entire universe is His body. Therefore, all favorable and unfavorable results of actions truly belong to Him and not to the individual body. When this understanding is gained, the individual remains free from anxiety, disappointment, and stress. Therefore, accepting Sri: *Krushna* as *se:shi* is said to have faith in Him.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* then explains the consequence of not accepting Him as the true doer and enjoyer. He describes the loss incurred by those who lack faith in Him, who do not surrender doership and enjoyership to Him, and who do not perform actions as an offering to Him:

***ye:thv e:thad abhya:su:yantho: na:nu
thishttanthi me: matham |
sarvajna:na vimu:dda:m stha:n viddhi nashta:n
ache:thasaha || 3.32 ||***

Sri: *Krushna* says, “*Arjuna*, those who disregard My teaching, who do not accept Me as the indwelling Lord and the master of the universe, and who do not follow the path of *karma yo:ga*, such people, being fault finding or envious, refuse to practice. Claiming doership, enjoyership, and ownership for themselves, they become deluded by ego.” Such persons are described earlier as ***ahanka:ra vimu:dha:thma***.

These individuals suffer loss in every way. ***sarvajna:navimu:da:mstha:n*** means they become confused not only about the knowledge of the Self, but also



about the purpose of the body and the proper understanding of the world. Their confusion is total.

Once decline begins, degradation becomes gradual and continuous. Just as a fruit falls to the ground once separated from the vine, a person disconnected from right understanding steadily falls from their higher state. It is like the river Ganga, which is supposed to reside at higher states, falling all the way to the *pa:tha:la*, the netherworld. Despite having obtained a rare human birth, the most valuable opportunity for growth, they descend due to ignorance, negligence, envy, and lack of faith. They lose knowledge of the Self, knowledge of *prakruthi*, and ultimately lose clarity about their own true nature. Therefore Sri: *Krushna* says, ***viddhi nashta:nache:thasaha***, they lose everything due to lack of discrimination.

Here, loss does not always mean destruction, but disappearance from awareness. ***nas adarsane:*** means that something becomes unseen or unavailable. Just as the loss of money or the loss of a tree means it is no longer visible or



accessible, in the same way the higher knowledge becomes absent from one's awareness.

In this context, loss means a transformation in which something no longer retains its original form and function. When a tree dries up and its trunk, branches, leaves, and fruits wither away, turning into mere wood or fuel, we say the tree is lost. The substance may remain, but its identity and purpose as a living tree have disappeared.

Similarly, a person today may call himself human. ***viddhi nashta:n*** means that such a status can be lost. If one lives without faith in Sri: *Krushna* and without aligning with His teaching, one may not obtain a human birth again. Instead, one may be born in lower states of existence. As stated elsewhere, ***a:suri:m yo:nim a:panna: mu:da: janmani janmani***, those of deluded disposition repeatedly take birth in lower wombs.

Due to envy and jealousy, a person becomes increasingly governed by the *gunas* of prakruthi. *Rajas* grows stronger, and over time thamas becomes dominant. thamas produces



ignorance, inertia, and confusion. When thamas becomes firmly established, the capacity for higher understanding diminishes. In extreme cases, the being descends into states where conscious awareness is almost absent. ***ache:thasaha*** indicates the loss of discriminative awareness. Thus they are said to be lost, not because existence ends, but because clarity and higher opportunity disappear. They end up being born as stones, rocks, other insentient objects.

To prevent anyone from falling to such a condition, Lord Sri Krishna strongly urges the practice of *karma yo:ga*. He instructs human beings to engage in ordained duties while transforming their actions into worship. He teaches that actions must be performed as *yajna*. At the beginning of the third chapter He says, ***saha yajnai:h praja:s srushtva: puro:va:cha praja:pathihi***, indicating that along with human birth, the capacity to convert action into sacred offering was also granted.

Therefore Sri Sri: *Krushna* clarifies the proper way to practice the *Ve:da* ordained duties. He explains that there are two types of seekers who desire liberation from *ka:rmic* bondage. One



group follows *karma yo:ga*, and another pursues *jna:na yo:ga*. Yet Sri: *Krushna* also demonstrates through enlightened beings and through His own example that even those qualified for *jna:na yo:ga* must not abandon action. Whoever is born as a human must practice *karma yo:ga*. In this third chapter, Sri: *Krushna* presents three clear reasons for this teaching.

1. *karma yo:ga* is easy to practice.
2. Practicing *karma yo:ga* causes no disruption because we are already accustomed to performing actions in our daily lives. In contrast, unfamiliar disciplines demand great effort and often become obstacles rather than aids. *karma yo:ga* works with our natural disposition instead of opposing it.
3. *karma yo:ga* directly removes sorrow and grief, and in due course bestows a stable state of inner clarity. This gradually matures into self-realization and ultimately leads to God-realization.

Ever compassionate Sri Sri: *Krushna Parama:thma* clearly presents these as the primary reasons why *karma yo:ga* alone is practical and worthy of pursuit.



Hardships of *jna:na yo:ga*

In contrast, *jna:na yo:ga* is not suitable for practice even for those who may be qualified to pursue it. The reason is that it is extremely difficult to accomplish and demands intense effort *accompanied* by many hardships. Moreover, *jna:na yo:ga* carries inherent risks. At any moment, the practitioner may falter and fall from the path. Although *jna:na yo:ga* can directly lead to self-realization, it also possesses the potential to cause a downfall at any stage and under any circumstance.

Apart from all these considerations, Sri Sri: *Krushna* gives a fundamental reason why *jna:na yo:ga* cannot be adopted as the primary path. As long as the *ji:va* is embodied, it must perform actions for the maintenance and journey of the body. The senses are constantly active, and the body naturally functions through *karma*. Therefore, only *karma yo:ga* is appropriate and feasible. This principle applies especially to ordinary seekers.

Sri: *Krushna* further explains that even distinguished and enlightened individuals must continue to practice *karma yo:ga*



in the same manner as ordinary seekers. Though they have attained realization, they engage in action without attachment to results in order to guide others by example. This responsibility of sustaining the moral and spiritual order of the world is known as *lo:kasangraham*.

Beginning with the thirty third verse, Lord Sri: *Krushna* elaborates on the challenges of *jna:na yo:ga* and the difficulties encountered by those who attempt to abandon *karma yo:ga* under the assumption that action is no longer necessary.

***sadrusham che:shtathe: svasya:ha prakruthe:h
jna:nava:napi |
prakruthim ya:nthi bhu:tha:ni nigrahah kim
karishyathi || 3.33 ||***

We must understand the challenges inherent in *jna:na yo:ga* so that we may avoid it as an independent pursuit and instead embrace *karma yo:ga*. The profound irony is that when *karma yo:ga* is practiced correctly, *jna:na yo:ga* naturally arises along with it.



For example, imagine a person climbing a staircase of one hundred steps to reach a lofty goal. After reaching the ninety eighth step, the person becomes exhausted and stops. Those who are climbing along with him naturally encourage and support him to complete the remaining steps. In the same way, out of abundant mercy, the Lord gives us the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. Having already attained the highest and rarest birth, the human birth, He instructs us so that we do not engage in degenerative actions that pull us downward, but instead conduct ourselves in a manner that enables us to rise to higher states in the next birth. *ve:dic* scriptures declare that obtaining a human birth is extremely rare and difficult, and the *Upanishads* affirm this truth through numerous illustrations.

A *ji:va* passes through millions of births before attaining a human birth. After receiving a human birth, the *ji:va* becomes qualified to progress to a higher state where there is no need for another birth. From this point, only a few more steps remain to bring the cycle of birth and death to an end. Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s objective is to help human beings escape this cycle



altogether. Therefore, out of His boundless compassion, He bestows the supreme teaching of the *Gi:tha* upon the entire human race, guiding them to live in a way that leads to true prosperity.

Every individual has a natural tendency to claim ownership of actions and to desire the enjoyment of their results. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that this very desire marks the first step toward human downfall. Actions inevitably produce results, whether or not one seeks them. A farmer may cultivate the land without any immediate intention of enjoying the harvest, yet as the work continues, the crop inevitably grows and yields results. ***In the same manner, when people perform their duties without claiming doership and without nurturing false pride, their expectation for results gradually diminishes.***

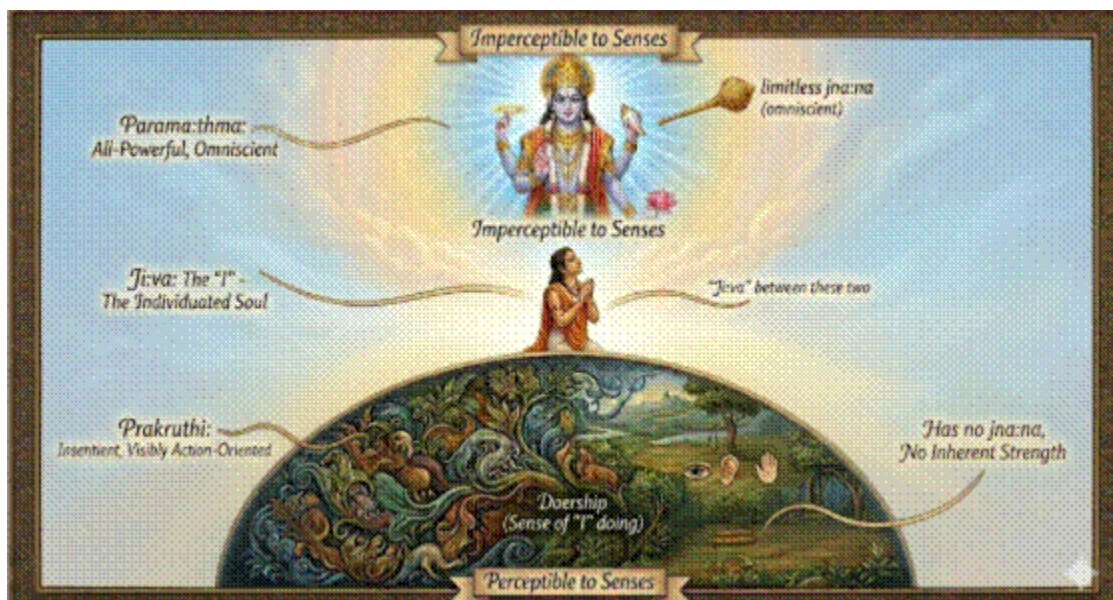
On the other hand, when we hold expectations for results, we must necessarily experience them, which implies taking another birth. Yet no one can be certain what form that next birth will take. It may be as an animal, a tree, a stone, or some other lower state, causing a fall from the elevated position of



human birth that we presently possess. No one wishes to follow such a path of degeneration.

Therefore, it becomes essential to give up expectations for the results of our efforts. This is possible only when we gradually reduce our attachment to actions. Attachment diminishes only when the sense of doership is slowly weakened. At this point *Arjuna* asks, “What should I do if I decide not to take the credit of doership?” Sri Sri: *Krushna* replies, “You can relinquish doership in two ways.”

What are the two ways?





First, we must understand that there are only three entities in existence. The first is the one who says ‘I,’ the *ji:va*. The second is *prakruthi*. The third is *Parama:thma*. Among these three, *prakruthi* possesses no *jna:na*. *Parama:thma*, on the other hand, is endowed with perfect and limitless *jna:na* and is omniscient. *prakruthi* has no inherent strength, whereas *Parama:thma* is all powerful. *prakruthi* is extremely weak, while *Parama:thma* is supremely strong. The *ji:va* stands between these two.

Parama:thma is imperceptible to the five senses, while *prakruthi* is perceptible. Sri: *Krushna* explains that the first step is to relinquish the sense of doership to that which is visible, namely *prakruthi*. *Arjuna* raises a doubt and asks how he can place responsibility on *prakruthi* and still feel that he himself is not the doer of actions.

Understanding *Arjuna*’s concern, Sri Sri: *Krushna* recognizes a deeper hesitation. *Arjuna* may assume that since *prakruthi* is devoid of *jna:na* and inherently weak, it should be possible for him to control it. The *ji:va*, though far weaker than *Parama:thma*, still possesses *jna:na* and is stronger than



prakruthi. Therefore, *Arjuna* wonders why the responsibility for action should be placed on *prakruthi*, which appears weaker than himself. He is inclined to retain doership while attempting to govern *prakruthi*.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* responds by clarifying the true position. If *prakruthi* were independent, then attempting to control it would not be inappropriate. However, *prakruthi* is not independent. It functions entirely under His rule. When something weak is supported by a supremely strong power, it no longer remains weak. Under such support, it becomes impossible for another to dominate it.

Sri: *Krushna* illustrates this with examples from common experience. A weak individual can easily be subdued by someone slightly stronger. But when that same individual gains the backing of a far stronger authority, no one can suppress him. In society, a person with little influence suddenly becomes powerful when supported by a strong leader. Though weak by himself, with powerful support he behaves as one who is strong.



Sri: *Krushna* therefore concludes that although *prakruthi* is weak by nature, because it operates under His governance, it becomes invincible to the *ji:va*. For this reason, *prakruthi* can never be subdued or controlled by individual effort.

He further explains this principle through familiar analogies. A train is an insentient object, yet when it is in motion under the control of a knowledgeable driver, it becomes immensely powerful. The passengers have no ability to control it. Similarly, an airplane is merely an insentient assembly of metal, engines, and components. Yet when it is governed by a skilled pilot, it is capable of traversing vast distances through the sky. The passengers have no authority over its movement. In the same way, *prakruthi*, though insentient, becomes powerful when directed by *Parama:thma*, and no *ji:va* can claim control over it.

In Sanskrit literature, scholars narrate an instructive story. A cobra and an eagle are natural enemies. The eagle, being more powerful, instills fear in the cobra, causing it to flee at the mere sight of the bird. However, when Lord Siva places a cobra around His neck, the cobra becomes fearless and powerful.



When Siva and Vishnu meet, the cobra neither flees nor fears Garuda, the eagle who serves as Vishnu's vehicle. Instead, the cobra confidently strikes up a conversation with Garuda, saying, "Hi mister Garuda, how are you?"

ni:thi sa:sthra, the science of right conduct, ethics, and wise living, captures this principle in the verse:

***ni:cha:srayo: na khalu karthavyaha karthavyo:
mahadasrayaha payo:pi saundaki:hasthe:
va:runi:thyabhidhi:yathe:***

One should not take refuge in what is inferior but should seek the shelter of the great. Even milk, when held in the hand of Saundika:, turns into liquor. The cobra gains strength and fearlessness because it is supported by the mighty Lord Siva.

Sri: *Krushna* conveys a similar truth to *Arjuna*. He explains that since *prakruthi* is under His control, *Arjuna* cannot suppress it. If one assumes *prakruthi* to be weaker and attempts to dominate it, it will never come under control. One should never attempt to do so because *prakruthi* is backed by the powerful Lord Himself.



Arjuna then asks, “What should I do?”

Sri: *Krushna* responds, “Either leave the responsibility to Me or leave it to *prakruthi*, which is visible to you. Since *prakruthi* itself is under My control, it is better to leave the responsibility to Me. ***mayi sarva:ni karma:ni sanyasya***. If you leave the responsibility to Me, I will ensure that the activities do not harm you such as creating *ka:rmic* bondage.”

Arjuna raises a doubt. “Is it not unfair to think that God is responsible for our actions? The scriptures and the enlightened declare that God is an ocean of mercy and a treasure of grace. How, then, can we say that You are responsible for all the hardships that *ji:vas* undergo? Why would You cause us pain? Would it not be unjust to place that responsibility on You?”

Sri: *Krushna* replies, “It is all right. Whether it is pain or pleasure, if you leave the responsibility to Me, I will ensure that it does not harm you in any way. There are only two entities to whom responsibility can be entrusted, either Me or



prakruthi. Entrusting it to Me is superior because I will ensure that everything proceeds smoothly.”

Sri: *Krushna* further assures *Arjuna* that if responsibility is placed in His hands, not only the present actions but even past actions will no longer bind him. He will render them inactive so that *Arjuna* may attain the *a:thma jna:na* he seeks. As a result, even deeply rooted *ka:rmic* impressions in the mind will gradually be erased.

It must be remembered that Sri: *Krushna* imparts the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* to a *mumukshu*, one who seeks *a:thma jna:na* and liberation from *ka:rmic* bondage. For those who are not interested in *mo:ksha* and instead wish to experience *karma* and its results, God does not offer such instruction. The *Gi:tha* is not taught to those uninterested in self-realization or God-realization.

This leads to the final question. What is truly lost if one continues to experience *karma*, or if one believes that *karma* can be eliminated through one’s own effort alone?



Sri: *Krushna* responds, “Then it pulls them further down into a vicious cycle of repeated births, *karma*, and experiences. God is helpless if one insists on choosing the path of deterioration. However, He fully supports the one whose goal is to rise to a higher state. *prakruthi* cannot experience itself. Likewise, the *ji:va* cannot experience *prakruthi* independently. It is Sri: *Krushna* who enables the *ji:va* to experience *prakruthi*. If you place your responsibility upon Me, I will deploy *prakruthi* in a beneficial manner, aligned with your past and present *ka:rmic* records.”

Sri: *Krushna* further explains, “In addition, I will ensure that *prakruthi* is experienced in a way that does not obstruct your *a:thma jna:na*. As a result, the path toward self-realization becomes smooth. On the contrary, if you believe that you can handle *prakruthi* on your own, then your vast *ka:rmic* records accumulated from the past will never allow you to act according to your choice. Even a *jna:nava:n*, a realized soul, acts according to his own *prakruthi*.”

Here Sri Sri: *Krushna* is not referring only to a completely self-realized person, a *jna:nava:n*. We may even consider a



mumukshu, one who sincerely desires liberation. Even after learning *ve:dic* teachings and willingly attempting to practice them, such a person's behavior continues to be governed by *prakruthi* and their accumulated *ka:rmic* records. No one can control *prakruthi* independently.



ve:dic knowledge represents logic, whereas *prakruthi* represents practice. Between logic and practice, most people assume logic to be the stronger influence. However, Sri Sri: *Krushna* clarifies that *ka:rmic* records exert a far stronger force. He illustrates this through analogies.



If we drop a handful of salt into a raging river, the salt has absolutely no influence on the river's flow. Instead, it is immediately carried away by the powerful currents. Similarly, the *ve:dic* scriptures state that the *ka:rmic* records of a *ji:va* are accumulated over millions and billions of cycles of birth and death. These records are immeasurable and resemble a raging river.

While being carried along by this immense river of *ka:rmic* impressions, by God's grace the *ji:va* attains a human birth. In that human birth, the *ji:va* comes into association with a good person. Not merely a good person, but an enlightened one who can impart knowledge of *Parama:thma* and His true nature. Among such enlightened beings, it is even rarer to find someone who, out of abundant compassion, is willing to correct us and guide us onto the right path. Rarer still is the opportunity to receive *ve:dic* knowledge from such a person.

Even if one is fortunate enough to meet such an enlightened guide, the knowledge received is still comparable to a handful of salt before a raging river.



Therefore, just as a handful of salt, sand, or sugar cannot influence a raging river, the little spiritual knowledge gained in a single birth can never impact the beginningless *ka:rmic* records if one attempts realization through personal effort alone.

Then how are the beginningless *ka:rmic* records erased? First, one must not renounce action, but instead become aware of the responsibilities that must be carried out through the body and put them into practice. Second, one must recognize that God is the master of both the body and the *ji:va*. Third, one should perform all responsibilities as commands of God and offer the fruits of those actions at the Lord's divine feet.

In the Sri *Ra:ma:yana*, *Bharatha* declares that both the *ji:va* and the body worn by the *ji:va* belong to the *Parama:thma*. After the last rites of *Dasharattha* were performed, Vasishta and the other sages advised *Bharatha* to accept the kingdom. *Bharatha* then expressed his thoughtful view:

“*Ra:machandra* possesses two things. First, this kingdom. Second, all sentient and insentient beings *within* this



kingdom. If everything belongs to Him, how can one object rule another? How can you ask me to rule the kingdom? If you ask the kingdom to rule me, will it be able to do so?”

The kingdom is insentient and cannot rule *Bharatha*. Similarly, although *Bharatha* is a sentient being, since he himself belongs to *Ra:ma*, the kingdom has no authority over him. Only *Ra:ma* has the authority to rule both the sentient and the insentient. Therefore, let us go at once and request *Ra:ma* to return to the kingdom so that He may be crowned and rule over us and this land. Saying this, *Bharatha* led the people of *Ayo:dhya* in search of *Ra:ma*.

As *Bharatha* conveyed, both sentient and insentient beings belong to the *Parama:thma*. Insentient objects have no knowledge and are therefore always under God’s control. Sentient beings, on the other hand, possess awareness and must use that awareness to realize God and remain constantly connected with Him.

Thus, even though sentient beings appear superior, neither sentient nor insentient can function without the Lord’s will.



The *ji:va*, though endowed with knowledge, can never control *prakruthi* and should not attempt to do so. Many modern scientists attempt to control nature, yet we see that they too perish in its powerful flow. History shows that those who sought to conquer nature or attain immortality through such efforts have ultimately perished.

Reasons for a *jna:n*'s downfall

Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs, “Instead of trying to control nature out of arrogance, it is better to acknowledge God and offer the sense of doership with an attitude of complete dependence and service to Him.”

If anyone objects to this, Sri: *Krushna* clarifies, “No matter how much spiritual knowledge one gains, they are ultimately carried away by the raging flow of *prakruthi*. No one can withstand *prakruthi*—*sadrusham che:shtathe svasya:ha prakruthe:h jna:nava:napi.*”



The reason is that our spiritual knowledge is very limited in comparison to the beginningless *ka:rmic* records. As a result, we function according to these records. Usually, we do not realize the outcome of our actions until after they are completed. Only then do we see that we should have acted differently. Yet, knowing this after the fact is of no practical use. *karma* is powerful and is the driving force behind our actions. Therefore, we act according to its command.

In the Sri *Ra:ma:yana*, Sage *Va:lmi:ki* presents a scenario where even the most composed *Ra:ma* becomes helpless and falls prey to *prakruthi*. When *Ra:va:na:sura* abducts *Si:tha: pira:tti*, both *Ra:ma* and *Lakshmana* search every mountain, every forest corner, every hill, river, and stream. Despite their exhaustive search, when they cannot find *Si:tha: pira:tti*, even the most composed *Ra:ma* becomes enraged and succumbs to anger.

In another situation, after *Ra:ma* defeats *Ra:va:na:sura*, *Si:tha: pira:tti* argues with *Hanuma:n*, saying that all the troubles occurred because *Ra:ma* had teased *Su:rpanakha*. She explains that no one born on Earth can avoid making



mistakes. Even the composed *Ra:ma* could not avoid making an error that brought grave consequences.

This demonstrates that no matter how wise a person is, they will become helpless in the face of the *ka:rmic* records.

In the Sri *Ra:ma:yan*, Sage *Va:lmiki*, while describing the nature of *Ra:machandra*, uses the term ***jitha-kro:dhaha***, meaning ‘one who has mastered or won over anger.’ Some people mistakenly believe that mastering anger means never feeling anger at all. This is incorrect, because if one never feels anger, they cannot truly be considered alive. For example, no matter how much one insults or strikes a rock, it never gets angry—but we do not consider a rock alive. Therefore, for a living being, anger is a natural emotion.

So what does it truly mean to *win over anger*? It means that anger becomes a conscious choice. A person may feel anger, but only when they choose to summon it—and they can let it go at will. A common example is a loving mother correcting her child: she may deliberately express anger when the child



errs, but once the lesson is taught, her anger naturally dissipates, and she continues to care for the child.

Even *Ra:macandra*, despite being *jitha-kro:dhaha*, experienced anger on one occasion. While searching for the abducted Mother *Si:tha*, overwhelmed by fury, He declared:

**“karishye: maitthili: he:tho:h apisa:cham
ara:kshasam** – Since they have separated *Si:tha* from Me, I will ensure that the demons and *ra:kshasas* do not exist in the world.”

**“na:saya:mi jagath sarvam thrailo:kyam sa
chara:charam** – Not just this world, but I will destroy all three worlds, all sentient and insentient beings.”

Drawing the *Brahma:sthra*, the supreme destructive weapon, He proclaimed:

**“de:va gandharva lo:ka:mscha
viche:shya:massama:hitha:h
ya:vanna:dhigamishya:masthava**



bha:rya:paha:rinam – Not only sentient and insentient beings, but I will destroy everything.”

Even though He is called ***jitha-kro:dhaha***, the one who has mastered anger, ***Ra:machandra*** allowed Himself to be carried away by righteous fury for the sake of Mother ***Si:tha***. Then ***Lakshmana***, who embodies controlled anger, interceded and said:

“na kro:dhavasama:pannaha prakruthim he:thumarhasi – Brother, You are overwhelmed by anger. It is obscuring Your natural state of peaceful calm. Do not let it take control.”

Lakshmana continued:

“e:kasya na:para:dhe:na lo:ka:n hanthum thvamarhasi – Someone has committed a mistake. It is not fair to let anger destroy the entire world for the fault of one.”

It is natural for humans to err when swept away by ***prakruthi***. However, the wise listen to the counsel of learned scholars, friends, and ***companions*** to return to a balanced state.



Similarly, *Ra:machandra* felt remorseful and possessed the wisdom to discern and embrace what is right:

**“sa:ra gra:hi maha:sa:ram prathijagra:ha
ra:ghavaha”** —

He immediately grasped the essential teaching in *Lakshmana*’s words.

What *Lakshmana* spoke was ***maha:sa:ra***—timely and essential guidance. *Ra:machandra* accepted it without hesitation, embodying the ideal of one who masters anger, yet remains fully human.

Sri Ra:machandra, while controlling His anger, tried to correct Himself and said, **“Sannigruhya maha:ba:hu
pravrutthim ko:pama:thmanaha** – All right, let us go search further.”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* then explained, “*prakruthi* has the power to take control, no matter how knowledgeable one is. *Arjuna*, it is a mistake to think that you can control *prakruthi* on your own. If someone like *Ra:ma* could be influenced by *prakruthi*,



it is obvious that ordinary people are even more helpless before it.

“Therefore, surrender the sense of doership to Me,” said Lord Krishna.

One might ask, since humans are intelligent, can they not use their intelligence to control *prakruthi*? Intelligence can make us aware of right and wrong, but the body carries habits. These habits give rise to new *karmas*, and these *karmas* can lead to downfall. In this third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that the only way to erase our *karmas* and attain liberation is to perform actions as prescribed by the *ve:dic* scriptures while leaving the sense of doership to Him. Such actions, performed in this spirit, are called *yajnas*.

Although we naturally possess *jna:na* and intelligence, *prakruthi* and the nature of the body sometimes suppress this *jna:na*. This applies even to noble and virtuous individuals, as can be seen from the life of *Ra:machandra*.

Who is responsible for *Ra:machandra*'s exile?



When *Lakshmana* questioned why Mother Kaikayi had to send Him into exile, *Ra:ma* replied that it was not a mistake of Kaikayi or anyone else. It was only the divine intention. The divine gives us only what is beneficial. Thus, *Ra:machandra* surrendered the doership to the divine, recognizing that ultimate responsibility rests with God alone.

As for Mother Kaikayi, *Ra:machandra* always held affection for her without any resentment.

Once in the forest, during the cold of *Dhanurma:sam* and winter, *Lakshmana*, wishing to cheer *Ra:ma*, began talking about *Bharatha*. He said, “Brother Rama, *Bharatha* must be struggling a great deal.”

Bharatha used to avoid bathing in the river Sarayu after daybreak. The reason was that if others came and saw him, he would have to hear their painful words: “Because of this person, Ra:ma had to go into exile.” To avoid causing sorrow to others and to himself, *Bharatha* would go to the river at unusual hours, around 2 or 3 in the morning, when no one was present.



Moreover, *Bharatha* could not bear the separation from *Ra:ma*. The sight of sunlight only intensified his inner anguish, so he avoided the daytime altogether. To cool his burning heart, he would reach the river before the sun's rays touched the water and bathed in the frigid waters.

Lakshmana continues, “Poor *Bharatha*! He must be going through such hardship. He is a gentle, delicate soul who was raised in comfort at his uncle's palace, and now he has to suffer like this.”

Overcome with affection for *Bharatha*, *Lakshmana* was about to speak harshly about Kaikayi: “Brother, all this happened because of that Kaikeyi...”

Immediately *Ra:ma* stopped him.

“*na the:mba: madhyama: tha:tha garhitavya: katthanchana* — there is no need to blame our middle mother Kaikayi. Why speak ill of her unnecessarily? What wrong did she truly commit? If you wish to speak, speak good words about *Bharatha*. I will listen joyfully. *Bharatha* is a great devotee, and your words become auspicious when you glorify



the qualities of a devotee. There is no need to blame Mother Kaikayi.”

Ra:ma became slightly upset with *Lakshmana*.

Ra:ma is the embodiment of discernment, love, and compassion. Not only does He control His own mind, but He also guides *Lakshmana* away from blame and bitterness. In this way, *Ra:ma* expresses affection toward Mother Kaikayi while restraining His disappointment toward her.

Does this mean *Ra:ma* had no anger at all toward Kaikayi?

No — He did feel anger toward her, but He restrained it and did not allow it to manifest outwardly. We know this from another incident.

Usually, when a person is overwhelmed by intense emotions such as anger, love, desire, or grief, their true feelings surface naturally. When emotions are mild, they can be easily concealed. But when they become powerful, suppression becomes difficult.



We see that *Ra:ma*'s restrained anger toward Kaikayi emerged when He was overwhelmed by the grief of separation from Mother *Si:tha*.

While searching for Mother *Si:tha*, *Ra:ma* and *Lakshmana* were heading toward *Jata:yu*, the bird who was on the verge of death before delivering the news of *Ra:vana*.

As they walked, *Ra:ma*, overcome with grief, said, “Hey *Lakshmana*, we have been searching for *Si:tha* without success. I cannot see how we will succeed in finding her. I do not see myself alive even for a moment without *Si:tha*. I assure you, I will die soon. Once I die, there is no point in you roaming the forest. Therefore, you need to return to *Ayo:dhya*.”

Ra:ma continued, “When you go back and deliver the news to our people, Mother Kaikayi will be overjoyed. She will be thrilled to learn that her wish has finally been fulfilled. She will think that *Bharatha* will never lose the kingdom and that she will enjoy the honor of being the mother of the emperor *Bharatha*. Kaikayi always dreamed of her son becoming king



and remaining king so that she could continuously enjoy the privileges of being the emperor's mother. Thinking this way, she sent us into exile. Therefore, *Bharatha* becoming king brings her happiness, while our exile gives her satisfaction."

If we examine *Ra:ma*'s words, it does not seem that he is truly angry at Kaikayi. Yet, understanding that his words arose from despair and sorrow, we can sense a trace of anger toward her. However, He immediately controlled Himself.

Drawing an example from *Ra:ma*'s life, Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, "*Arjuna*, there is no escape from the influence of *prakruthi* and *ka:rmic* records. Every living being born on this Earth will be affected by *prakruthi*. The little spiritual knowledge we acquire in one birth is often insufficient."

Sage *Viswa:mithra* is no ordinary person. He is so great that he did a parallel creation. He possessed immense spiritual knowledge, yet it was of little use against the pull of his past *karma*. Traveling in different directions to observe penance, he was repeatedly disturbed by his *ka:rmic* records, which prevented him from achieving his intended results. Yet, he was



wise and resolute, and ultimately he reached a state where he could no longer be harmed or disturbed.

When did he achieve this? It was when Sage *Viswa:mithra* surrendered responsibility to God. Initially, he believed he could control *prakruthi*, but *prakruthi* continually pulled him in different directions. *Sunasse:pa*, *Me:naka*, and Thrishanku all distracted him and diverted him from his goal.

Viswa:mithra ultimately surrendered all his knowledge and mastery of weapons, including the disciplines of ***Bala*** and ***Athibala***, to *Ra:machandra*. Only after relinquishing the sense of being the doer and placing the entire responsibility upon *Ra:ma*, and observing the ***shadra:thra vratha***, a six-night spiritual and a religious observance, did he attain ***siddhi***, realization of truth or liberation. The *Ra:ma:yana* demonstrates that *Viswa:mithra*'s earlier attempts to control nature through his own power led to his failure. Therefore, even if one acquires vast knowledge, deeply ingrained habits can still pull one down.



Many people know that sugar is unhealthy, yet the moment sweets are placed before them, they instinctively reach for them. In the same way, a person may understand that one should not trample a mat or pluck leaves while seated, yet the hand moves almost unconsciously. Scripture clearly teaches that harming living beings leads to suffering, and yet deeply rooted tendencies, *va:sana:s*, compel people to consume meat even when they recognize that taking life is wrong. This pattern is seen even among those who possess considerable knowledge. The distance between what one knows and how one behaves reveals the powerful hold of ingrained habits.

A story illustrates this clearly. A rat and a scorpion were being swept away by a river. The rat knew how to swim, but the scorpion did not. The scorpion pleaded with the rat to carry it across. The rat hesitated, fearing that it would be stung. The scorpion argued that if it stung the rat, both of them would drown, and so the rat reluctantly agreed. As they were crossing the river, the scorpion stung the rat midway. Shocked and in pain, the rat asked why it had done so. The scorpion replied that although it understood the consequences and knew it



should not sting, stinging was its nature. Knowledge belonged to reason, but action followed ingrained habit.

In the same way, even with great intelligence and spiritual knowledge, it is exceedingly difficult to overcome the influence of the *gunas* of the body and to counter the force of accumulated *ka:rmic* impressions through personal effort alone. Attempting to conquer them solely by one's own strength is both demanding and exhausting. When confronted with this reality, a natural question arises: what then should one do?

Sri Sri: *Krushna* declares, “***mayi sarva:ni karma:ni sannnyasya***, entrust all actions to Me. Do not hand them over to *prakruthi*. If you surrender the sense of doership to Me, I will take care of you. Being all powerful, I will ensure that your actions do not bind or harm you. At the same time, I will reshape *prakruthi* in such a way that your accumulated *ka:rmic* impressions are gradually exhausted. Therefore, cease trying to control *prakruthi* by your own limited strength and place your trust in Me.”



prakruthim ya:nti bhu:tha:ni nigraha kim karishyathi - teaches that every being acts under the compelling force of *prakruthi*. No one can fully control or suppress it by personal effort. In the third chapter, Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* makes it clear that knowledge alone, whether scriptural or spiritual, does not by itself uplift a person. Anyone born on this earth is subject to its laws. Even when the Lord incarnates in an *avatha:r*, He abides by these laws. Yet through His conduct He demonstrates how one may gradually transcend *prakruthi*, and in many *avatha:rs* He gives direct instruction on the path to liberation.

Our *rushis* offer a powerful analogy to show how difficult it is to assume doership and independently control *prakruthi*. They say that such an attempt is like the insentient Vindhya mountains trying to swim across the ocean. In other words, it is impossible to overpower *prakruthi* by one's own strength. No embodied being can claim complete mastery over the senses. In the verse ***sadrusam che:shtathe***, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that the senses do not obediently follow us; rather, they pull us away, disregarding even our knowledge.



In “*prakruthim ya:nthi bhu:tha:ni,*” *bhu:tha:ni* refers to all beings. However, this teaching is especially directed toward humans, because other beings are entirely carried by *prakruthi* without the capacity for deliberate spiritual effort. Human birth alone offers the possibility of liberation. Yet even humans continue to act under the influence of beginningless *ka:rmic* impressions. They may appear to exercise control, but the deeper forces of *prakruthi* still govern them. “*nigrahaḥ kim karishyathi*” asks, what can mere suppression accomplish. At best, one may restrain these tendencies temporarily, but *prakruthi* inevitably reasserts itself.

Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* presents the true solution as surrender. Place the burden upon Me. I act on your behalf. I guide you according to your *karma*. In this way, *karma* is experienced and gradually exhausted. As *karma* is exhausted, *a:thma jna:na* arises. When knowledge arises fully, liberation follows. Without surrendering doership to the Divine, *karma* cannot be removed in a manner that allows *a:thma jna:na* to



function unobstructed. One then remains bound to the cycle of birth and death.

Thus one must recognize the immense power of *prakruthi*. Even when we know what is right, the force of accumulated *va:sana:s* repeatedly pulls us downward. Personal effort has its limits. Many resolve to live a noble and disciplined life, yet find themselves slipping again and again under the weight of past impressions.

Here is an illustration - A forest dweller who had hunted for many years once received spiritual instruction and resolved to lead a saintly life. He put on saffron robes, withdrew into the forest, and began practicing penance beneath a tree.

One day, a man came running past, trying to catch a turtle. Though the turtle moved slowly, it repeatedly escaped because of its hard shell. Disturbed by the noise, the sage opened his eyes. Drawing unconsciously upon his former life as a hunter, he advised the man on how to kill the turtle. He suggested turning it over and striking its soft underbelly.



As one who had embraced nonviolence, there was no need for the sage to offer such advice. He could have remained silent and detached. Yet his old habits resurfaced and overpowered his present resolve. This incident shows how deeply ingrained tendencies can continue to influence a person, even after outward transformation. It illustrates the truth that old habits are not easily erased.

Another example conveys the same lesson. A man once took a vow at *Ka:si* to renounce mangoes in memory of the departed. Although he resolved not to eat them, he found himself advising others about which varieties were superior. At the marketplace, he eagerly discussed their quality and taste. Though he had physically renounced mangoes, the impressions of their flavor remained in his mind. Those lingering tendencies continued to shape his behavior without his awareness.

In this way, *prakruthi* pulls a person along, even against conscious intention. Because of its force, one may slip into harmful or undesirable actions despite sincerely wishing to act otherwise.



Here is another illustration. The Panchathanthra narrates a story about a bear and a man who both sought refuge in a tree to escape a lion. One night, a lion chased them toward the tree. The bear climbed to an upper branch, while the man settled on a lower one. The lion remained below, waiting patiently for an opportunity to attack.

The bear looked down at the frightened man and invited him to climb higher so they could share the branches and take turns sleeping. The bear reasoned that both were in equal danger and neither could descend until the lion left. He offered to remain awake and guard the man while he slept first, asking that the favor be returned later. The man agreed and fell asleep while the bear kept watch.

After some time, the bear rested and the man took his turn staying awake. Seeing this, the lion began to whisper to the man, urging him to push the bear down so that the lion could have its meal. The man was educated and knew from scripture that harming one who has offered protection is wrong. Yet fear and the stirring of old tendencies almost drove him to betray



the bear. Overcome by anxiety and temptation, he attempted to push the bear from the branch.

The bear, however, held firmly and climbed back to safety. Instead of retaliating, he gently reproached the man, explaining that his past tendencies had momentarily clouded his judgment. The bear acted with restraint and caused no harm.

This story reveals how human beings, despite possessing knowledge and moral understanding, can allow fear and ingrained tendencies to override reason. Even when aware of what is right, old habits may tempt one toward harmful action. Knowledge alone does not guarantee right conduct unless one has mastery over one's inner tendencies.

When inner tendencies are aligned with *dharma* and goodness, they guide a person toward righteous action even in the midst of hardship and adversity. Conversely, when those tendencies lean toward *adharma* and wrongdoing, they drive a person toward improper conduct even while surrounded by comfort and prosperity.



A simple observance such as ***a:chamanam*** demonstrates how deeply conditioned behavior operates. ***a:chamanam*** is performed before beginning any sacred activity. The rules prescribe forming the hand in ***gokarna:kruthi***, sipping water through the ***bramhadva:ra*** beneath the thumb, reciting specific ***manthras***, sitting facing east or north, drinking silently, and refraining from wiping the hand on the head afterward. Most people remember to sit in the proper direction, maintain silence, and hold the hand correctly. Yet immediately after sipping, some instinctively wipe their hand on their head, thereby violating the final injunction. Even though the ***sa:sthra***, ***ve:dic*** scripture, clearly states that the hand should not be wiped on the head, many find themselves doing exactly that. The action arises automatically from deep rooted conditioning.

No matter how well a person understands the scripture, entrenched tendencies can override discriminative intelligence and lead to error. Even when unintended, such mistakes still produce consequences. Since these actions may



contribute to spiritual decline, one who claims personal doership must also accept the resulting merit or demerit.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* therefore declares, “If you relinquish doership to Me, I will ensure that your actions do not harm you. I will transform both your intentional and unintentional acts so that they do not bind you. I will also neutralize the accumulated impressions of the past. Therefore, *Arjuna*, surrender the sense of doership to Me and continue to act.”

In the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains the powerful influence of nature and the force of beginningless *ka:rmic* tendencies. Deep seated patterns can bring even an intelligent person under their sway. Their force can overshadow knowledge in both positive and negative ways. Even when one clearly recognizes that an action is improper, intellect alone may not always be sufficient to overcome the pull of past conditioning.

Karna was renowned as a great donor. He was also a mighty warrior who was born with divine armor and earrings. When Indra came seeking these protective ornaments, Karna did not



hesitate to give them away, even though he knew that without them he would certainly be killed. The reason was that generosity was Karna's ingrained nature. He never thought twice about giving whatever was asked of him. Although reasoning might have advised him not to give, since it would cost him his life, the force of his innate disposition compelled him to part with them. Thus his deeply rooted nature prevailed over logical reasoning.

Just like Karna, we learn from the *ithiha:sas*, the sacred historical narratives, that Bali Chakravarthi also gave away his kingdom in the same spirit, despite the warnings of *Sukra:cha:rya*.

The same truth is illustrated through another story. A sage was bathing in a river along with many others when he noticed a scorpion being swept away by the current. Compassion being his nature, he immediately lifted it with the intention of placing it safely on the bank. As soon as he lifted it, the scorpion stung him and he instinctively let it go. The scorpion was again carried away by the current. This happened



repeatedly. Each time the sage rescued it, and each time the scorpion stung him.

Those who were watching questioned his actions. They pointed out that stinging was the scorpion's nature and advised him to stop rescuing it. The sage replied that the incident only revealed the power of ***svabha:va***, one's true nature. If a small and ignorant creature does not abandon its nature even while facing death, how could a human abandon the nature of protecting one who is in danger? Since the sting caused no harm to his true self, he saw no reason to stop trying. Temporary pain was insignificant when compared to remaining true to one's nature.

This illustrates how a good nature leads a person to perform good deeds effortlessly. Sri Sri: *Krushna* expresses the same principle while instructing *Arjuna*. All beings act according to their inherent tendencies and impressions formed by past *karmas*, the ***va:sanas***. Attempting to control these tendencies solely through one's own personal strength is ineffective. When the sense of doership is surrendered to the Lord, those tendencies gradually lose their power.



There is an often cited example of a frog being slowly swallowed by a snake. As the snake gradually devours it, the frog, despite facing certain death, instinctively stretches out its tongue to catch passing insects. Catching insects is the frog's nature. The impulse to do so becomes so strong that it overpowers even the fear of losing its life.

Similarly, a sandalwood tree continues to spread fragrance even while it is being cut down with an axe. The tree does not abandon its nature of giving fragrance even in the face of destruction. Such is the power of ingrained nature. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that this force of ingrained nature operates equally in both noble and harmful tendencies, because both are shaped by past *ka:rmic* impressions that compel beings into corresponding actions.

We observe the same principle in everyday life as well, sometimes in negative ways. Everyone knows that biting one's nails is improper and unhealthy. Dirt gathers under the nails and various bodily impurities are expelled through them. Yet people of all ages, whether educated or uneducated, often bite their nails whenever they have a moment of leisure. Even



though they know it is improper, the habit persists. An old *samskara* quietly overpowers their understanding.

These ingrained tendencies cannot be changed by personal strength alone. Tamarind remains sour wherever it is placed. Neem retains its bitterness even when mixed with sugar or jaggery. Chili keeps its spiciness despite being combined with sweet substances. Many such examples show that natural qualities are not easily altered.

Another illustration of noble nature is *Dharmara:ja*'s constant inclination to wish and do good for others. Because helping others was inherent to him, he even ensured the protection of *Duryo:dhana* when people like *Chithrase:na* sought to harm him. Each person acts according to their nature, shaped by long standing tendencies.

nigrahaḥ kim karishyathi - For this reason, mere restraint through personal effort is not sufficient. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains the reason:

***indriyas ye:ndriyasy a:rtthe: ra:gadve:shau
vyavasthithau |***



***thayo:r na vasam a:gachche:th thau hyasya
paripantthinu || 3.34 ||***

All living beings possess two types of ***indriyas***, the sense faculties. The ***karme:ndriyas*** are used for performing actions, while the ***jna:ne:ndriyas*** are used for perceiving the world. The passages for stool and urine, the feet for walking, the hands for acting, and the tongue for speaking together constitute the five ***karme:ndriyas***. The five ***jna:ne:ndriyas*** are ***chakshurindriya***, the sense of sight; ***ghra:nendriya***, the sense of smell; ***rasane:ndriya***, the sense of taste; ***sravane:ndriya***, the sense of hearing; and ***thvagindriyam***, the sense of touch. The ***jna:ne:ndriyas*** bring information from the external world into the mind, while the ***karme:ndriyas*** express the inner impulses outward through action. In total there are ten senses, each connected to a particular faculty and accustomed to it over long periods of time. Over countless ages, the senses have become so accustomed to their respective faculties that those faculties appear as their ingrained nature.



Take the nose, for example. Its natural faculty is smell. Because of this, the nose instinctively recognizes scents and can perceive even the faintest fragrance carried by the wind. Sri *Ra:ma:yana* illustrates this through the episode of Kumbhakarna, the brother of *Ra:vana*, who slept for six months at a time. When the *ra:kshasas* tried to awaken him, they attempted many methods. They poked him, shouted loudly, played musical instruments, and even made elephants walk over him. Yet he remained in deep sleep, since only nine days had passed in his six month cycle of slumber. Even extreme efforts such as poking his feet, hands, and nostrils failed to wake him. When they tried to prod his nostrils, many of them were drawn in as he inhaled. As he exhaled, they were expelled again, as though they had taken a tour through his lungs. Still he did not wake up. Finally they prepared food with strong aromas and brought it near him. As soon as the fragrance reached his nose, he suddenly awoke.

This episode demonstrates how the senses follow long established habits. No matter how firmly restrained, they naturally seek their respective faculties: the eyes seek forms,



the ears seek sounds, the skin seeks contact, and the organs of action seek activity. Even when controlled by personal effort, they do not remain inactive for long. Human tendencies, like the senses, are deeply rooted. Personal effort alone cannot immediately overcome them. Long standing tendencies continue to guide both perception and action, shaping behavior again and again.

Legs, for instance, have a deep rooted tendency to walk. If one tries to restrain them and avoid walking, the legs begin to revolt. If forcibly restricted for long, they grow stiff and inactive, almost like dead logs. All *karme:ndriya:s* are similar in this respect. When kept idle, they lose their flexibility and gradually cease to function effectively. Both the *karme:ndriya:s* and the *jna:ne:ndriyas* naturally operate *within* their respective faculties. Each develops attachment, *ra:ga*, toward what it finds pleasing and aversion, *dve:sha*, toward what it finds disagreeable. These tendencies, *ra:gadve:shau vyavasthithau*, do not arise by one's deliberate choice and cannot be removed merely by personal effort. Their activity ultimately operates under the order of the



Divine. Therefore, Sri: *Krushna* advises *Arjuna* to place this burden on Him rather than attempting to control everything by his own strength. Deep rooted tendencies often overpower the intellect, and individual effort alone cannot fully restrain them.

prakruthi possesses inherent tendencies, and since our bodies are formed out of *prakruthi*, those tendencies are imposed upon them. To understand how strongly *prakruthi* influences us, we must recognize the instruments through which the body interacts with the world. These instruments are the five senses, each accustomed to interacting with a corresponding object arising from *prakruthi*.

Prutthivi or earth from *prakruthi* has the property of fragrance. The corresponding sense is the nose, which has the capacity to perceive smell and recognize the fragrance that arises from the earth.

A:paha, or water from *prakruthi*, has the property of taste. The corresponding sense is the tongue, which perceives and recognizes taste.



the:jas, or fire from *prakruthi*, has the property of form and illumination. The corresponding sense is the eyes, which possess the ability to see and recognize forms.

Va:yu, or wind from *prakruthi*, has the property of touch. The corresponding sense is the skin, which possesses the ability to feel and recognize touch.

A:ka:s, or ether from *prakruthi*, has the property of transmitting sound. The corresponding sense is the ears, which possess the ability to hear and recognize sound.

When the senses function naturally, their experiences cannot be avoided, even if a person withdraws from the world and sits in seclusion. If the effects of the senses are not experienced, it indicates impairment in the sense organ. For example, if one does not see forms, there must be something wrong with the eyes. Likewise, if sensory experiences are absent, the senses are not functioning properly. Therefore, the senses inevitably interact with *prakruthi* and draw experiences from it. The real question is whether the *ji:va* pays attention to those experiences or not. For instance, when someone is deeply



absorbed in thought, they may fail to notice what is happening around them. Although people may pass before their eyes, their mind does not register those forms.

Therefore, if a person has a higher goal and pursues it with great intensity, it is possible that they may not consciously recognize the bodily experiences arising from the senses. However, this does not mean that the senses have stopped interacting with *prakruthi* or that sensory perceptions have ceased. The senses inevitably continue to engage with *prakruthi*. Therefore, if one wishes to avoid being affected by sensory perceptions, the first step is to establish a higher spiritual goal. When a person remains deeply focused on such a goal, to the extent that forms, sounds, or tastes do not register in their awareness, then the pleasure or pain produced by the senses loses its influence over them.

A rose naturally spreads fragrance, while filth emits a foul odor. Yet a person absorbed in a higher spiritual pursuit may pass by without consciously noticing either. The senses still encounter the smell even if one resolves not to smell the rose or become attracted to it. The difference is that the one who is



focused on a higher goal does not register the smell and continues with their activity. Similarly, past experiences produce attraction toward what is familiar and dislike toward what is unfamiliar. These responses arise automatically whenever we see, hear, smell, taste, or touch something.

This principle is illustrated by a story about fish vendors who carried baskets of salt-preserved fish to the city for sale. One evening, while walking toward the city, darkness began to fall and the path became difficult to see. Soon it also started raining. They decided to rest for the night when they came upon a rose garden. As they approached a small house *within* the garden seeking shelter, the generous gardeners offered them a small room to stay for the night.

Although the vendors were exhausted, none of them could fall asleep. They could not understand why sleep would not come despite their fatigue. After some time, they realized the reason. They were accustomed to the strong odor of fish, but in the garden they were surrounded by the fragrance of roses. The unfamiliar fragrance prevented them from sleeping. One of them then suggested sprinkling water on the baskets that



contained the fish. As soon as they did so, the dry fish began to release their strong odor, overpowering the fragrance of the roses. Once the familiar smell filled the room, all the vendors fell asleep peacefully.

The senses of the vendors were accustomed to the smell of fish, and therefore the olfactory sense felt comfortable when that smell was present. When the unfamiliar fragrance of roses appeared, the senses resisted it. This story illustrates how the mind and senses are naturally drawn toward what they are accustomed to and turn away from what is unfamiliar.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* highlights this principle in the statement ***ra:gadve:sho vyavasthithau tayoh na vasama:gachhe***. Attachment and aversion arise naturally toward their respective objects. They are not under the direct control of discretionary intelligence. We tend to like what is familiar and feel aversion toward what is new or unfamiliar.

A gardener may be surrounded by many fragrances, yet he desires only the scent of roses. Having been accustomed to it for a long time, the moment that fragrance appears, he feels a



sense of happiness. When a different smell appears, he dislikes it. His mind decides it doesn't belong, and irritation naturally follows.

The senses naturally connect with objects in the world, and from this connection, attachment or aversion arise. A wise person doesn't simply react but reflects. They examine why they reacted and how they lost control. They practice self-introspection. When they stumble midway toward their goal, they ask themselves why it happened. Through this introspection, they understand the strength of the senses, the pull of sense objects, and their own limitations. They realize that they couldn't restrain them fully. Even when they try to rise again, they slip repeatedly.

Sri Krishna explained to *Arjuna* that *Viswa:mithra* fell many times, yet was able to rise when he placed the burden upon *Ra:ma*. In the same way, only when the burden of doership is placed upon Him can freedom from attachment and aversion be attained. On the contrary, as long as one believes they can achieve freedom through their own personal effort alone, then



there is no escaping from the attachment and aversion towards objects in *prakruthi*.

Attachment is as destructive as aversion. Both accumulated merit and de-merit bind a person in this world. Merits bring happiness, while de-merits bring grief, yet both continue to bind the soul. A distinction is often made by comparing sin to iron shackles because it causes pain, and merit to golden shackles because it gives pleasure.

However, whether the shackles are iron or gold, their purpose is the same, that is to bind us. Only when one is free from shackles, whether iron or gold, is it said to be truly free. Therefore, attachment and aversion function as two forms of bondage, albeit one pleasant and one painful. Hence, the iron shackles as well as the gold shackles are both undesirable. Sri Sri: *Krushna* thus indicates that both must be given up.

Freedom becomes possible when a person resolves not to be disturbed by either pleasant or unpleasant experiences. Whether an agreeable fragrance or a disagreeable one arises, the goal must remain firm. One must continue walking toward



a higher spiritual goal with a persistent self-introspection, evaluating every time we fall, and placing the sense of doership upon Him.

Jadabharatha was a great soul. He was a mighty emperor from the lineage of Rishabhadeva, and it was because of him that this land came to be known as *Bha:rath*. Although today *Bha:rath* refers only to the Indian subcontinent, in those days the entire world was called *Bha:rath*. People everywhere spoke with pride of their connection to him. In the final stage of his life, *Jadabharatha* withdrew into the forest to live the remainder of his life in austerity.

Towards the end of his pursuit of self-realization as a recluse in the forest, *Jadabharatha* was ready to give up the body and attain liberation. Unfortunately, due to *ra:ga*, attachment, he showed compassion toward a fawn. In truth, he could have simply continued his spiritual practice and eventually attained liberation by giving up his body. Instead, *Jadabharatha* was reborn because of the subtle attachment that developed toward the fawn he rescued.



One day a pregnant deer came to a river to drink water. Startled by the roar of a lion, she attempted to cross the river but could not leap because of her condition. She fell into the water and in her fear gave birth. The mother deer was carried away by the fierce currents and lost her life, while the newborn fawn was swept along by the river. Emperor *Bharatha* was performing penance nearby when his sight fell upon the struggling fawn. *Bharatha*, who had reached a very high spiritual state as a *yo:gi*, instinctively felt compassion upon seeing the helpless creature being carried away. He rescued the fawn, fed it, and cared for it attentively.

Gradually this care became habitual. As the fawn began to wander about, *Bharatha* kept it close to him even while performing his penance. His attention slowly drifted to the safety and welfare of the fawn, and his focus on spiritual discipline gradually weakened. He began to follow the fawn wherever it went. In time he became so concerned about its safety that he could not remain apart from it even for a moment. When his final moments approached, his mind



remained fixed on the fawn and its welfare. Thus he gave up his body while thinking of the fawn.

***yam yam va:pi smaran bha:vam thyajathyanthe:
kale:baram |***

***tham thame:vaithi kaunthe:ya sada: thadbha:va
bha:vithaha || 8.6 ||***

In the eighth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* reiterates a principle found in the *Upanishads*. It means that ***a person becomes whatever he thinks of at the time of death***. Since *Bharatha* gave up his body thinking about the fawn, he was born as a deer in his next life. Even though he was an exalted *yo:gi* who was eligible for liberation, the subtle influence of attachment led to that birth.

However, because of the deep impressions formed in his mind through previous penance, spiritual discipline, and elevated spiritual experiences, *Bharatha* retained awareness even in that birth. As a deer he avoided worldly involvement and lived quietly near sages. After the end of that life, he was born again as a human.



In this final birth he grew up as a transcendent *yo:gi* from childhood itself. According to the account of *Para:sara Maharshi*, *Bharatha* later imparted profound spiritual knowledge of the ultimate reality to King *Rahu:guna*.

Bharatha lived like an indifferent eccentric. He ate when food was given and remained without food when none was available. He wore clothes if someone offered them and remained unconcerned otherwise. He avoided all worldly involvement and remained absorbed in the knowledge of the Self. Because he behaved as if he were inert and indifferent to the world, people later came to know him as *Jadabharatha*. In that life he ultimately attained complete self realization.

The essence of *Jadabharatha's* history is that unintentional *ra:ga*, compassion, became binding even for an exalted *yo:gi* like himself.

The life of Sage *Kanvamaharshi*, who raised *Sakunthala*, offers an extraordinary lesson in fulfilling one's responsibilities without attachment. He cared for her from infancy and raised her with affection, naturally developing fondness for her.



When she grew older and formed a relationship with King *Dushyantha*, Sage *Kanvamaharshi* sent her away with his blessings. After *Sakunthala* left, the sage did not continue to cultivate emotional dependence or anxious concern about her circumstances. He fulfilled his responsibility only to the extent that was necessary and went no further, thereby avoiding attachment. His life illustrates how one can perform their duties without developing *ra:ga*, attachment.

From such examples we learn that both attachment and aversion possess a powerful capacity to bind human beings to the mundane world. These tendencies arise from the interaction of the senses with the material world. Because they bind us to worldly existence, Sri Sri: *Krushna* urges *Arjuna* to develop the habit of distancing himself from them. Nevertheless, one must continue to perform their responsibilities and not abandon their ordained activities. While engaged in action, one must not be carried away by the favorable or unfavorable experiences that arise from it.

thayo:rna vasama:gachhe:th thau hyasya paripantthinauthayo:. Attachment and aversion are



formidable enemies. In the second chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* already explained the dangers of attachment and aversion toward the material world and emphasized the benefits of relinquishing them. Reminding *Arjuna* of this teaching, the Lord in the third chapter explains that the wise understand that nothing occurs purely according to their personal will. Therefore, when one performs their ordained duties while leaving the sense of doership to God, only then can that person progress toward the higher spiritual goal.

It is impossible for anyone to live entirely as they please. Throughout life one inevitably encounters disappointments and hardships. Even to achieve material goals, one must overcome many challenges. This raises the question of what the goal of life should be for a person who has received spiritual instruction from the enlightened.

First, there are certain responsibilities that every embodied being must fulfill. One has duties toward kin, including parents, children, and ancestors. One also has responsibilities toward the *community*, toward flora and fauna, and toward maintaining one's own health and physical well being. While



fulfilling these obligations *within* the material world, such a person sets a higher goal of attaining self realization or receiving the divine grace of God.

Those who seek God's grace inevitably face obstacles. Neither self realization nor divine grace can be attained unless the *ka:rmic* bondage responsible for the present body is exhausted. The *ka:rmic* impressions that produced this body have accumulated over many births, and these impressions must be completely erased.

For the *ka:rmic* impressions to be erased, one must relinquish the sense of doership in all actions. To give up the sense of doership, one must not remain attached to the fruits of action. Furthermore, when a person performs their ordained duties with the understanding that these duties are the command of the Lord, the *ka:rmic* bondage is gradually weakened. As this happens, self-knowledge progressively flourishes and the aspirant steadily advances toward the higher spiritual state. At the same time, since the body is naturally inclined toward activity, the ordained duties continue to be performed without fail.



The primary goal of a soldier is to protect the nation and faithfully carry out the duty assigned to them. At times, while patrolling the border, a soldier must run on foot. While running, they do not pay much attention to the condition of the ground beneath them. They charge forward toward their objective regardless of whether the path is covered with sharp stones, thorns, mud, or a stretch of lush grassland. As they advance, the body instinctively clears any obstacles that appear along the way. The hands automatically push aside obstructing branches and the feet adjust to uneven ground. Soldiers neither become discouraged when they encounter stones and thorns nor feel elated when they pass over soft grass. Whatever they face, they quickly examine the situation, adjust themselves, and continue moving forward. The body responds according to its training, while the mind remains fixed on the goal. The body still experiences pain from thorns or comfort from soft ground, yet the soldier does not dwell on these sensations.

Thus the soldier proceeds carefully toward the objective while disregarding the pain or pleasure experienced by the body. In



the same manner, a person who has self-realization as their goal encounters both favorable and unfavorable experiences in life. At times there is pleasure and at other times there is pain. Circumstances may sometimes support their effort and at other times hinder it. In both situations, **samasi:thoshna sukhadukhe:shu**, they remain even minded. **samalo:shta:sma ka:nchanah**, whether they come upon a pot of clay or a pot of gold, they remain indifferent and continue toward the goal of self-realization.

This attitude resembles that of a baby. A baby remains indifferent to the value of the objects placed before it. Gold, stone, or clay are treated alike. The baby does not assign value to them. Its attention is directed toward reaching its mother, obtaining food, or playing with a toy. Adults, however, recognize the value of gold and may become attached to it while disregarding something of lesser value such as clay. For the baby, such distinctions hold no meaning because its attention is fixed on what it truly seeks.

Similarly, a wise person progresses steadily toward the spiritual goal while gradually reducing interest in the



attractions of the material world. As self-knowledge deepens, indifference toward worldly gain and loss naturally increases. One who has attained this understanding is called a **Pandith**, and the state of such understanding is called **pa:ndithya**. The *Upanishads* declare **ba:lye:na thishta:se:th ba:lyam cha pa:ndithyam cha nirvidya:ttha munihi**. As spiritual knowledge matures, a person begins to exhibit the simplicity and freedom of a baby. Just as a baby does not rejoice in praise nor feel distressed by criticism, a person with ripened knowledge remains undisturbed by either.

They neither become arrogant when praised nor defensive when criticized. The Sri:mad *Bha:gavatham* presents *Jadabharatha* as a striking illustration of such equanimity. *Jadabharatha* neither felt sorry when King *Rahu:gana*'s attendants shouted at him nor became arrogant or puffed up with pride when *Rahu:gana* himself later fell at his feet.

King *Rahu:gana* was traveling in a palanquin when his attendants, in a harsh and insulting manner, ordered



Jadabharatha to come and carry it. Hearing their abusive words, *Jadabharatha* did not react with hatred nor did he feel sorry for himself. He did not attempt to retaliate. He simply carried the palanquin as instructed. While carrying it, a conversation arose between King *Rahu:gana* and *Jadabharatha*. Through this exchange the king gradually realized that *Jadabharatha* was an exalted *jna:ni*, a realized soul. Recognizing his mistake, King *Rahu:gana* acknowledged *Jadabharatha*'s greatness and fell at his feet seeking forgiveness for the serious offense of insulting him. The king then humbly requested to receive teachings from *Jadabharatha*.

Even at that moment, *Jadabharatha* did not become puffed up with pride when the very person who had insulted him fell at his feet. Nor did he feel elated or proud. In other words, *Jadabharatha* was neither inflated with joy when praised or honored nor saddened when he was asked to perform a menial task or when he was insulted. This resembles the state of a baby. However, the baby behaves this way out of ignorance. A wise person reaches such a state through mature spiritual



knowledge. Sri Sri: *Krushna's* teaching is meant to guide us toward that ripened state.

Usually, whatever we do, we assume doership and imagine that everything happens because of our will. In reality, the world does not stop functioning even if everyone ceases their activities. Many egoistic people have been born and many more have died, yet the world continues to function perfectly well. The sun rises and sets each day without difficulty. The earth continues to revolve without interruption. Crops grow, rivers flow, and living beings carry on with their lives. Despite this natural order, people arrogantly imagine that the world depends on them.

This same attitude can often be seen in households. Parents sometimes believe that they alone are responsible for their children's growth, marriages, and future families. As a result, they burden themselves with unnecessary worry. In truth, their primary responsibility ends once the children are raised into capable adults. They may offer guidance if their advice is sought. Beyond that, parents must gradually let go rather than taking upon themselves the responsibilities that belong to



their grown children. They should not live in constant anxiety thinking that their children cannot manage without them.

Once parents have fulfilled their responsibilities to a reasonable extent, they must gradually turn inward and begin to pursue self inquiry by reflecting on the question, “Who am I?” From that point forward, they should lead a life that supports the path toward liberation. Until this stage, parents generally understand the functioning of the body and the duties associated with it. After having children, certain responsibilities naturally arise and must be fulfilled. However, once those worldly responsibilities are largely completed, attention must turn inward. One must reflect that it is the *a:thma* that has guided the body all along. Therefore, from this stage onward, all activities should be directed toward realizing the *a:thma*. One must contemplate the needs of the *a:thma*, seek the guidance of a worthy teacher who can help reveal this truth, and live a life that gradually leads to self-realization. Living with this awareness is the aim of a wise person.

In reality, however, we often observe the opposite. Many elderly parents continue to assume responsibilities that



properly belong to their grown children, grandchildren, and even great grandchildren. They worry about examinations, schooling, careers, and marriages, carrying anxieties that are not truly theirs to bear, as though they alone are responsible for the success and well being of the younger generations.

Even the great Emperor *Bharatha*, who later lived as *Jadabharatha*, offers an instructive example. At that time he could have allowed the deer to survive on its own, yet he assumed an unnecessary responsibility to care for it. In this vast world, countless living beings continue their lives without anyone's supervision. Life proceeds naturally according to its own order. Our role is only to act *within* the limits of our rightful responsibilities and abilities, without arrogantly assuming that the universe rests upon our shoulders.

This teaching of the *Ve:das* is profound and clear in principle, yet extremely difficult to practice. Because we are enveloped in ignorance, we constantly feel that we are the doers of every action. Moreover, this ignorance is sustained by the beginningless chain of past *ka:rmic* impressions that each of us carries.



What then should we do?

First, we must continue to fulfill our worldly responsibilities diligently. At the same time, we should remember that these duties are in fact God's command. God has entrusted us with certain responsibilities, and it is our duty to perform them. However, these actions must be transformed into service offered to God. The results of our actions should also be offered to Him. When life is lived in this spirit of service, we gradually move toward liberation. In such a state, past *ka:rmic* impressions no longer bind us to the mundane world.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains to *Arjuna* in the third chapter that one who acts in this spirit does not become bound by *karma*.

***indriyas ye:ndriyasy a:rtthe: ra:gadve:shau
vyavastthithau |***

***thayo:r na vasam a:gachche:th thau hyasya
paripantthinau || 3.34 ||***

The senses are naturally accustomed to interacting with the material world, and therefore they function according to their inherent tendencies. Instead of forcibly suppressing them, one



should engage them in rightful actions as prescribed by the *Ve:das*. Sri: *Krushna* is not instructing us to abandon activity. Rather, He teaches that we must continue to act while maintaining the right understanding and orientation toward our duties.

Furthermore, while engaged in ordained duties, one should let go of attachment and aversion toward those activities. One should never abandon one's duties merely because they appear difficult or seem unnecessary in the pursuit of *jna:na*. Attachment and aversion toward actions only strengthen the notions of 'I' and 'mine,' thereby drawing us deeper into *ka:rmic* bondage.

Only when attachment and aversion are relinquished do the impressions of past actions, known as *karma va:sana:s*, gradually fade. As these *karma va:sana:s* diminish, self knowledge begins to flourish, leading one toward the ultimate goal of self-realization. Sri Sri: *Krushna* therefore instructs in the third chapter, "Therefore, *Arjuna*, it is essential to distance oneself from attachment and aversion, for they are the primary



enemies. ***thau hi anya paripantthinau.*** Hence, abandon them.”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* uses two important terms here: ***svadharma*** and ***paradharma***. *Svadharma* means performing one’s ordained duties while remaining free from attachment and aversion. *Paradharma*, on the other hand, is abandoning one’s ordained duties under the pretext of pursuing *jna:na*.

Even an exalted *jna:ni* requires a source of light to see with the eyes. This is because it is natural for human beings to depend on light for vision. Animals such as cats, however, can see even in the dark. That ability is natural to them. Thus, every object and every being in this world possesses its own inherent nature. Although all are composed of the same *prakruthi*, all contain a *ji:va*, and all are governed by *Parama:thma*, their natural dispositions remain distinct. Simply knowing that all are equal does not grant a human the ability to see in darkness, nor does it make it possible for ordinary people to see with their eyes closed.



Therefore, just because we learn from *ve:dic* scriptures that all beings are equal, the behavior of objects and beings does not change. Each retains its unique qualities, follows its own order, and interacts with the world according to its inherent nature. Consequently, our actions and interactions must respect these natural tendencies.

For example, according to scriptural understanding, water and acid are equal in the sense that both contain a *ji:va* and are sustained by the same *Parama:thma*. Yet their effects are entirely different. When poured on the hand, water cleanses and removes dirt, whereas acid burns and destroys. Thus water and acid continue to exert their influence according to their inherent qualities regardless of our spiritual knowledge.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* further asserts, “*Arjuna*, if the inherent qualities of an object are to be altered, it can happen only through Me. *prakruthi* is under My control and behaves according to My command. If I command fire not to burn, it will cease to burn. If I command water to burn, it will burn. In this way, I alone can alter the natural properties and forms of objects. Therefore, if you wish to remain unaffected by the



influence of objects, perform your duties while surrendering the burden of doership and enjoyership to Me. Only then can you lead a smooth and peaceful life.”

Sri: *Krushna* explains that ***prakruthim ya:nti bhu:tha:ni***, all beings inevitably follow their inherent nature. Nothing in creation can transcend its natural tendencies. By surrendering all actions to God, ***mayi sarva:ni karma:ni sannyasya***, and by performing work as a divine command, one acts with faith while offering all results to Him. In such a life, *karma* itself becomes a means of liberation rather than a cause of bondage in the worldly cycle.

By sincerely surrendering the sense of doership to *Parama:thma*, our present actions cease to create new *ka:rmic* impressions. Instead, they begin to dissolve the impressions of past actions and gradually lead us toward self realization. Only through such surrender are the attachments and aversions accumulated over long periods of time erased. Attachment and aversion are our primary enemies, for over



many lifetimes we have developed attraction toward certain objects and dislike toward others.

For instance, humans have developed an attachment to rice because it has long served as nourishment. This attachment has formed over many births. At the same time, we feel repulsed by the bitter taste of neem juice because we are not accustomed to consuming neem leaves. Yet the insects that live on a neem tree eagerly feed on neem juice while being repelled by what they are not accustomed to, such as milk. If we were to drop such an insect into a glass of milk, thinking it to be superior to neem juice, the insect would die.

Similarly, a fish that is accustomed to living in water cannot survive in milk. Every being has its own natural disposition and thrives only *within* what accords with that nature. A person accustomed to eating rice naturally develops attachment to it and may feel little inclination toward other foods. Such preferences arise naturally, almost like the rules governing life. Though everything may be equal before *Parama:thma*, the stomach accepts only what it is accustomed to.



Sri Sri: *Krushna* advises *Arjuna* that while ***ra:gadve:shas***, attachment and aversion, naturally arise, they will have no influence on one who is steadily progressing toward a higher spiritual goal. Therefore, to overcome *ra:gadve:shas*, Sri: *Krushna* instructs that the body must continue to engage in the necessary sensory activities with proper discipline and with attention fixed on a higher spiritual purpose.

At the beginning of the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* emphasized that every individual must engage the senses in activities prescribed by the *Ve:das*. Those who claim to have restrained their senses merely deceive themselves, for the mind continues to present objects that provoke attachment or aversion. Sri: *Krushna* reiterates this teaching here: ***thayo:r na vasam a:gachche:th thau hyasya paripantthinau***. The senses and their activities are not harmful in themselves. What binds a person is the attachment or aversion that arises when one labels something as ‘good for me’ or ‘bad for me.’ Sri: *Krushna* therefore advises that such judgments must be given up.



At that moment, the greatest obstacle before *Arjuna* in waging the war against the *Kauravas* was the rise of *ra:ga*, an attachment toward them. Earlier he had harbored intense hatred toward the *Kauravas*, believing that the war must be fought at any cost since they refused to grant even a few villages or houses. In preparation for the war, *Arjuna* undertook great efforts, including obtaining the powerful *pa:supatha:sthra* weapon. His earlier hatred toward the *Kauravas* was misguided, and now his sudden affection toward them was equally misplaced. Both hatred and attachment are harmful. Sri Sri: *Krushna* therefore instructs him to act according to his ordained duty without being influenced by either emotion.

Dharmara:ja, by contrast, held neither fondness nor hatred toward the *Kauravas*. When *Duryo:dhana* sent the *Pa:ndavas* into exile, *Dharmara:ja* accepted it calmly as destiny and observed the exile as his duty. He carried out the period of exile without nurturing resentment toward the *Kauravas*. This attitude is evident in the episode when *Dharmara:ja* ordered *Bhi:mase:na* to rescue *Duryo:dhana*. A Gandharva named



Chitrarattha had captured *Duryo:dhana*, yet *Dharmara:ja* did not rejoice at his cousin's misfortune. Instead, he felt compassion and instructed *Bhi:mase:na* to rescue him.

Bhi:mase:na initially objected, arguing that it was only fair for *Duryo:dhana* to suffer punishment for the harm he had inflicted upon them. He even remarked that if not by their hands, at least someone else was now delivering the justice *Duryo:dhana* deserved. *Dharmara:ja* gently reminded him that the *Pa:ndavas* and the *Kauravas* were brothers. He explained that even if there were internal conflicts between them, they must remain united when facing external forces. Actions, he insisted, must be guided by a sense of duty rather than by personal emotions.

Thus *Dharmara:ja* neither hated the *Kauravas* for their past wrongs nor developed misplaced affection toward them when the war approached. He remained ready to act according to *dharma*, free from sorrow and personal bias.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that *ra:ga*, attachment, and *dve:sha*, hatred, are the real dangers for a human being. The



problem does not lie in the work itself or in the people involved, but in the emotional labels we attach to them. One must continue to perform ordained duties without clinging to the pleasure that arises from favorable actions and without abandoning actions that bring discomfort or pain.

As explained earlier in the second chapter, ***ra:gadve:sha viyukthais thu vishaya:n indriyais charan prasa:dam adhi:gachchhathi. prasa:dam*** refers to a state of mental peace free from agitation or emotional disturbance. Such serenity arises when a person performs their ordained duties without any expectation of the fruits of their actions. A calm, peaceful, and undisturbed state of mind naturally results when one performs *yajna* and fulfills responsibilities as the command of the Lord.

A person who has attained such inner peace remains undisturbed wherever they are and whatever circumstances they encounter. Just as a lamp placed inside a sturdy chimney remains steady regardless of the strength of the wind, one whose mind is absorbed in *a:thma jna:na* remains unaffected by ignorance or by the distractions of pleasure and pain arising



from worldly activities. Such a person sincerely performs their duties while maintaining steady awareness of the Self and progressing toward the higher spiritual goal of self-realization. They do not develop the arch enemies of human beings, namely attachment and aversion toward the mundane world.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* therefore instructs *Arjuna* to perform his ordained duties without developing attachment or aversion toward the world. One must act because action is natural to the body and necessary for life. Only such conduct is considered the practice of ***svadharma***. Engaging in ordained duties applies equally to both the enlightened and the ignorant. The difference lies in their attitude. An ignorant person acts with a strong expectation of the fruits of action, whereas an enlightened person performs the same actions without such expectations. Nevertheless, one must never abandon duties. Renouncing duties becomes ***paradharma*** and is unsuitable for the body, whose very purpose is to engage in *ka:rmic* activity.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains:



***sre:ya:n svadharmo: vigunaha paradharma:th
svanushttitha:th |
svadharma: nidhanam sre:yaha paradharma:
bha:ya:vahaha || 3.35 ||***

Performing one's own ordained duty is always beneficial, even if it is performed imperfectly. On the other hand, adopting another path, the path of *jna:na* while abandoning duties, may appear attractive but carries uncertainty and danger. The terms *svadharma* and *paradharma* are often misunderstood. Here Sri Sri: *Krushna*, supported by *ve:dic* teaching, indicates that *svadharma* refers to the path of *karma yo:ga*, the performance of one's ordained duties, whereas *paradharma* refers to the abandonment of action in the name of pursuing *jna:na*. From this it becomes clear that *svadharma* is to perform one's prescribed duties, while *paradharma* is to renounce action prematurely.

Consider a simple example. We desire to keep the house we live in clean and pure. While sweeping or cleaning the



accumulated dust, small creatures such as ants may be harmed. Such harm occurs unintentionally, yet it is still considered a form of sin. Actions like these are said to fall under the category of ***panchamaha:pa:thaka:s***, the five great sins committed unknowingly in daily life. To atone for such unavoidable harm, every person is advised to perform the ***panchamaha:yajnas***, the five great sacrifices.

It is said that such sins can be eliminated by performing *bhu:tha yajna* and by feeding birds and animals. However, we feed the birds and animals not for their sake, but as a service to *Parama:thma*, who resides in all living beings. Caring for animals becomes an offering to the Lord. In this way, while we keep our house clean, we do not develop attachment to it, nor do we harm ants and insects out of spite.

When cleaning the house becomes the main goal, we focus on removing the obstacles to that goal without attachment, love, or hatred toward the ants and insects. Our attention is on the end goal—keeping the house clean. Similarly, if our goal is self-realization or God-realization, or to live a happy life, the



obstacles we must overcome are the pain and pleasure arising from our activities.

For example, if a student's goal is to succeed in an examination, they do not dwell on obstacles such as lack of sleep or reduced meals. They do not harbor hatred toward the teacher for assigning homework, nor do they show affection toward those who provide food or allow extra rest. The student focuses on the goal, working diligently without attachment, love, or hatred toward the obstacles. The same principle applies in sports or in the workplace. Love and hatred are like slackers, always finding excuses to avoid hard work.

If one has even a slight attachment toward actions or their results, such as thinking, "I am doing," "This is for me," or "Everything is for me," then attachment and avarice ensure that the person will experience the outcomes, both good and bad.

On the other hand, when one performs actions without claiming doership, those actions do not bind. Moreover, as stated in the second chapter, ***prasa:dam adhigacchathi***,



the same actions lead to a clean, calm, and undisturbed mind, ultimately guiding one toward self-realization.

In the third chapter, Sri Sri: *Krushna* speaks about relinquishing the burden of doership. He explains that attachment and avarice arise from the qualities of the *gunas* of *prakruthi*. He says, ***ka:ryathe hi avasah karma sarvah prakruthijaih gunaihi***, meaning that all actions are compelled by the *gunas* born of *prakruthi*.

Even if one decides to remain idle and avoid activity, that state of idleness itself is an action. Sitting tightly curled up with the intention of doing nothing is also an action. Therefore, there is no possibility for anyone to completely stop performing actions.

Sri: *Krushna* earlier explained that *prakruthi*'s qualities of *satthva*, *rajas*, and *thamas* continuously drive us into activity. At every moment, one of these three qualities dominates and urges us into a corresponding action. Hence, Sri: *Krushna* first instructs us to place the burden of action upon *prakruthi* rather than on the ego.



When *ji:vas* or human beings perform their actions in this manner, it is called ***svadharma***. Practicing *karma* in alignment with *svadharma* means carrying out scripture ordained duties while surrendering doership to *prakruthi*. Such actions do not bind one to *karma*.

On the other hand, when a person renounces action out of difficulty or neglects ordained duty, it is called ***paradharma***. Avoiding responsibility under the pretext of renunciation is considered an escape. If one does not engage in rightful action, the body will inevitably engage in actions that are harmful or undesirable. These are referred to as *paradharma*.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* even teaches that pursuing *jna:na yo:ga* prematurely can also be *paradharma*.

There is a common interpretation of *svadharma* and *paradharma* that relates them to social or community based duties. It is often said that a *bra:hmin*, *kshathriya*, *vaisya*, and *su:dra* each have their own prescribed practices. While this classification exists in scripture, Sri Sri: *Krushna* is not



referring to that meaning in this particular verse of this chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. The popular interpretation of this verse is therefore incorrect.

The reason is that the *ve:dic* scriptures have already instructed that the practices prescribed by-birth should be observed, without the need to adopt other practices.

However, at times these by-birth duties may not provide sufficient livelihood. In such situations, one may adopt other vocations, provided that one continues to fulfill the responsibilities of the duties prescribed by-birth alongside the adopted work. We discussed this in the second chapter, and history also offers several examples.

Dro:na:cha:rya, by-birth, was a Brahmin of the highest virtue and conduct. He was a great scholar, well versed in the *ve:dic* scriptures. Yet his vocation did not provide him with food or sustenance. As a result, he adopted the duty of a Kshathriya, becoming a warrior. He also taught the science and art of archery and weaponry to the *Pa:ndavas* and the *Kauravas*. He



even became part of the Kaurava army and fought for them as a warrior.

Similarly, we find scholars who adopted agriculture when their by-birth *ve:dic* occupations could not sustain them.

At first glance, this verse may appear as though Sri Sri: *Krushna* is speaking about which practices should be followed and which should not. In reality, in the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* addresses all of humanity while instructing what they have, referred to as **svam**. The practices related to what they have are called **svadharma**, meaning the natural duties of being a human being, not merely the practices ordained for a particular *community*.

Svam means something that is owned. For example, when we buy a ring or clothes and wear them, we own those objects. Likewise, a house, a piece of land, or any object meant for our benefit and enjoyment becomes our own. Such objects are called **svam**, and the one who owns them is called **swa:mi**.

When a *ji:va* is born as a human, the human body itself becomes svam. The one who owns this body is the *ji:va*, and



thus the *ji:va* becomes the *swa:mi*. The body is given to the *ji:va* solely for the purpose of experiencing *karma*. Therefore, engaging in action becomes *svadharma*, or one's natural duty.

For this reason, it is incorrect to renounce action or to replace action with something else such as *jna:na* alone. *jna:na yo:ga*, when understood as abandoning ordained duties and withdrawing into meditation away from society, is not what is intended here. If one believes that ignoring the natural tendencies of the body, including relationships and responsibilities connected with worldly life, is beneficial, such an attitude is called *paradharma*.

What is truly supreme over the body, the *svam*? That is the *a:thma*. The *a:thma* also has specific responsibilities. Since *a:thma* possesses *jna:na*, its duty is to recognize and understand other entities that also possess *jna:na*. There is only one such entity, and that is the *Parama:thma*.

The question then arises: since the *a:thma*'s duty is to know the *Parama:thma*, can it renounce the responsibilities of the *svam*, the worldly duties?



Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that one should never abandon their worldly responsibilities. As long as we inhabit the body, we must fulfill the duties associated with it. For example, if a person is driving a car, they must drive according to the car's requirements. Only after exiting the car can they act freely. Similarly, as long as we are in the body, we must fulfill our bodily responsibilities. Only upon relinquishing the body can one fully adopt *jna:na yo:ga*. Pursuing *jna:na yo:ga* while still in the body is incorrect.

Nevertheless, all bodily actions should be performed with an intense yearning for the *Parama:thma*. Human duty, the *svadharma*, is to pursue *karma yo:ga*. Everyone must practice the ordained duties as prescribed by *ve:dic* scripture. There is no escaping worldly responsibilities.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* says, “Therefore, *Arjuna*, even if your *svadharma*, the practice of worldly duties, seems imperfect, it is still *sre:ya:n*, beneficial. The reason is that one is accustomed to these activities, and it is natural not to achieve perfection immediately. Gradually, one can improve, and even if interrupted, the practice can be resumed later.”



Moreover, if one dies before perfecting their practices, they will have an opportunity to continue in the next birth. Since they observe their *karma* as a service to God in this life, the Lord ensures that their service continues in the next life, preserving their *svarupa*, their nature of serving the Lord.

On the other hand, anyone pursuing *jna:na yo:ga* must attain perfection in this life itself. Achieving such a state is extremely difficult. Those who believe they are practicing *jna:na yo:ga* perfectly can learn from the story of *Jadabharatha*. Near the end of his life, *Jadabharatha* believed he had achieved perfect *jna:na yo:ga*. Yet, he became attached to a foe he had rescued. His mind was completely absorbed in concern for the foe, and he lost sight of his ultimate goal. *jna:na yo:ga* can lead practitioners astray in this way.

Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* instructs humanity that pursuing *jna:na yo:ga* while abandoning *karma* carries inherent dangers. It is better to pursue *karma yo:ga*: it is harmless, it can continue in the next birth if necessary, it is beneficial, pleasurable, and, most importantly, it is the command of the Lord.



Winning over carnal desires

In the third chapter of the Sri:mad *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that every human being must perform their ordained duties as an offering of service to the Lord. While doing so, one must renounce attachment and aversion toward the results of their actions.

Attachment and aversion arise from an unknown force. Even though we understand this and wish to let go of such feelings, there exists a force that can push us toward unwholesome or wrong conduct. *Arjuna*, sensing this, expresses his desire to understand the nature of this mysterious force:

Arjuna uva:cha |

*attha ke:na prayuktho:yam pa:pam charathi
pu:rushaha |*

*anicchannapi va:rshne:ya bala:diva niyo:jithaha
|| 3. 36 ||*

Arjuna says, “Hey Sri: *Krushna*, who is the one compelling a person to commit sin? I feel that there is someone influencing



me, yet I cannot see anyone. I wish to act virtuously and uphold good conduct without attachment or aversion. I also realize that You are the Supreme Being and merciful. I also know that I must entrust my burdens to You because I am incapable on my own. I acknowledge that I am ignorant and bound by *prakruthi*, which carries beginningless *ka:rmic* imprints.”

Arjuna continues, “Krishna, even though I resolve to surrender responsibility to You, I find myself thinking that I will fight and win, that I will achieve and experience more. These thoughts arise as if someone is provoking such spiritually negative intentions.”

“I wish to relinquish ego and doership while entrusting all doership to You. Yet, *attha ke:na prayuktho:yam pa:pam charathi pu:rushaha*, I am carried away by some force, like a log or blade of grass swept along by a raging river or gust of wind. Despite possessing knowledge and having learned from You, I am still influenced as if an unknown power is acting upon me.”



“*ji:va* is sentient and possesses knowledge, while *prakruthi* is insentient and lacks awareness. How then can *prakruthi* provoke the *ji:va*? I cannot understand how *prakruthi* generates attachment and aversion. I am confident that You are not responsible for the arising of these negative qualities. You would never harm humanity. You are supremely compassionate, a treasury of supreme grace, and filled with deep affection for us. You always seek to remove our shortcomings and uplift us.”

“Therefore, I am confident that You are not the one provoking negative thoughts. You are the supreme sentient being. All other sentient beings are the same in that none of them is independent by themselves. Moreover, they cannot control or provoke one another. Hence, if You are not driving us toward bad actions, and if other beings are also incapable of doing so, then who is provoking me? The only remaining entity is *prakruthi*. But *prakruthi* is insentient, and therefore it should not be able to control the *ji:va*, who possesses *jna:na. pa:pam charathi pu:rushaha*. Why then is the *ji:va* committing sinful actions?” *Arjuna* asks Sri Sri: *Krushna*.



Here, sinful activity refers to actions performed by the *ji:va* with a sense of doership, ownership, and enjoyership. Thinking, “I am enjoying through my senses,” “This is for me,” “This is happening because of me,” and “Only I will attain it” is itself the sin the *ji:va* commits. This is the meaning of ***ke:na prayukthaha ayam charathi***.

Who is provoking this? ***bala:diva niyo:jithaha***. Just as a small umbrella cannot protect a person from a violent storm, and strong winds can easily carry it away, even metal roofing can be torn apart by powerful gusts. In the same way, *Arjuna* asks what force is so powerful that it pushes the *ji:va* onto the wrong path, driven by an unseen power.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* responds:

Sri Bhagava:n uva:cha

ka:ma e:sha kro:dha e:sha
rajo:gunasamudbhavaha
maha:sano: maha:pa:pma: viddhye:namiha
vairinam || 3.37 ||



“*Arjuna*, the force that provokes you is called ***ka:ma***. It is also called ***kro:dha***.”

From where does it arise? It manifests from ***rajo:guna***.

What does it do? It is ***maha:sana*** and ***maha:pa:pma***, a glutton that is never satisfied no matter how much it is fed.

Sri: *Krushna* gives the powerful name ‘glutton’ to ***ka:ma***. Not only is desire never satisfied, it continues to grow the more it is indulged.

We see this clearly in daily life. For example, someone who decides to stop eating sweets may think, “I will eat just a little today and stop tomorrow.” But tomorrow never comes, because the same decision is repeated again and again. Once interest in an object develops, attachment gradually increases. A person who has not tasted food may not crave it much, but once they begin enjoying it, the attachment steadily grows.

na ja:thu ka:maha ka:ma:n upabho:gena sa:myathi – the desire or craving is never satisfied because we continue indulging the senses with the objects of desire.



What exactly happens? ***havisha: Sri:***

Krushnavarthme:na bhu:ya e:va abhivardhathe –

if we try to extinguish a blazing fire by pouring ghee into it, the fire does not go out; instead, it flares up and burns even more brightly. Similarly, when we try to satisfy the senses by giving them worldly objects according to their desires, the objects do not fulfill the desires. On the contrary, they intensify the longing for more.

Consider the ceremony of the first rice feeding for an infant. The mother offers sweetened, mashed rice. Since the baby has never tasted rice before, it initially rejects it by spitting it out. The mother then encourages the baby to eat through coaxing and playful gestures. Later, she introduces salty and sour foods, but the baby continues to reject them. Yet, the mother tricks the baby into consuming the food by showing a crow, the moon, or some other distraction.

However, as the child grows, they cannot give up the food even when ill, despite the mother asking them to skip it. The child clings to sweet, sour, or salty food and may even insist, “We would not die if we eat a little salt.”



What is happening here is clear: attachment to worldly objects only grows stronger when we indulge the senses, thinking it will satisfy them. The more we give, the more the senses crave.

Sri: *Krushna* explains that ***ka:ma e:sha*** – desire – is a very powerful attribute of the *a:thma*. This attribute arises from beginningless attachments and tendencies toward sensory objects, accumulated over millions of births. These attachments are stored as *ka:rmic* records, which act like seeds. Just as seeds, when sown, sprout into plants, these *ka:rmic* records remain with the body, ready to manifest in future experiences.





This body is a manifestation of *prakruthi*, the material nature. *prakruthi* has three *gunas*, or modes: *rajas*, *thamas*, and *satthva*. These modes can be compared to water: just as seeds sprout when dropped into water, *ka:rmic* impressions immediately manifest when they come into contact with the *gunas*. From time to time, *rajas*, *thamas*, or *satthva* rise and influence the body and mind.

The first ‘sprout’ that emerges is *ka:ma*, the desire for material objects. From *ka:ma* grows another plant called *kro:dha*, or anger. Sri Sri: *Krushna* gives descriptive names to these: he calls *kro:dha* ‘extremely sinful and engaged in wicked behavior’ and *ka:ma* ‘the glutton.’ But where do these arise from?

ka:ma and *kro:dha* emerge from *rajo:guna*. Just as seeds sprout when mixed with water, *ka:rmic* records manifest when associated with *rajas*. *ka:ma* produces hunger, drives indulgence in material objects, provokes anger, and compels one to commit wrongful deeds. As long as the body exists, *rajas* is a powerful and formidable enemy. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains the nature of *rajas*, emphasizing its morally and



socially improper arrogance and insolence, and cautions us to avoid its influence.

The human body is a beautiful manifestation of *prakruthi*, containing all its attributes. All transformations that occur in *prakruthi* also occur in the body, though the changes are not always obvious, unlike in the visible nature around us. Nevertheless, the body undergoes similar transformations as the environment.

Nature moves through seasons—summer, monsoon, winter, and so on—without any external influence. Similarly, the body also experiences changes corresponding to these seasons. Since the *ji:va* applies its *jna:na* to the body, it perceives and sometimes reflects the states of the body.

A wise person understands that these changes belong to the body, not the self. An ignorant person, however, laments his own change. For example, the body grows from a child to a toddler, to an adult, and finally to old age. These are bodily changes, not changes of the *ji:va*. The ignorant person mistakenly identifies with these stages, thinking “I am a child,



I am a toddler, I am an adult, I am aging.” The wise person, in contrast, recognizes that these changes are of the body and continues performing duties with the body without identifying with its transformations.

The wise continue to apply their *jna:na* in performing practices that bring happiness to the Lord, who presides over *jna:na*. At the same time, they also observe the changes of *prakruthi* within their bodies.

In spring, trees produce young shoots; during the monsoon, nature is drenched with water; and in winter, nature becomes cold and frigid. Similarly, the body sometimes manifests *rajas*, sometimes *thamas*, and at other times *satthva*. All three modes are potentially dangerous and manifest in varying proportions each time.

When *rajas*, *thamas*, and *satthva* exist in equal proportion, this is called the state of *pralaya*. During *pralaya*, creation ceases and objects are no longer visible. Nature becomes still and frozen, without any movement. Only when there is a rise and fall in the relative proportions of the modes does *prakruthi*



begin to manifest. When *satthva* predominates, the person engages in virtuous deeds. When *rajas* predominates, the person performs corresponding actions driven by desire.

Rajas usually generates attachment or affection toward material objects and nature. It creates a desire to indulge in worldly objects. If the object of desire is obtained, *rajas* causes the person to think, “I experienced, I enjoyed.” This generates a *ka:rmic* record, a seed that is stored in the body.

If the desired object is not obtained, the person starts blaming others, thinking that people or circumstances prevented the fulfillment of the desire. This gives rise to *kro:dha*, anger, which is a distortion in *jna:na* causing mental distress. The distortion occurs because the mind mistakenly believes that external factors obstructed the desired object.

ka:ma and *kro:dha* are two changes that occur in *jna:na*, caused by attachment and aversion. Attachment arises toward the desired objects, while aversion arises toward anything that conflicts with the desire. This aversion leads to *kro:dha*, prompting the person to try to remove the conflicting objects.



For example, if we feel aversion to heat, we try to eliminate it by turning on a fan or an air conditioner. Aversion is thus a form of *jna:na* that seeks to remove what is unfavorable. Attachment, aversion, *ka:ma*, and *kro:dha* are all manifestations of *jna:na* influenced by *rajas*, a mode of *prakruthi*.

Rajas can be compared to colored glass. If a red glass is placed around a lamp, the light that emerges appears red. Similarly, when *a:thma jna:na* passes through the covering of *rajas*, it becomes colored by attachment and aversion, eventually giving rise to *ka:ma* and *kro:dha*. This *rajas* influenced *jna:na* then compels the person into action.

Rajas is one of the three modes of *prakruthi*. Since the body is a manifestation of *prakruthi*, the *ji:va* is always associated with *prakruthi* through the body. Moreover, *prakruthi* is constantly changing.

When *rajas* rises, the person desires everything and develops the sense of doership, believing that he alone is responsible for all actions and outcomes. When *thamas* rises, perception



becomes distorted; he identifies himself with the body and assumes the body's attributes as his own. When *satthva* rises, *jna:na* becomes pure, and he listens to the teachings of scholars and the learned, gaining knowledge about *a:thma*.

Listening to scholars, developing faith, acknowledging the existence of God, showing devotion toward Him, performing ordained duties as service to God, loving *prakruthi* as God's property, and engaging with the world while remembering one's belonging to God all occur when *satthva* rises. Each time *satthva* rises, the person gains a measure of *a:thma jna:na*.

Just as winter eventually gives way to summer, whether one desires it or not, *satthva* inevitably rises from time to time. When it does, a person gains *a:thma jna:na*. However, this is not pure realization; it is a theoretical understanding known as *paro:ksha jna:na*. One understands intellectually that *a:thma* exists, that knowledge of *a:thma* brings joy, that sorrow diminishes, and that this joy is lasting. Yet this remains knowledge received from teachers, not direct self-realization.



A person who gains ***paro:ksha jna:na*** is called a ***mumukshu***, one who longs for liberation. Only when *satthva* rises can a person become a ***mumukshu***. But *satthva* does not remain permanently. Eventually *rajas* rises again, and when it does, the *ka:rmic* records once more come into effect. This continual rise and fall of the modes is the true nature of *prakruthi*.

When *ka:rmic* records become associated with *rajas*, a person immediately develops attachment toward the objects before him. Interest arises, drawing him toward those objects and compelling him to indulge in them. As a result, he begins to act in pursuit of what he desires.

When a child sees a toy in a store, the child pulls the parent toward it, insisting that it be bought. In the same way, when *ka:rmic* seeds come into contact with *rajas*, attachment and aversion arise and push the person into action toward the desired objects. This is the nature of the body. However, when such impulses arise, one must exercise discretion regarding which actions are beneficial and which are harmful, which objects are appropriate and which are not. This discernment



is given to us through God's command in the form of *ve:dic* scripture. Before acting, we must take guidance from scripture.

Just as a parent refuses when a child asks for an unsuitable toy, the *ji:va* must instruct the body, explaining that certain actions and objects are improper. Yet the *ji:va* does this effectively only when a clear goal is present.

For example, if a family must catch a flight, the parent leads the child away from shopping by pointing out the goal of reaching the airport on time. Similarly, the *ji:va* must present a higher goal to the body and guide its actions toward that purpose. This guidance is especially necessary when *rajas* rises, since *rajas* pushes the body into action whether the *ji:va* wishes it or not. At that time, the *ji:va* should redirect action as service to God, offering the results to Him. When actions are performed in this way, *rajas* no longer binds.

Only then does *a:thma jna:na* function properly. Yet the influence of *prakruthi* is extremely strong. The moment *rajas* rises, it turns into desire, which quickly pulls the person



downward, making him forget God and assume doership, ownership, and enjoyership for himself instead of attributing them to God. This is where danger arises, for it creates new *ka:rmic* records that bind him to the worldly cycle. Explaining this difficulty, Sri Sri: *Krushna* says that overcoming *prakruthi* is extremely hard.

ka:ma, desire, and *kro:dha*, anger, are essentially the same, with *kro:dha* being the ripened form of *ka:ma*. Sri Sri: *Krushna* calls *ka:ma* a glutton and *kro:dha* an evil doer, identifying both as our enemies. We all know from experience that when anger takes over, it drives a person to commit many wrongful actions.

kruddhah pa:pam na kurya:th kah who is the person who would not commit a sin when angry! Anger can become so extreme that, ***kruddho hanya:th guru:napi***, a person overtaken by it no longer recognizes mother, father, or teacher. They lose awareness that these elders are guiding them for their own good. In such a state, one may harm or abuse without hesitation. This is not the person's true nature, but the consequence of anger taking control. Anger is thus a



formidable enemy, and the desire behind it, *ka:ma*, is also an enemy.

Both desire and anger arise due to association with *rajo: guna* and therefore that association is identified as the primary enemy. Because of this, the *Ve:da* instructs that the sense of doership regarding desire and anger should be relinquished and not owned as one's true nature.

ka:mo:ka:rshi:th manyuraka:rshi:th ka:mah karo:thi na:ham karo:mi - Those who perform ***sandhya:vandanam*** in the morning, afternoon, and evening use the prayer to let go of the sense of doership for all actions performed throughout the day. In fact, the two ***ithihasa:s*** emerged to reveal the destructiveness of desire and anger, and how they should be rightly managed.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* clarifies what is truly beneficial and what should be practiced, describing inner tendencies that obstruct righteous living and prescribing spiritual disciplines to overcome them. These teachings are meant for those who genuinely desire well-being, who understand themselves as



distinct from *prakruthi*, and who know themselves to be conscious *ji:vas* rather than inert matter. Such a person aspires to manifest this knowledge and attain the bliss it promises. For one who wishes only to remain immersed in worldly enjoyment, these instructions serve no purpose.

Arjuna was a seeker of lasting bliss. His suffering arose from not knowing how to perform the duties of the body correctly. Before leading him to the bliss of the Self, Sri: *Krushna* explained how action should be performed and what obstructs it. This teaching is not meant for *Arjuna* alone but for all human beings.

Every action must be supported by right understanding. When life is lived with the awareness that one belongs to God, that all action is service to God and that duty must be performed as such, the state of inner bliss gradually takes shape. In the course of action, some experiences may be favorable and others unfavorable. One must proceed without being disturbed by either. *Arjuna* asks what prevents a person from living in this way. Sri Sri: *Krushna* replies that even for one endowed with great knowledge, desire born of contact with



nature obstructs that knowledge. He declares desire to be the primary enemy.

Desire arises in an object due to attachment. An attachment forms when the mind feels that an object is beneficial or pleasing. That feeling comes from accumulated memory impressions gathered over a long time, which convey that "this is good." , and are known as *vishaya va:sana*.

Such latent desire comes to the surface because of contact with *prakruthi* and the influence of ***rajo: guna***, the quality of passion. As long as one lives in a body, connection with *prakruthi* and ***rajo: guna*** cannot be fully relinquished. Because of this embodied condition, the changes produced by ***rajo: guna*** are unavoidable. The primary effect of *rajo: guna* is the creation of desire, called ***ka:ma***. When this desire is obstructed or remains unfulfilled, it turns into anger, called ***kro:dha***.

To show how desire and anger lead to destruction, the scriptures present *Duryo:dhana* in the Sri:mad *Maha:bharatha* and *Ra:va:na:sura* in the Sri:mad *Ra:ma:yana*. The same truth



is summarized in the Sri:mad *Bha:gavatham* through two wrestlers *Cha:nura* and Mushtika, who served Kamsa. Nourished by indulgence and growing hostility, they resolved to destroy Sri Sri: *Krushna*.

People who love Sri: *Krushna*, the embodiment of bliss, are in essence seeking that bliss. Kamsa, born of *rajo: guna*, represents the force that blocks this happiness. His name carries meaning: ka or kam is happiness, while na means removal, showing that he takes away joy. He rules the city of *Mathura*, symbolizing *manas*, the mind, where destructive tendencies grow. Knowing Sri: *Krushna* was growing up in Vrepalle, Kamsa sent followers like *Pu:thana*, *Sakata:sura*, and others to cause harm, but none returned.

Believing that Sri: *Krushna* was clever and needed to be confronted, Kamsa arranged the *dhanurya:gam* and sent for Him through *Akru:ra*. The people of *Vre:palle* loved Krishna, seeing Him as the embodiment of bliss that souls long for. For those who seek this bliss, nature often sends obstacles in the form of sense experiences, *vishaya anubhava*.



Forces such as *Pu:thana* sought to harm Sri: *Krushna*, yet those who lived in devotion and placed their trust in Him were protected. The devotees did not resist those evil forces, but focused entirely on Sri: *Krushna*. He removed the obstacles Himself, slaying the demons and bringing them happiness. Just as Kamsa sought to harm Sri: *Krushna*, *prakruthi* uses desire, *ka:ma* and anger, *kro:dha* to distract the *ji:va*. Those who align their actions with God's will and remain steadfast in faith cannot be harmed by these forces, for Sri: *Krushna* Himself ensures their protection and fulfillment. Devotion and surrender allow the devotee to experience God's bliss, undisturbed by the challenges of *prakruthi*.

Parama:thma restrains *prakruthi* so that it neither compels us to engage in non-*ve:dic* activities nor influences us even while we are engaged in *ve:dic* duties. When we place sincere faith in Him, He subdues the forces of desire and anger. Suppressing desire here does not mean abandoning our activities. For example, there is no need to stop taking food. Since the body requires nourishment, one must eat without fail. However, this act should be performed as a service to



God. The body exists to serve Him; therefore food should not be consumed merely to satisfy hunger but should first be offered to God as an act of service.

But where can one find God?

Because the omnipresent Lord cannot easily be perceived in His all pervading form, we approach Him through a visible form suitable for worship. The *Ve:das* teach that God manifests in five forms, and among them the deity form is the most accessible for direct service. Therefore we worship the Lord in the deity form and offer our services there. One such service is the offering of food. Food must be prepared properly according to *ve:dic* injunctions and offered first to the deity. This offering is called ***naive:dyam***.

Later the same offering is consumed as a dedication to the Lord who also resides *within* us. The Lord who dwells *within* the heart and guides all beings is called the ***antharya:mi***. When the offered food is partaken with the awareness that the indwelling Lord receives it, the act becomes ***anuya:gam***. Though outwardly it appears that we are simply eating, the act



has been transformed into a sacred service to the Lord who manifests both as the deity we worship and as the *antharya:mi* *within* us. Thus every meal becomes a spiritual practice when we remember that God is both around us and *within* us, accepting our offerings.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* declares that when food is offered to God and then consumed, it purifies the person. ***yajna sishta asinah santah muchyanthe sarva kilbishaih*** - Those who partake of food after offering it to the Lord are freed from all sins. Eating merely for hunger or for the pleasure of taste leads to *ka:rmic* bondage, whereas consuming food after dedicating it to the Lord becomes sacred and purifying.

In this way two purposes are fulfilled. First, the body receives the nourishment it requires. Second, the act of eating is transformed into a *yajna*, a sacred offering to the Lord. Only the intention behind the act changes. The physical act of eating remains the same.

This principle applies to all experiences. One must engage only in activities approved by the *Ve:das* and perform them in



the spirit of offering to God, remaining indifferent to the pleasure or pain that may arise from them. An illustration of this principle can be seen during the ***Uga:di*** festival. On that day people consume a special chutney prepared with ingredients such as neem flowers, jaggery, tamarind, raw mango, chili, and salt. The mixture tastes both bitter and sweet, symbolizing that life contains both pleasant and painful experiences. Yet we accept the mixture without focusing on its bitterness or sweetness because it is taken as a sacred offering. Similarly, one must remain unaffected by pleasure and pain while performing one's duties as service to God. When actions are performed in this spirit, they become *yajnas*.

When the mind remains fixed on Sri: *Krushna*, He ensures that desire does not arise, attachment does not take hold, anger does not overpower us, and hatred does not take root.

The principal enemy in this process is ***rajo:guna***. As long as one is associated with the body, *rajo:guna* cannot be completely eliminated, no matter how intelligent one may be. The three *gunas saththva, rajas, and thamas* naturally arise in succession *within* the body and no embodied person can fully



escape their strong hold. To explain their power, especially that of *rajo:guna*, Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* presents clear illustrations demonstrating how strongly they affect human beings.

Desire and anger result from changes in perception as the *a:thma jna:na* is transformed. Moreover, the transformation in *a:thma jna:na* is brought by one's association with *prakruthi*. Therefore, it is not possible to stop or eliminate desire or anger.

It therefore becomes essential for human beings to understand the nature of desire and anger and to guide them properly. Just as it is difficult to stop a raging river, a wise person does not attempt to halt its force completely. Instead, he channels the strong current in a safe and beneficial direction, neither obstructing its natural power nor allowing it to flow wildly and cause destruction. One builds a dam and devises ways to use the water for the welfare of all. If left unchecked, the water simply rushes to the sea and is wasted. If it is completely blocked, it leads to flooding. The wise regulate the flow at the right place, dig canals, and transform barren lands into fertile



fields. The water continues to move, crops flourish, and the excess water eventually reaches the sea without causing harm.

In the same way, the emotions *within* us resemble a powerful current, and desire is one such force. Desire can be restrained, but if it is suppressed entirely it may overwhelm a person. What is required is the wisdom to regulate it and allow it to flow in a proper direction. Restraining desire means guarding the gateways through which it expresses itself. These gateways are the senses, which function through the body. Sri: *Krushna* teaches that the body cannot be completely stopped from acting. Since the body naturally engages in activity, we must learn to perform our actions carefully and in an orderly manner.

When actions are offered as service to the Lord, He assumes responsibility and ensures that they do not become a cause of *ka:rmic* bondage. The *Ra:ma:yana* provides a clear illustration of this principle through two different expressions of desire. One kind of desire is represented by *Ra:vana* and another by *Si:tha*. *Ra:vana* sought to abduct and possess *Si:tha pira:tti*, who belonged to *Ra:machandra*. This reveals how selfish



desire operates. The soul, which truly belongs to God, forgets Him and begins to pursue pleasure for its own sake, attempting to enjoy the world independently. This is the nature of misguided desire.

Si:tha, however, represents the opposite kind of desire. She constantly remembered the Lord, surrendered herself to Him, and upheld righteous conduct. The Lord removes the selfish desire and installs the rightly desire of union with God. Just as *Ra:machandra* came to Lanka, destroyed *Ra:vana*, installed *Vibhi:shana* as the king, and reunited with *Si:tha*, the Lord removes the *rajo:guna* that gives rise to restless desire, establishes the stability of *saththvaguna*, and keeps the soul in a state of lasting bliss.

In other words, the Lord assumes the responsibility of removing all *ka:rmic* impressions of a surrendered *ji:va* while lovingly drawing that *a:thma* into His fold.

Sugri:va provides another illustration of desire born of *rajo:guna*. Both *Va:li* and *Sugri:va* possessed strong desires. *Va:li* chased *Sugri:va* away and seized not only the kingdom



but also *Sugri:va*'s wife. When *Sugri:va* sought refuge in *Ra:machandra* and surrendered to Him for protection, *Ra:machandra* killed *Va:li* and restored *Sugri:va*'s happiness. *Ra:ma* returned the kingdom to *Sugri:va*, reunited him with his wife, and, in accordance with her wishes, allowed him to accept *Tha:ra*, *Va:l*'s widow. In every way, *Ra:ma* ensured that *Sugri:va* was restored to honor and comfort.

We see that both *Va:li* and *Sugri:va* possessed desire, yet *Sugri:va*'s desire eventually led him to serve *Ra:machandra*. Therefore his desire is regarded as worthy, because it inspired him to dedicate himself fully to *Ra:ma*, even to the extent of risking his life for Him. For this reason *Ra:ma* removed *Va:li* and crowned *Sugri:va*, recognizing the higher direction of *Sugri:va*'s desire.

This teaches that desire itself is not wrong. What matters is the direction in which it flows. Desire that leads one toward serving God and engaging in activities related to Him is beneficial, whereas desire that turns one away from God must be removed. The *Ra:ma:yana* repeatedly shows that the Lord removes every obstacle that prevents a devotee from serving



Him and establishes righteous desire *within* the heart. Thus the text demonstrates that desire is not to be rejected altogether, but to be purified and directed toward divine service.

The *Ra:ma:yana* also presents *Lakshmana*, *Bharatha*, and *Sathrughna* as embodiments of sacred, *sa:thvik* desire. *Lakshmana*'s desire was intense, resembling the powerful urge of a person who longs to possess an object entirely for themselves. Yet unlike worldly desire, *Lakshmana*'s intense longing was directed solely toward serving *Ra:machandra*. This is why, when *Ra:ma* followed *Viswa:mithra* as a young boy, *Lakshmana* also accompanied Him. *Ra:ma*'s purpose was to protect *Viswa:mithra*'s *ya:ga*, whereas *Lakshmana*'s purpose was simply to support and serve *Ra:ma*. He did not go to guard the sacrifice nor to receive teachings from the sage. His only aim was to remain beside *Ra:ma*.

Lakshmana also possessed an overwhelming desire to serve both *Ra:ma* and *Si:tha*. Therefore, when *Ra:ma* resolved to go into exile in obedience to *Kaike:yī*'s demand, *Lakshmana* immediately chose to accompany them. *Lakshmana* declares



***aham sarvam karishya:mi ja:grathah
svapathascha the:***, meaning that he alone would perform every service required by *Ra:ma*, whether *Ra:ma* was awake or asleep.

Moreover, while in Panchavati, *Lakshmana* says,

***parava:n asmi ka:kutstha tvayi varsha satham
stthithe: |
svayam thu ruchire: de:se: kriyatha:mithi ma:m
vada ||***

“Command me in whatever way pleases you, and I will carry it out. I have come with you specifically to act according to your wishes. Please tell me where you would like the hermitage and other arrangements to be made.”

Through these words in Panchavati, *Lakshmana* reveals an important principle of service. Service should not be performed according to one’s own preference but in a manner that pleases the Lord. *Lakshmana* offered himself entirely to *Ra:ma* so that *Ra:ma* could employ him in any way He wished,



even in the task of building the hermitage exactly as *Ra:ma* desired. In this way *Lakshmana* teaches that service to God must be performed at all times, in every possible way, and always according to what pleases Him rather than according to our own inclinations.

However, until the episode at Panchavati, *Lakshmana* often served *Ra:ma* according to his own wish. Although he rendered tireless service and willingly undertook difficult tasks, he sometimes acted according to his own preference. For example, when *Ra:ma* instructed *Lakshmana* to return to *Ayo:dhya* and take care of their mother Kausalya, *Lakshmana* firmly refused. He insisted on accompanying *Ra:ma* into the forest. *Lakshmana* declared that just as a fish taken out of water struggles and loses its life, he too would perish if separated from *Ra:ma*. In this way he pressed his own desire upon *Ra:ma*, choosing to serve according to his own longing rather than strictly following *Ra:ma's* instruction.

Bharatha, on the other hand, served entirely according to *Ra:ma's* wish, even when doing so caused him great sorrow. Like *Lakshmana*, *Bharatha* deeply desired to be with *Ra:ma*



and pleaded with Him to return to *Ayo:dhya*. Yet *Ra:ma* refused and declared that He would return only after completing the full fourteen years of exile. Instead, *Ra:ma* entrusted His *pa:dukas*, His sacred sandals, to *Bharatha* and asked him to rule *Ayo:dhya* in His absence while placing the *pa:dukas* on the throne. Although separation from *Ra:ma* caused *Bharatha* immense grief, he accepted *Ra:ma's* command without hesitation. As promised, *Bharatha* placed the burden of the kingdom as well as his own responsibility upon the *pa:dukas*. Even though he endured the pain of separation for fourteen years, he accepted it with devotion as *Ra:ma's* grace and command.

Thus *Bharatha* stands as a symbol of the highest form of service to God. Even when the performance of that service brings suffering through the workings of *prakruthi*, one must continue to serve with steadfast devotion. Our desires must always align with the will of God and never arise merely from personal preference.

Sathrugna illustrates this spirit of service even further. He devoted himself entirely to serving *Bharatha*, dedicating all his



actions to him while maintaining deep love for God and reverence for all that is connected with God. Great souls and objects associated with God belong to His divine order. Therefore, our desire should always be directed toward serving them as well, just as Sathrugna exemplifies through his life.

There is nothing inherently wrong with having desires. However, when desires remain unregulated and drive a person toward undesirable goals, they become harmful. Such desires weaken *a:thma jna:na* and gradually pull a person back into the mundane world, binding them again to the cycle of birth and death. On the other hand, when desires are properly guided, they can uplift a person by directing them along the right path, allowing *a:thma jna:na* to grow and flourish.

While describing the dangers of pursuing selfish ends, Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains to *Arjuna* that such desire acts as a constant inner enemy. It arises from *rajo:guna* and naturally resides *within* every person. This type of desire is common, whereas pure ***saththvika*** desire appears only rarely. Just as the rainy season follows summer, when ***saththva*** declines and *rajas* increases, passionate desire naturally grows *within* a person.



Even the most accomplished individuals are not entirely free from its influence.

***dhu:me:na:vriyathe: vanhihi yattha:darso:
male:na cha |***

***yattho:lbe:na:vrutho: garbhaha thattha:
the:ne:dam a:vrutham || 3.38 ||***

the:na by that desire, ***idam*** this entire world is ***a:vrutham***, enveloped.

Sri: *Krushna* presents three illustrations to explain this truth. He speaks of smoke covering fire, dust covering a mirror, and the fetus being enveloped *within* the womb. By offering these three examples, He helps us understand in different ways how desire obscures clarity and knowledge.

Throughout the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* employs such vivid illustrations to convey profound philosophical ideas. In the second chapter, He compares the wise person to the vast and steady ocean. He also likens stable knowledge to the steady flame of a lamp. Elsewhere He explains the dependence of the world upon God with the expression



su:thre manigana: iva, showing that just as beads are held together by an unseen thread, the entire universe is sustained by the Lord. In the same way, in this third chapter He uses these three illustrations to reveal how desire envelops all living beings and how none can completely escape its presence.

Although desire can never be completely eliminated, a wise person can learn to regulate it, direct it properly, and even rise above its influence. For this, one must first understand the nature and behavior of desire.

To help us understand its true nature, Sri Sri: *Krushna* presents three illustrations in the thirty eighth verse:

dhu:me:na:vriyathe: vanhihi - Just as smoke envelops fire.

No matter how brightly a piece of wood or coal burns, smoke eventually gathers around the flame. At times a thin layer of ash also settles over the burning embers. When smoke covers the fire, the flame becomes dull and appears weak.



Simply worrying about the smoke does not remove it. Instead, one must blow upon the burning wood. When the smoke is blown away, the embers glow again and the flame rises brightly. Yet after some time the smoke once again gathers and covers the fire. It must again be cleared away for the flame to shine fully. Because of the natural behavior of fire and wood, smoke repeatedly appears and veils the flame.

Similarly, the clarity and knowledge that a person gains can become obscured by the influence of *prakruthi*. The flame of knowledge must therefore be constantly protected and nourished. One cannot assume that knowledge will remain bright without continued effort. *prakruthi* is composed not only of *saththva* but also of *rajas* and *thamas*, and these qualities continually fluctuate. Because of this ever changing nature, clarity of understanding can easily become clouded, and desire can once again arise. Therefore maintaining knowledge and regulating desire requires constant vigilance, just as a fire must be continually tended to keep it burning brightly.



We often see a rotating beacon placed on top of a tower or building at an airport. The beacon continually changes the color of the light, showing red for a moment, then green, and then another color. In a similar way, *prakruthi* operates through its three qualities, *saththva*, *rajas*, and *thamas*, which constantly fluctuate. This is natural, and we experience their influence because we ourselves are part of *prakruthi*. When *saththva* becomes prominent, its calmness and clarity influence us. When *rajas* increases, we experience activity, restlessness, and desire. When *thamas* predominates, heaviness, laziness, and confusion arise.

Just as we repeatedly clear away the ash or smoke covering a burning log, *rajas* and *thamas* must be removed whenever the mind becomes covered by these undesirable qualities of *prakruthi*. Otherwise, just as smoke obscures a bright flame, *thamas* overwhelms the senses and clouds our understanding.

The removal of *rajas* and *thamas* can be accomplished through the guidance of enlightened teachers, through the study of scriptures, and through the performance of *ka:rmic* activities prescribed by the *Ve:das*. In addition, recollecting



our relationship with God helps us to act in a righteous manner. We must recognize that both we and *prakruthi* function under the control of God. Therefore, we should act according to His will by surrendering the sense of doership to Him. At the same time, we must engage in the activities that He has ordained while offering the fruits of those actions to Him.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* repeatedly instructs us to give up doership, ownership, and enjoyership while continuing to perform the duties prescribed by the *Ve:das*. He reiterates this teaching again and again because *prakruthi* causes us to forget it. The moment we begin to act, no matter how much knowledge we possess, the sense of ‘I,’ ‘me,’ and ‘mine’ quietly returns. *prakruthi* is responsible for this recurring forgetfulness. Just as one must continually blow away the smoke and ash to keep a fire burning brightly, one must constantly remind oneself of these teachings and of God’s presence in order to preserve clarity.

Thus, the three illustrations given in the thirty eighth verse make this truth clear. ***dhu:me:na:vriyathe: vanhihi***



shows fire covered by smoke, indicating that desire continually arises. *yattha:darso: male:na* cha shows a mirror covered with dust, indicating that distractions naturally accumulate. Even when the mirror is cleaned, dust eventually settles again. In the same way, no matter how carefully we live, these influences return. Maintaining clarity, like keeping a fire bright or a mirror clean, requires continual effort and vigilance guided by knowledge and devotion to God.

The analogy of smoke is given to show that even when it is cleared away, it continues to return and envelop us. The mirror analogy illustrates that no matter how many times we clean it, dust keeps settling upon it. Therefore, the surface must be cleaned repeatedly in order to see our reflection clearly.

The statement about the mirror explains this idea well. Just as dust continually settles on a mirror, *ka:ma*, the desire for material objects, repeatedly occupies the mind, even when we believe we have become free from it. As a result, it keeps compelling us into action and strengthens the *rajas* quality *within* the body. No sooner is it cleansed than *ka:ma* again



covers the consciousness. In this way, *ka:ma* is never completely eliminated.

Just as a mirror requires constant cleaning, as long as one possesses a body, one must continually apply knowledge to cleanse *ka:ma* from *within*. Therefore, one must remain engaged in action while simultaneously purifying desire through right understanding. If someone claims to be a great *jna:ni* who has matured enough to destroy *prakruthi* along with *ka:ma* and thus no longer needs any spiritual practice, Sri Sri: *Krushna* presents another analogy to show that such a notion is not the path of wisdom.

He explains that this entire world, including all living beings, is enveloped by *ka:ma*, just as a fetus is enclosed *within* the womb.

No matter how intelligent a child may become after birth, as long as it remains in the womb, it is completely surrounded by the womb fluid. The fetus cannot break free from this enclosure, and any attempt to do so would endanger both the



baby and the mother. In fact, the womb fluid protects the fetus while it remains *within* the womb.

Similarly, *ka:ma* envelops the *ji:va*. Through this womb analogy, Sri Sri: *Krushna* teaches that the ***ji:va cannot escape desire entirely while embodied.***

In conclusion, Sri Sri: *Krushna* states firmly that *ka:ma* cannot be completely avoided. Since escaping it is impossible, He proceeds to teach how one should live and act wisely in its presence.

Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes the difficulty of overcoming desire in the verse:

***a:vrutham jna:nam e:the:na jna:nino:
nithyavairina: |***

***ka:ma ru:pe:na kaunthe:ya!
dushpu:re:na:nale:na cha || 3.39 ||***

Here, ***jna:niha*** refers to the *ji:va*. When Sri Sri: *Krushna* speaks of the *jna:ni*, He is not referring to a fully matured or self-realized *ji:va*. A self-realized *jna:ni* requires no instruction,



for full maturity occurs only upon liberation from the clutches of *prakruthi* and *ka:rmic* records. Sri: *Krushna* is addressing bound *ji:vas* who are still under the influence of *prakruthi*.

The verse states that *jna:niha*, the *ji:va* endowed with knowledge of *a:thma* or *ve:dic* scripture, is still *a:vrutham nithyavairina:* — constantly enveloped by an eternal enemy. This enemy, always present and ever-compelling, is named *ka:maru:pena* — *ka:ma*, desire.

Sri: *Krushna* describes two further characteristics of *ka:ma: dushpu:re:na* — it cannot be satisfied, and *analaha* — it is always burning with desire.

Desire arises from the perception of *a:thma jna:na*, but when associated with *prakruthi*, it manifests in three forms: *nithyavairi*, *dushpu:ra*, and *anala*.

The name *nithyavairi* reflects the eternal nature of desire. As long as the *ji:va* remains associated with *prakruthi*, desire will always be present, acting as a relentless enemy. Its danger lies in its compelling force: whenever we see an object we are familiar with, desire provokes us to acquire it. Once provoked,



it drives us to action, refusing to let us rest until we obtain and indulge in the object. *ka:ma* firmly fixates on the object and continually presses us until the desire is fulfilled.

a:charyas refer to *ka:ma* as ***man mattha***.

ma:m matthna:thi — when we encounter an object, *ka:ma* fixates on a particular quality of that object and will not be satisfied until we acquire it and experience that quality. Until the object is obtained, *ka:ma* relentlessly disturbs the mind, striking it like a hammer.

Even if we indulge *ka:ma* by giving the object, it is never fully satisfied. It immediately desires more, seeking objects of greater allure. In this way, *ka:ma* draws the *ji:va* repeatedly into worldly experiences and ultimately submerges him in the mundane world.

A wise person immediately recognizes their own folly, whereas an ignorant person gets carried away by it. Even if they stumble, a reasonably mature person strives to break free from the cycle and gradually improves.



ka:ma is an eternal enemy that can drag a person down at any moment. It remains with the individual until self-realization is achieved. The *ji:va* is the subtle body of the *a:thma*. Consequently, the subtle body always *accompanies* the *a:thma* as it transitions from one physical body to another. There is therefore no question of abandoning the subtle body. Moreover, the subtle body is a manifestation of *prakruthi* and is composed of *rajas*, *thamas*, and *satthva*, which give rise to *ka:ma*.

After *Ra:ma* killed *Ra:va:na*, *Mando:dari*, the wife of *Ra:va:na*, sat beside his lifeless body and lamented: “Hey *Ra:va:na*! Out of ignorance, you believed that your penance had conquered *ka:ma*. In truth, you merely suppressed it. *ka:ma*, together with the senses, lay in wait, like a suppressed enemy ready to strike back. You were ignorant of how to control the senses, and as a result, today they have destroyed you.”

No matter how much we try to control *ka:ma*, it is always ready to strike back. This is why Sri Sri: *Krushna* calls *ka:ma* the eternal enemy.



The Lord also names *ka:ma dushpu:ra*, meaning that no matter how much we indulge it, it can never be satisfied. Small potholes or even sinkholes can eventually be filled with soil and sand, but the desires of the senses are insatiable. *ve:dic* scriptures call the senses ***thrushna:khani***, the insatiable.

The scripture says, “The desires of the senses are a bottomless pit, ***aga:dhe:yam***; it is impossible to measure their depth.”

Why is that? Scholars ask, is there anyone capable of filling this pit?

The answer is that the very objects used to fill it only make it deeper. If the tongue is offered a taste, even once, it demands that taste again and again. Similarly, if the eye becomes accustomed to seeing beauty, it will secretly seek it out again, even when asked not to look.

The sense of hearing, the sense of smell, and the sense of touch behave in a similar way. They are like bottomless pits whose depth only increases the more we try to fill them. Therefore, to truly satisfy them, one must stop continuously feeding them.



But if we stop feeding the senses, we cannot live. Yes, that is true. So, should we feed them or not?

Sri Sri: *Krushna* already addressed this in the second chapter: the senses must be fed while simultaneously practicing deliberate restraint.

vishaya:n indriyarshcharan – Sri: *Krushna* explains that one must understand when to give and when to refrain. Only then should the senses be fed appropriately. For example, when we wish to eat, we first offer the food to the Lord, purifying it through His vision, and then consume it. Such an offering, when eaten, removes all weaknesses of mind and body. Similarly, the senses should be fed only with those things that Krishna deems suitable and provides. Only in this way can these bottomless pits be satisfied.

thrushna: khani aga:dhe:yam – for this reason, Sri: *Krushna* gave another name, ***dushpu:ra***, for desire. He called it the fire of desire, or *ka:ma* - anala. In Sanskrit, ‘ala’ means enough.



anala means ‘not enough’ – it is the nature of desire to always want more. After filling their belly with food, if someone brings a laddu or gulab jamun, people often say, “Why did you bring this now?” Yet no one ever says no. Even if they cannot eat it immediately, they insist on keeping it to eat later. Similarly, if you ask a 90-year-old man whether he is interested in marriage, he may reply, “Who will give me a young girl?” Yet he never says no. Desire is insatiable; this is the dangerous nature of the senses – *anala*, never satisfied.

In Sanskrit, *anala* also means fire. Fire does not discriminate – it does not care whether the object is big or small, whether it can burn or not, whether it belongs to us or others, or whether it is innocent or wise. Its nature is to burn, and it will reduce everything to ashes.

Sri Krishna says, “Just as fire has a single purpose – to burn indiscriminately anything placed into it – *Arjuna*, *ka:ma* behaves in the same way.” That is why he declares,
***nithyavairina: ka:maru:pena kaunthe:ya
dushpu:re:na:nale:na cha a:vrutham jna:nam.***



“For every living being in this world, *Arjuna*, *ka:ma* is an eternal enemy. It can never be satisfied and never says enough, no matter how many objects are given to it. Moreover, it drives living beings to act indiscriminately. *ka:ma* envelops all beings, which is why it is considered a chief enemy.”

Sri: *Krushna* further explains the cruelty of *ka:ma* to *Arjuna*: “*ka:ma* always finds a way to obstruct *jna:na yo:ga*. Therefore, surrender the doership of all actions to Me with strong faith. If you also leave *ka:ma* to Me, it will never be able to harm you.”

Arjuna then asked, “Sri: *Krushna*, where does this *ka:ma* reside? If I know where it exists, I can burn it away. Tell me, to what is *ka:ma* attached?”

We can understand this through a simple analogy: just as plaque sticks to our teeth or dirt clings to our body, and we clean it with a toothbrush, floss, or a shower, *Arjuna* was thinking the same way. If he knew where *ka:ma* resided, he could eliminate it.



Krishna was pleased that *Arjuna* was willing to cleanse himself of *ka:ma* and began to explain to him what *ka:ma* is attached to.

***indriya:ni mano: buddhihi asya:ddhi:shta:nam
uchyathe: |***

***e:thair vimo:hayathy e:shaha jna:nam a:vruthya
de:hinam || 3.40 ||***

Sri: *Krushna* says, “*Arjuna*, these are the places where *ka:ma* resides and attaches itself. First are the ***indriya:ni***, the senses. Second is the ***manaha***, the mind that governs the senses. Third is the ***buddhi***, the intellect. *ka:ma* is attached to all three.”

Now *Arjuna* felt confused. These places are not visible, nor can they be directly accessed for cleansing. He wondered if there was a way to overcome them and remove *ka:ma*.

Sri: *Krushna* reassures him: “Yes, there is a way.”

He continues, “Objects outside the body are visible, and since we can see them, we can choose to accept or reject them. The



objects *within*, however, cannot be grasped or discarded. How can one control objects that have no form yet drive us from *within*?”

Sri: *Krushna* explains further: “The senses enable all our actions. The sense of vision allows us to see, but the *indriya* is not the eyeball itself. It is a subtle, invisible particle located at the tip of the eye. Some people may have perfect eyes, yet they are blind; the sense of vision is missing. Similarly, some people have hands but cannot use them, a nose but cannot smell, or a tongue but cannot taste or speak. The corresponding senses are absent. These senses are subtle and unseen, which makes them impossible to control. For that matter, even the visible body parts cannot be fully controlled.”

“For example,” Sri: *Krushna* says, “we can see our hands and bend the palm forward, yet we cannot bend it backward. Trying forcibly may injure us. If we cannot control visible parts, how can we expect to make the senses, intellect, and mind obey us? Desire, or *ka:ma*, is attached to these very senses.”



Sri: *Krushna* asserts, “Therefore, my boy, you can never fully conquer the senses. If you attempt to control your senses by clamping your hands or legs, or closing your eyes, nose, and ears, *ka:ma* will still be attached to another place: the *manaha*, the mind. Even if the body sits still, the mind travels everywhere.”

“We may sit in a prayer room for meditation, chanting ‘om, om,’ yet our mind continues to wander, observing people and events around us. The senses are subtle, invisible, and constantly active, making them impossible to fully control by force alone.”

The senses and the mind are the primary seats of desire. Because of this, desire constantly pulls them in different directions. That is why a person who tries to meditate and keep the mind still often complains that they cannot focus.

The third place where desire resides is the *buddhi*, the intellect. When a person decides in their mind to pursue a spiritual practice, the intellect, which is also influenced by *ka:ma*, begins to divert them by presenting tempting thoughts



of the material world: “What is wrong in indulging? There is no harm in thinking about it,” and so on.

Mukthi means firm and unwavering knowledge. The *buddhi*, or intellect, is what enables us to arrive at such certainty. It is the faculty that concludes decisively, “This is how it truly is.”

For example, during twilight, when we see a tree stump from a distance, it is difficult to tell whether it is a stump or a person. After observing it carefully for a while, we come to the conclusion that it is indeed a tree stump and not a person. Once this firm understanding arises, we walk toward it without fear. This unwavering conclusion is given by the *buddhi*, the intellect. It provides clear knowledge and prompts action based on that knowledge.

The mind, on the other hand, is the leader that governs the senses. Therefore, it is called *antharindriya*, the inner sense. The other senses, the *karme:ndriyas* or action senses and the *jna:ne:ndriyas* or senses of perception, are called *ba:hya:ndriyas*, the external senses. We need to discipline the external senses, the mind, and ourselves. We



must also discipline our knowledge and discernment. If the senses are not restrained, they naturally run toward undesirable objects and experiences.

There is a story from the time of *Thenali Ra:maSri: Krushna*. Once, people complained to the king about a severe mouse infestation. To solve the problem, the king gave them a cat. Then he provided a cow to supply milk for the cat, a farmer to take care of the cow, and a piece of land to grow grass to feed the cow. The people returned home with all of these arrangements.

They used to milk the cows to feed the cats. The cats happily drank the milk and leisurely roamed around the house. Since the cats were well-fed, the mice also grew strong and wandered freely, unbothered. There was no need for the cats to catch the mice, as they were already satisfied with milk. While distributing milk to the cows and cats, the king laid down a rule.

He said, “Cats should not die and cows should not become weak. I am giving you six months, after which you must report



to me what has happened.” Therefore, the farmers diligently grew grass and fed the cows. The cows produced milk, which was given to the cats. The cats drank the milk and minded their own business. Meanwhile, the mice also roamed freely without fear.

Thena:li Ra:maSri: Krushna brought a cat and other arrangements to his home as well. He observed the situation for a month and was astonished by what he saw. The cows were producing good milk, but feeding it to the cats served no real purpose—the cats were not catching the mice, which defeated the very reason for having them at home. He thought carefully about how to solve the problem.

He realized that the cats could benefit from the milk, but the mice were their natural food. The cats were supposed to hunt the mice, yet they were ignoring them.

The next day, *Ra:maSri: Krushna* boiled the milk and left it in a container for the cat. As usual, the cat went to drink, but immediately burned its mouth and ran away, refusing the milk for the day. *Ra:maSri: Krushna* repeated this for several days,



creating a fear in the cat. Drinking milk became associated with pain, and the cat avoided it at all costs.

Now, without milk and no other food, the cat began to starve. After a few days, hunger forced the cat to hunt.

In this way, *Thenali Ramasri Krishna* cleverly made the cat eat the mice in the house. The cat was finally fed its natural food—the mice—rather than the milk, which was meant for itself and the family.

Now the cat became healthy by eating its natural food, and *Thenali's* family also enjoyed drinking the milk. The cat lived by hunting mice, and the purpose of keeping it was fulfilled. Just as the cat was guided and redirected toward its intended role, it is essential to redirect our senses toward the activities and objects meant for them.

If one assumes that he has become a great *jnani* and therefore avoids engaging the senses, the senses gradually drift toward undesirable activities and unwanted objects. This happens because *kama*, desire, has taken shelter in the senses.



Thus, the senses are the first residence of desire. Since the senses are subtle and difficult to perceive directly, one may falsely believe they are controlled simply by sitting still. In reality, each sense slowly gravitates toward inappropriate objects. This is why desire is described as the primary enemy.

The teaching explains that the senses are powerful and serve as the foremost seat of desire. The gateways of the senses, the eyes, nose, ears, mouth, and skin, are at least accessible and can be regulated to some extent. Yet the mind is even more powerful and dangerous than the senses, for desire also settles deeply *within* it.

In daily life, we observe how dirty water is purified. First, a filter catches the large particles. Smaller ones pass through and require another filter, which removes finer impurities. Even then, minute particles may still escape.

In the same way, as we interact with the material world, experiences generate desires that first settle in the senses, then sink into the mind, and finally become embedded in the intellect. Even if one restrains the external senses and believes



himself to be a *jna:na yo:gi*, deeply rooted desire can still pull him down.

Even if a person withdraws from the world and locks himself in a room, the mind can still roam freely, indulging in worldly objects and experiences. Therefore, the mind cannot be controlled merely by isolation. It must be guided through proper practice.

Right practice involves repeatedly reminding the mind of the higher goal and the knowledge that leads to it. One must gently and consistently direct the mind toward the noble qualities of the desired goal so that it naturally turns away from inferior objects.

The mind should be trained to remember: “The Lord has given this body for His service. These actions are worthwhile and sacred.” In this way, the mind leads the senses toward righteous activity. When the mind is educated and aligned with purpose, the senses follow its direction.

The third seat of desire is the intellect. What role does it play? The intellect misdirects us toward undesirable worldly and



prakruthi related experiences, pulling us away from the higher goal of self realization. It immerses us in the mundane world. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains to *Arjuna* that the senses, the mind, and the intellect are the three primary seats of desire.

He teaches that for anyone embodied in *prakruthi*, even if one possesses *ve:dic* knowledge of *a:thma* and has resolved to attain self realization, desire continues to envelop and delude the senses, mind, and intellect. Because it covers all three, desire is extremely dangerous.

Sri: *Krushna* therefore cautions that no one should abandon *karma yo:ga* believing he has become a *jna:na yo:gi*. Regardless of one's learning or discipline, desire can still pull a person down.

The *Bhagavad Gi:tha* is not meant merely for listening. It is given by the Lord as a guide for living and practice. It is an ***abhya:sa grantham***, a scripture meant to be lived, not just studied.

In the third chapter, Sri: *Krushna* repeatedly warns that desire is powerful enough to defeat even one who believes he has



control over the mind. It constantly resides in the senses, mind, and intellect, waiting for an opportunity to draw a person into unnecessary actions and distractions. No matter how wise one becomes, desire often proves stronger than the instruments of control themselves.

When the *rajas* mode of *prakruthi* comes into contact with beginningless *ka:rmic* records, it transforms the *jna:na* of the *ji:va* into restless wanting: “I want this, I want that.” Material objects provoke attachment *within jna:na* itself. This compelling urge toward possession and experience is called *ka:ma*, desire.

Consequences of renouncing *karma yo:ga*

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that desire is extremely powerful. To accomplish anything meaningful, one must first overcome desire. Yet, He also makes it clear that completely conquering desire is not possible for anyone while embodied.



If someone attempts to suppress desire entirely, Sri Sri: *Krushna* warns of the dangers involved. He teaches that desire is a natural aspect of the body, and as long as one lives, one must continue to function through the body. Instead of fighting desire through withdrawal, He instructs that all actions should be performed as His command and offered as service to Him. When actions are dedicated in this way, they no longer bind or cause harm. Sri: *Krushna* assures that whatever is offered to Him will be protected by His grace. This is why He earlier declared, “Offer all actions to Me.”

However, if a person renounces action believing himself to be a *jna:na yo:gi*, Sri: *Krushna* explains the serious consequences and gives firm instruction in the verse:

***thasma:th thvam indriya:ny a:dau niyamyā
bharatharshabha! |***

***pa:pma:nam prajahi hye:nam jna:na vijna:na
na:sanam || 3.41 ||***

Here, *jna:navijna:na na:sanam* refers to the destruction of both basic and higher knowledge of *a:thma*.



jna:nam, the foundational knowledge of *a:thma*, consists of understanding two essential truths: first, the nature of *a:thma* as described in the second chapter, and second, the dependence of *a:thma* upon the Supreme Lord, as taught in the third chapter.

In the second chapter, Sri: *Krushna* explains that *a:thma* is extremely subtle, finer than the smallest particle. It is not singular but exists in countless forms. *A:thma* is distinct from the body and does not perish when the body deteriorates. Because of its subtle nature, it can enter and inhabit various bodies. Recognizing that *a:thma* is different from and superior to the body is true *jna:nam*.

Yet the greatness of *a:thma* lies not merely in its difference from the body, but in the fact that it belongs to God. Knowledge is incomplete unless one understands the relationship between the *a:thma* and the *Parma:thma*.

This can be compared to changing trains during a journey. Stepping off one train does not automatically bring us to our destination. We must board another train that takes us where



we wish to go. In the same way, realizing “I am not the body” is only the first step. One must also realize, “I belong to God.” Only then does knowledge become complete.

Therefore, first one must be aware that the *a:thma* does not belong to the insentient and unintelligent *prakruthi*. Second, one must realize that the *a:thma* belongs only to *Parama:thma*, who is supremely wise and omnipresent. If we are convinced that the *a:thma* belongs to *Parama:thma*, then we should also believe that it functions according to His command. As a result, the fruits of our actions also go to *Parama:thma*. Therefore, the *a:thma* must give up the sense of doership to *Parama:thma*, offer the fruits of actions to *Parama:thma*, and then the *a:thma* along with *prakruthi* must function for the sake of *Parama:thma*. This is called *vijna:na*.

If the *a:thma* does not leave the burden of *jna:na* and *vijna:na* to the Lord, then desire will destroy the person. If one renounces action altogether, desire will still drag him in undesirable directions. It is like a powerful dust storm that carries a person helplessly in random directions.



Therefore, desire forces us into committing all kinds of sins. Desire itself is the manifestation of sin. Hence, one must give up desire: ***pa:pma:nam prajahi.***

How can desire be given up? ***thasma:th indriya:ni a:dau niyamyā, Bharatharshabha.*** The senses are the first and strongest seat of desire, and they have direct contact with material objects. Therefore, one must first develop the habit of controlling the senses. Gradually, the mind and then the intellect come under control.

Some ignorant people say, “What one does externally does not matter internally. If one has the right knowledge, it does not matter what one eats, where one goes, or what one does. As long as the mind is pure, there is nothing wrong with bodily actions. Devotion exists only in the mind and does not come from external discipline.”

Sri Sri: *Krushna* makes it clear that this view is wrong. ***indriya:ni a:dau niyamyā*** means first you must control the external senses. Only then does the mind come under control. Once the mind is fully controlled, the senses no longer



need separate restraint. But the mind comes under control only by first disciplining the senses.

For example, only after a tree grows strong can cattle be tied to it. Until then, the young plant must be protected from cattle by fencing it. Similarly, the senses must be restrained from running after whatever they want to eat, see, or indulge in. They should engage only in appropriate and righteous activities. This does not mean avoiding action altogether. Rather, one must act continuously on the path of righteousness.

Just as cattle are allowed to graze freely *within* a fenced field, the senses may function freely *within* the boundaries of disciplined and ordained conduct.

Similarly, before engaging the senses in activities, we must first understand which activities are appropriate, which objects may be enjoyed in a righteous way, and which places and situations should be avoided. Only after gaining this clarity should we allow the senses to act. It is only then that desire can be gradually conquered.



The senses are the first means to overcome desire. Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains the reason in the following verse:

indriya:ni para:nya:huhu indriye:bhyah param manaha |

manasas thu para: buddhihi yo: buddhe:h parathasthu saha || 3.42 ||

indriya:ni para:nya:huh means that the senses are extremely difficult to restrain. ***indriye:bhyah param manah*** - means that even if one works hard to control the senses, the mind often releases them toward worldly objects, because the mind governs the senses. Therefore, the mind is more powerful than the senses, and desire resides in the mind as well. While the senses can be restrained to some extent, controlling the mind, which directs the senses, is far more difficult.

Even if one puts great effort into disciplining the mind, Sri: *Krushna* points out that the mind is more stubborn than the senses. One may succeed in controlling external actions, but the mind itself is extremely hard to master.



This is something we experience in daily life. When we sit for meditation or try to read something uplifting, the mind wanders wherever it wishes. It does not readily obey us. This shows how stubborn it is. The reason is that there is something even more powerful behind the mind that drives it, just as unrest in a village may continue despite police presence because an unseen powerful figure is directing it from behind the scenes.

Similarly, when we find ourselves pulled in unwanted directions despite trying to control the mind, it indicates the presence of a stronger force influencing it.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that the mind is more powerful and more deeply affected by desire than the senses. Then He reveals something even stronger:

manasas thu para: buddhihi

The intellect, or *buddhi*, is stronger than the mind. When the intellect forms a firm decision, it compels the mind to follow it. In turn, the mind commands the senses. Thus the senses



operate under the mind, and the mind operates under the intellect, which is an even more powerful seat of desire.

Even more powerful than the *buddhi*, which persuades a person that moving in an unwanted direction is good, is *ka:ma*, or desire. It is desire that drives the intellect itself and makes one accept what is harmful as beneficial. Hence it is called the great enemy, *vairi*, *dushpu:ra*, and *anala*. Therefore, there is no enemy greater than desire, and one must give it up, says Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna*.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* explains that the enemies of *a:thma jna:na* are powerful, each stronger than the other, and among them desire is the most powerful of all. That is why desire is able to control everything. A person cannot conquer this desire by their own strength. The only one who can control it is the Lord Himself. Therefore, Sri Sri: *Krushna* advises *Arjuna* to surrender this burden to Him and continue performing his ordained *karma*.

“Since I am asking you to act, why should you worry? I will take care of the results,” says Sri Sri: *Krushna*, thus



encouraging *Arjuna* toward *karma yo:ga*. With this teaching, Sri Sri: *Krushna* brings the third chapter to a close.

Conclusion

In the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, Sri Sri: *Krushna* emphasized the importance of *buddhi*, the intellect.

vyavasa:ya:thmika: buddhihi e:ka

Sri Sri: *Krushna* said that a person whose goal is *a:thma jna:na* must not only aspire for a higher state but must also develop a firm and unwavering determination toward that goal.

In the third chapter, He explains what disturbs even such a resolute intellect. Even when one has strong determination, external influences and latent desires cause the person to drift away from their higher purpose and engage in undesirable actions.

For example, a person who has spent many years in politics may decide to retire and pursue devotional life. They seek guidance from enlightened souls and sincerely practice austerity and discipline. However, when an old acquaintance



approaches them with an offer for a political position such as Member of Parliament or Member of Legislative Assembly, they immediately accept it.

Despite resolving to live a devotional life, the person returns to politics because of the past *ka:rmic* impressions stored in the mind. It is the underlying desire that pulls them away from spiritual practice and back into their former profession.

Although the person had firmly concluded that a devotional life is better than political life, the moment desire arises, the intellect begins to justify the change. It starts presenting arguments such as, “Perhaps being a politician is not bad after all. Maybe God is giving me another opportunity to serve society.” Eventually, the intellect convinces the person that returning to politics is the right choice.

This is the work of *ka:ma*, desire, which manipulates the intellect itself.

Benjamin Franklin, former president of the USA, once decided to become a vegetarian. It was a noble thought, and many people were pleased with his decision.



One day, he went on a seventeen-day voyage across the sea. After a few days of travel, the passengers exhausted their supply of vegetarian food. As a result, Benjamin had nothing to eat, while all his fellow travelers continued enjoying non-vegetarian meals. Benjamin, on the other hand, was starving.

Although he was extremely hungry, he could not bring himself to eat non-vegetarian food because of his firm resolution to remain vegetarian. He managed to stay that way for three days. On the fourth day, the passengers went fishing. Along with several fish, they caught one very large fish. When they cut open the big fish, a few smaller fish fell out of its stomach.

Seeing this, Benjamin began to reflect. Though he had vowed not to eat non-vegetarian food, he now felt that he must eat or he might not survive. Gradually, he started inventing twisted logic to convince himself that eating non-vegetarian food was not wrong.

He thought, “This large fish is a water-dwelling creature, and the smaller fish are also water-dwellers. If the big fish did not



hesitate to eat other water-dwellers, then what is wrong if I eat them too?”

His real aim was simply to satisfy his hunger. To achieve that, he needed to arrive at a firm conclusion that eating non-vegetarian food was acceptable. Therefore, he created distorted reasoning to justify his decision. As a result, he returned to being a non-vegetarian.

When human beings make a firm decision to achieve something, all their thoughts begin to align with that decision. The urge to achieve something is called *ka:ma*, or desire. The decision forms in the *jna:na*, the intellect, and desire reshapes the intellect accordingly. Once this happens, the intellect begins to declare that the chosen resolution is good and correct.

At the same time, the mind starts generating thoughts in harmony with that decision. The mind then directs the senses to act in line with those thoughts.

Even when the actions are inappropriate or harmful, the mind convinces the senses by saying, “It is fine; eventually you will



get used to it.” For example, when a person wants something hot to drink, the mind suggests coffee. When they take a sip, the hot coffee burns the tongue. The mind then persuades the tongue to sip slowly, claiming that it will gradually become accustomed to the heat. Meanwhile, the intellect invents reasoning to justify that drinking coffee is good for them.

This is the functioning of desire.

In the third chapter, Sri Krishna explains how dangerous desire is in the verse:

***e:vam buddhe:h param buddhva: samsthabhy
a:thma:nam a:thmana: |
jahi sathrum maha:ba:ho:! ka:maru:pam
dura:sadam || 3.43 ||***

Sri Sri: *Krushna* addresses *Arjuna* as ***maha:baho:***, meaning ‘one with great physical strength.’ It is a very meaningful word that Sri: *Krushna* deliberately uses.

Earlier, *Arjuna* believed that through physical power he could bring everything under his control. That is why Sri: *Krushna*



calls him ***maha:baho:*** and gently reminds him, “O mighty-armed one, even though you are physically powerful, you cannot restrain desire.”

Why is that?

Because ***dura:sadam***, desire is extremely powerful and difficult to control. Nothing can restrain it through force alone.

Then what should be done? How can desire be restrained?

It must be restrained through the intellect. First, the intellect should restrain the mind. Then, through the restrained mind, the senses should be properly engaged in action.

The central theme of the third chapter is learning how to restrain the mind and engage the senses correctly. When Sri: *Krushna* says ***samsthabhya a:thma:nam a:thmana:***, he uses the word ***a:thma*** twice.

We have already learned that words such as ***a:thma*** and ***brahma*** carry different meanings based on context. ***A:thma*** can refer to the physical body, the mind, the



individual self, *Parama:thma*, or even one's nature and behavior.

In this verse, Sri: *Krushna* uses *a:thma* twice with two different meanings.

Earlier, he spoke about *buddhi*, the intellect, and *manaha*, the mind. Since the intellect is stronger, it must first control the mind. This is the meaning of *samsthabhya a:thma:nam*, restraining the mind that is inclined toward sense pleasures. The phrase *a:thmana:* indicates guiding it with the higher intellect that has firmly resolved to pursue a higher goal. After this, the senses should be engaged in action.

Consider a stubborn horse that walks backward. Initially, one must walk with it backward while slowly bringing it under control. In the same way, desire naturally pushes the senses into action, often toward unwanted objects. If we suddenly try to stop all activity, the mind will push the senses even more strongly toward harmful thoughts and actions. The intellect may then begin to justify those harmful actions as beneficial. Therefore, activity should not be stopped altogether.



Then how should the intellect be guided?

Sri: *Krushna* teaches that performing *karma* is always beneficial, while renouncing action is harmful. Hence, *karma* must be practiced, and *karma yo:ga* alone is the proper path. This understanding must first be firmly established in the intellect. Then the mind should be gently persuaded.

The body we have received is meant for action. Therefore Sri: *Krushna* says, “***Jahi sathrum maha:baho:***,” meaning, “O mighty-armed one, you alone can conquer this enemy, desire, by engaging the senses in proper action.”

Thus, throughout the third chapter, Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes that engaging the senses is necessary and appropriate. They should be engaged according to the command of God. The *ve:dic* scriptures prescribe which activities are suitable for the human body. First, the mind must be convinced that the activities taught by scripture are truly beneficial.

On the other hand, if you stubbornly try to restrain the senses, control the mind, or forcefully focus your intellect, the desire that drives everything from behind will overpower you. Desire



is extremely powerful. It is closely associated with *ka:rmic* records, and when these *ka:rmic* impressions interact with the restless energy, or *rajas*, of *prakruthi*, desire grows even stronger. Eventually, it suppresses the intellect, mind, and senses while simultaneously obscuring *jna:na*, dragging you downward.

Therefore, you should not attempt to restrain any of these by force. Instead, you should engage happily in activities, since the body is naturally accustomed to action. Naive people often expect rewards from their actions. If you wish to guide and protect such people, you must perform your duties without expecting results.

For your highest good, you must act selflessly, without anticipating any return. Even if you feel personally exempt from action, you still need to perform your responsibilities diligently for the sake of those who look up to you. Your actions inspire others and contribute to maintaining the world order. Thus, you must fulfill your duties as conscientiously as a naive person performs their work, even if they expect results.



King Janaka performed his duties in this manner. I, too, carry out my activities in many ways. Therefore, it is not appropriate for you to renounce the battle and wander the forests in pursuit of austerities. You must act now and fight.

Sri Sri: *Krushna* concludes the third chapter by saying, “Every human being, as long as they are embodied and functioning, must observe *karma yo:ga*. Fulfilling one’s responsibilities is proper, but do not expect results from your actions. Leave the burden of doership to Me. I will take care of everything.”

In this chapter, Sri: *Krushna* emphasizes the greatness of *karma yo:ga*, explains the obstacles that arise while practicing it, instructs how to control these obstacles, and teaches how to perform *karma yo:ga* while surrendering the doership to Him. For this reason, enlightened teachers have named this chapter *karma yo:ga*. This concludes the third chapter of the Sri:mad *Bhagavad Gi:tha*.

***O:m thathsadithi Sri:madbhagavadgi:tha:su
upanishathsu bramhavidya:ya:m yo:gasa:sthre:***



***Sri:Sri: Krushna:rjuna samva:de: karma yo:go:
na:ma thruthi:yo:dhya:yaha***

|| Jai Srimanna:rayana! ||

Questions

1. What is the name and purpose of this chapter?
2. What is the main topic of this chapter?
3. What is the key connection between this chapter and *Ve:da*?
4. What is *Arjuna*'s doubt? What is the reason? What is Lord Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s response?
5. Who is eligible to pursue only *jna:na yo:ga* without performing *karma yo:ga*?
6. What is *karma chakra*?
7. What reason did Sri Sri: *Krushna* give while explaining that humans who are interested in liberation must start with *karma yo:ga* only?
8. Who, when and why *yajnas* were created?
9. Did Sri Sri: *Krushna* practice *karma yo:ga*? If so, how?
10. What is the difference between scholars and ignorants in practicing *karma yo:ga*?
11. What is the key principle in performing *karmas* without getting bound?
12. What is Sri Sri: *Krushna*'s response to *Arjuna*'s question on who is forcibly making him do sinful actions despite no penchant towards doing bad things?
13. How are humans motivated towards doing sinful actions and how can we overcome them?

