Concise Geetä

For Students

108 Selected Verses from the Bhagavad Geetä
The Celestial Song of the Supreme Lord

The Essence of Yoga and Vedānta
Spiritual Wisdom of Eastern Traditions

Dr. Ved Prakash Chaudhary
Educators' Society for Heritage of India (ESHA)
Concise Geetä

Explaining the Four Spiritual Paths

- Dhyāna Yoga: Meditation for Inner Peace
- Karma Yoga: Selfless Service to Humanity
- Gyāna Yoga: Spiritual Wisdom (Vedānta)
- Bhakti Yoga: Loving Devotion to Lord
Dedication

त्वदीयम् वस्तु गोविंद - तुभ्यमेव समर्पये

Dedicated to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa who bestows blessings and bounties on all beings.

with Profound Gratitude to my Gurus:
Pujya Śwāmi Dayānanda Saraswatī
Pujya (Dr.) Śwāmi Śhāshvatānanda
Prayers to Lord Sri Krishna

श्री कृष्ण वंदना

श्रीकृष्ण गोविंद हरे मुरारे
हे नाथ नारायण वासुदेव ।
जिस्वे पिबस्वामृतम् एतदेव
गोविंद दामोदर माधवेति । ।

Let us meditate on all names, forms and attributes of Sri Krishna as Lord Vishnu, Govind, Hari, Murari, Vasudeva, and Damodar.

As you meditate on His attributes as Madhava, experience the sweetness of nectar on thy tongue.

मूकम् करोति वाचालम्
पंगुम् लंघयते गिरिम् ।
यतु कृपा तमहम् वंदे
परमानन्द माधवम् । ।

Whose compassion enables one with a speech disorder to become an eloquent speaker, or a physically disabled person to climb a mountain,

I pray to Lord Sri Krishna who is Paramanand (Greatest bliss) and Madhava (Lord of the universe).
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Preface

Yoga and meditation are widely practiced; their benefits towards physical and mental health are well researched and understood by seekers of balanced and holistic wellness in the western world. However, the spiritual dimension of yoga in its fullness and richness, is not as well established because authentic yet accessible sources that present the spiritual dimension of yoga in a simple, contemporary, western context are not widely available.

This small booklet aims to provide a simple but comprehensive overview of the spiritual dimensions of yoga as recited by Lord Sri Krishna in the Geetā. It is written for the students of Sanskrit, philosophy, culture and yoga, and TM practitioners who have interest in learning about the Eastern wisdom traditions and want to learn more about the spiritual dimensions of yoga and vedânta.

The Bhagvad Geetā is the most revered sacred scripture of Hindus. Ever since its first translation by Charles Wilkins¹ it has been greatly admired by American spiritual seekers, like Ralph Waldo Emerson² (1803-1882), Henry David Thoreau³ (1818-1862), and Walt Whitman (1819-1892). Since then, numerous translations and commentaries on Geetā have been written, yet Geetā remains difficult to understand for many seekers because it requires sadhana to derive understanding.

Bhagvad Geetā, a poetic dialogue between Lord Sri Krishna and Prince Arjuna, presents a well reasoned and compelling appeal to fight evil, injustice, and corruption at both levels: in the physical world to uphold Dharma (righteousness) and create a just society where people can live in peace and harmony, as well as from within, to ennoble oneself to achieve lasting peace and happiness, and ultimately to free oneself from the cycle of life and death (attain Moksha) through union with the Supreme.

The dialog between Lord Krishna and prince Arjuna took place thousands of years ago and makes references to the society of that ancient period. The lessons in this

¹ The Bhagvat Geeta, or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjûn (1785)
² Emerson wrote of Geeta in his journal in 1831 “It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spake to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us”. Emerson founded the Transcendental Club in 1836.
³ Author of Walden, wrote: “In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad Geeta, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seems puny and trivial.” He also wrote: “Whenever I have read any part of the Vedas, I have felt that some un-earthly and unknown light illuminated me. In the great teaching of the Vedas, there is no touch of the sectariansim. It is of all ages, climes, and nationalities, and is the royal road for the attainment of the Great Knowledge.”
booklet do not provide a literal translation but try to relate the sense of the selected verses to the modern world through modern vernacular as used in the English medium in the West.

Geetä is composed of seven hundred (700) verses organized in 18 chapters. In order to present the important themes and messages of Geetä in only 108 verses, I have selected what I considered the most profound verses from all the chapters and compiled them in five short, coherent lessons: one each for the four spiritual paths (Dhyāna, Gyāna, Karma and Bhakti) and one chapter on Self-discipline which is essential for anyone trying to tread on the path of spirituality. Obviously, verses in this booklet are not presented in the same order in which they appear in Geetä, but in the order in which they are relevant to the five lessons organized in this booklet.

The inspiration for this booklet came from H.H. Mahāmandaśēwar (Dr.) Swāmī Shāswatānanda of Akhand Geetā Peeth, Kurukshetra, India, in his lectures at Ved Mandir in East Brunswick, NJ. Its content is highly influenced by his lectures and by the writings and lectures of H.H. Swami Chinmayānanda and H.H. Swami Dayānanda Saraswati of Ārsha Vidyā Gurukulam, PA.

The outline and structure of this monograph came to me in a flash of insight with a divine impulse to write it. But the selection of verses, while limiting the total number to 108, and finding words, equivalent English expressions and examples to express my thoughts as I intuitively understood each selected verse, has been a daunting challenge which took, on and off, several years.

I offer loving gratitude to my wife, Rajni, and to family and friends for their interest and encouragement for writing this booklet. Special, heart-felt gratitude is due to two young people: Amit Chaturvedi (Ph.D. candidate at University of Hawaii) and Sona Chaudhary (High school over achiever in English; published author by the 6th grade) and a colleague Piyush Desai, without whose critical reviews and editing skills this booklet would have never completed.

Critical reviews and suggestions from Dr. Ari Jain, Dr. Ram Misra, Dr Ramesh Paliwal, Jai Chaudhary, Sharon McGreevy, and Ashu Sharma have helped bring this book into its present form and are deeply appreciated. Special gratitude to Swami Tattvavidānanda of Ārsha Vidyā Gurukulam, PA and Swami Jyotirmayananda of Anand Ashram, Kerala for their guidance and encouragement.

Ved Prakāsh Chaudhary
Transliteration and Pronunciation Guide for Sanskrit words

Bhagavad Geetä is composed in beautiful Sanskrit verses that are easy to recite and remember. Also, the sound of Sanskrit language gives the feeling of a deeper spiritual connection which is not possible with any translation. Therefore, this book attempts to make it possible for the reader to learn the teachings of Geetä from the original source.

Sanskrit is an elegant language with phonetic alphabet, Devanāgarī (Divine script), containing 14 vowels and 36 consonants, with a separate character for each distinct speech sound. Unfortunately, even those with the knowledge of Devanāgarī script can not easily read Geetä.

What makes reading Geetä difficult is the practice of joining words together in Sanskrit. For example: Param + ātmā becomes Paramātmā, a common word for God. But when multiple words are spliced, e.g., Karmani + eva + adhikāraḥ + te = Karmanyevādhikāraste, it becomes difficult to read the verse, un-splice the constituent words, and understand the meaning.

In order to make it easy to read and understand, I have written the verses without splicing words together. Reading the verses with separate, distinct words is very effective in remembering them. And by dwelling on the meaning of words, it is possible to appreciate the deeper message as it was meant in Sanskrit; No translation can communicate the elegance, beauty and shades of meaning that the original Sanskrit verse carries.

The text in this booklet contains verses in Sanskrit for readers who know (or want to learn) Devanāgarī. For others, a simple transliteration scheme has been used to write Sanskrit words using English alphabet (with 5 vowels and 21 consonants) in a manner that is intuitive to English readers. It would facilitate in pronouncing the words correctly.

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4 The International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) is commonly used for writing Sanskrit words in English alphabet. However, IAST employs diacritical marks that are inconsistent with the pronunciation guides in American English dictionaries and, therefore, unfamiliar to English readers. In order to avoid the use of unfamiliar diacritical marks, we have used only a subset of IAST.
Vowels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronounced as:</th>
<th>Pronounced as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a as in above, acute, alone</td>
<td>i as in it, fit, kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>å as in father, jär, fär, cår</td>
<td>ï or ee as in meet, keep, sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ai as a in fat, hat, cat</td>
<td>o as in go, slow, boat, pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>au as in author, Paul, haul</td>
<td>u as in put, pull, push, full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e as in San Jose, crochet</td>
<td>ü or oo as in cool, fool, tool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General (intuitive) rule: a line above the vowel indicates a long vowel sound.

Consonants: The reader should become familiar with the following notations to differentiate between soft and hard sounds and aspirated sounds used in Sanskrit.

**General rule:** A dot under the letter indicates hard sound; Aspirated sounds have an ‘h’ added.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal soft/hard sounds</th>
<th>Aspirated sounds pronounced as:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b as in but, boy, basic</td>
<td>bh as in abhor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c as in epic, dharmic</td>
<td>ch as in chalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d (soft sound) as in this, that</td>
<td>dh as in adhere, breathe-hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d (hard sound) as in done</td>
<td>dh as in hardhat, redhad, madhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g as in going, great</td>
<td>gh as in doghouse, loghouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j as in just, judge, jewel</td>
<td>jh as in leisure, hedgehog (hejhog)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k same as c in cat, car…</td>
<td>kh as in chutzpah, inkhorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ksh sounds like kch</td>
<td>n hard sound, not found in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n as in nut, not, note</td>
<td>th as in thunder, thatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t (soft sound) as in pasta</td>
<td>th as in anthill, warthog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t (hard sound) as in total, art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other consonants have roughly the same sounds as in English.
Frequently used simple Sanskrit words:

न (na) not म (mā) not च (cha and
अहम (aham) I मम (mam) my, mine माम (mām) to me
tvam you त्वा (tvā) to you त्वाम (tvām) to you
tat that तम (tam) to him ते (te) they, to you
s: sah he य: (yā) whoever सा (sā) she
इदम (idam) this एतद् (etad) this अदस् (adas) that
यदा (yadā) when कदा (kadā) when तदा (tadā) then (time)
यथा (yathā) as, like तथा (tathā) same wa इव (iva) as, like
अस्मि (asmi) am अस्ति (asti) is इति (iti) like this
आदि (ādi) beginning अंत (ant) end अनन्त (anant) endless, infinite
कः (kā) who, what कथम् (katham) how किम् (kim) who, what
tat: tatah from there तत्र (tatra) there
यत: (yat) from where यत्र (yatra) where ever यत (yat) since
कुत: (kutah) from where कुत्र (kutra) where
chet if so तहिं (tarhi) then (logic) किन्तु (kintu) but
इह (ih) here हि (hi) indeed भूयः (bhūyah) again

Frequently used Compound words
that have not been broken out in the text:

चाहम् (च + अहम) chāham (cha + aham) = and I
चापि (च + अपि) chāpi (cha + api) = and also
चौव (च + एव) chaiva (cha + eva) = and only
चौन्त (च + एनम्) chainam (cha + enam) = and … to this
नैन्त (न + एनम्) nainam (na + enam) = not … to this

Epithets used in Geeta for Sri Krishna:
Achyuta, Govinda, Keshava, Hari, Madhava, Madhusūdan, Vāsudeva

Epithets used in Geeta for Arjuna:
Pārtha, Pāndava, Bhārata, Kaunteya, Dhananjaya, Mahābāho
Essential Vocabulary

Aham  
pronoun I; also self-centered ego

Ahamkāra  
Ego, false pride

Ahinsā  
Non-violence, not harming any living being

ānanda  
Bliss, pure joy

Ananta  
Limitless, infinite, God

ātmā  
Soul, spirit, self, or the essence of life

Bhagavāna  
Divine (God)

Bhārata  
India in Sanskrit and other Indian languages

Bhārata  
Prince Arjuna, a descendent of an ancient Indian dynasty started with King Bharat

Bhakti  
Surrendering to Divine with love, devotion and service

Bhāvam  
Emotion, Spiritual Energy Field

Bhoga  
Enjoyment, indulgence in sensory gratification

Bhūta  
Physical entity (living body)

Brahmā  
The creator aspect of Supreme Godhead

Brahman  
Absolute Supreme Divinity (Godhead)

Brahmin  
A highly educated person, belonging to the priestly class

Chit  
Consciousness

Chitta  
Deep thought, collection of all memories of life

Chintana  
Thinking of something

Dāna  
Donation, offering something of value, service to humanity

Dharma  
Principles of virtuous human conduct in harmony with the universal laws of nature. Includes notions of moral duty and social justice for harmony and well being of society.

Deha  
Physical body

Dehī  
Metaphysical Soul or Spirit dwelling in the physical body

Devā  
Divine Angel, also written as Devatā**

Devī  
Feminine form of Devā

Divya  
Divine, enlightened

Dhārana  
Meditation

Dukha  
Pain, sadness, misery (antonym: Sukha)

Gyāna  
Spiritual Knowledge, wisdom

Guna  
Three inherent qualities in nature (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas)

Indriyān  
Sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose…)

Īśvara  
Lord (God)

Jīva  
Living being

Kāma  
Desire, sensory gratification, enjoyment

Karma  
Deeds, metaphysical law of human actions and reactions (i.e., effects on one’s own life), the sum total of one’s actions in the current and past lives that determines the possibilities and circumstances of future lives
Krodha  
Anger

Kshetra  
Field, field of action, domain of activity

Kuru  
Dynasty in Northwest India

Mana, Mānas  
Mind, Mental

Mandir  
Hindu temple

Mantra  
Sanskrit verse for prayer or chant

Māyā  
Creative aspect of Brāhmaṇ with three Guṇa, attachment to material objects

Moksha  
Objective of human life: Liberation from the cycle of life and death by uniting the soul with the spirit of Brahman

Pāṇḍava  
Prince Arjuna (plural: all five noble Sons of King Pāndu)

Paramātmā  
Supreme Soul (Godhead)

Prakriti  
Mother nature, physical body, inborn personality traits

Pūjā  
Hindu prayer ritual

Purusha  
ātmā (the life of physical body), man (in common usage)

Rajas  
Guṇa (tendency to indulge in sensory gratification)

Sansāra  
World; the cycle of life and death (Reincarnation)

Sat  
Truth; original, changeless essence

Sattva  
Guṇa (tendency to pure, virtuous thoughts and deeds)

Sevā  
Volunteer service to elders, others, as an offering to God

Sukha  
Pleasure, happiness (antonym: Dukha)

Sri, Shrī  
A word of respect

Tamas  
Tendency to indulge in impure, bad thoughts and deeds

Tapas  
Virtuous austerity, self-discipline, self-control

Upanishad  
108 Hindu scriptures (also called Vedānta): Ishā, Kena, …

Veda  
Oldest (4) Hindu scriptures: Rig, Yajur, Atharva, Sām

Vedānta  
Spiritual wisdom as contained in Geetā and Upanishads

Yagya, Yajna  
An undertaking sacrificing self-interest for the good of society

Yoga  
(yoke) Integrating body, mind, intellect with ātmā.

** English language has no words equivalent to Devī and Devatā. These words have been incorrectly translated as ‘gods’ and convey the sense that Hinduism is polytheistic. It is important to understand that Devīs and Devatās are different names, forms, and aspects of the same One God, called Brahman in Vedas.
Historical Perspective

Many thousands of years ago, perhaps during the Indus Valley Civilization (approximately five thousand years ago) a mighty Kuru dynasty of Kshatriyas (protectors of the weak) ruled large parts of North India with their capital in Hastinapur (northwest India). When the ruling king Pându died, his eldest son, Yudhisthîra, was too young to occupy the throne, so Pându’s only brother Dhritarâṣṭra, who was blind from birth, became the caretaker king.

King Pându had five sons (collectively called Pândavas). They were noble, pious and righteous. Dhritarâṣṭra had one hundred sons (collectively known as Kauravas), but most of them were embodiment of evil. When he became too old, his eldest son, Duryodhana, wanted to occupy the throne even though Yudhisthîra was the eldest and wisest among all Pândavas and Kauravas and therefore, had right to succession. Dhritarâṣṭra, forgetting his moral duty to confer the throne on the eldest and ablest successor, supported Duryodhan’s unjust desire for the throne. Meanwhile, the subjects of the kingdom had become miserable and the moral character of the royal family had become despicable.

In this epoch, Srä_krishna, who was an Avatār (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu, had appeared on earth to guide kings and rulers in virtuous ways to serve their people and uphold justice. He had established a mighty kingdom in Dwarika (present day Gujarāta) and was the wisest and most respected statesman of his time. He was related to the Kuru royal family as a maternal cousin of Pândavas, so he took upon himself to counsel Duryodhana and mediate the dispute of succession peacefully. However, despite his best efforts, Duryodhana would not concede even five inches of land to Pândavas, let alone giving them half the kingdom.

Duryodhana proclaimed that if Pândavas wanted even an inch of land, they would have to wage a war with his formidable army. Reluctantly, Pândavas, in the interest of upholding Dharma (moral duty) for the welfare of the masses in their kingdom, agreed to fight as the last resort. Srä_krishna declared that he will not fight on either side, but Duryodhana insisted on his help so Srä_krishna gave his army to him. On the other hand, Arjuna requested only for his presence on his side, so he agreed to serve not as a warrior (not fighting with weapons) but as the charioteer and adviser to Arjuna who was a true friend of Srä_krishna and a noble warrior and ardent warrior.

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5 The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) or Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilization (SSC) was a Bronze Age civilization that existed from 3300–1300 BCE. Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_Valley_Civilization

6 A seminar was held on January 5-6, 2003 in Bangalore, India on “The Date of Mahabharata War: based on Astronomical Data Using Planetarium Software” where several eminent researchers submitted papers. Based on the scientific research and evidence based on archeology, astronomy and linguistics by Dr. Narahari Achar (a professor of physics at University of Memphis, TN) and others, the seminar officially accepted that the Mahabharata War began on 22nd November, 3067 BCE. Ref: http://www.patheos.com/blogs/drishtikone/2009/08/krishna-and-mahabharat-historical-reality/
Kshatriya (defender of the weak) of his time ready to uphold justice and Dharma (righteousness) in society.

Before the start of the war, Srí Krishna counseled Arjuna not only in his immediate Dharma but, more deeply, in the basic questions asked by every intelligent human being at critical times in their life: Who am I? What is the purpose of life? What will happen to me after I die? What is right or what is wrong in a given situation? Is there a God? Who (or what) is God, the Ultimate Reality? How can I know the Ultimate Truth, the Ultimate Reality?

While this story is set in a physical place and time: a royal dynasty, with a looming war, and a mighty leader, Arjuna, engulfed in self doubt, not knowing what to do, this is also an unmistakable metaphor for the inner struggle of what is the right thing to do when we find ourselves in a moral quandary, which happens to each one of us from time to time.

Unmistakable metaphor? You ask, how so? Well, think of Arjuna as any human being and Srí Krishna as the Supreme (God) who, as the charioteer, guides one's life. Further, the blind king Dhrita-rāṣṭra is the metaphor for human beings blinded with greed and passion; the battle is the metaphor for the inner struggle between a few good thoughts (like the five Pandavas) against a large army of bad habits, or evil thoughts (like one hundred Kauravas) that might delude us when thinking about questions of what is right or wrong in many stressful situations that we go through in our work life and home life.

Through this metaphor, Bhagvad Geetā blends the two inter-related aspects of reality:
1. the physical (ādhi-bhautik) aspect: as a physical war between two armies.
2. the metaphysical, (ādhyātmik) aspect: for example, an inner struggle between right and wrong, evil and virtue, in human psyche.

In other words, whatever phenomenon exists in the physical universe also exists within our selves. Our bodies with souls are microcosms; the physical universe is the macrocosm; and the Divine pervades both the microcosm and the macrocosm. Accordingly, this physical war between Pāṇḍava and Kaurava armies is perceived by spiritually intuitive thinkers as the universal phenomenon of man’s inner struggle.

Perhaps, this is the aspect of Geetā that Mahatma Gandhi took to heart when he wrote: “When doubts haunt me, disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagvad-Geetā and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow.”
Concise Geeta

Background: Setting the Stage

The blind king Dhritarashtra spoke:

Verse B.1  धर्मक्षेत्रे कुर्क्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः:
मामकः पाण्डवः चैव किम् अकुर्वतं सम्भवः (BG1.1)
Dharma-kshetre kuru-kshetre samavetā yuyutsavah
māmakāḥ Pāṇḍavāḥ chaiva kim akurvata Śanjaya?

Dhrita-rāśtra, the blind king, sitting in his palace, asked his wise counsel, Sanjaya, who had ‘divya-drishṭi’ (divine vision) that enabled him to see things happening in far off places:

Assembled in the field of righteousness (Dharm-Kshetra),
on the holy lands of Kuru dynasty (Kuru-kshetra),
intent on waging a war,
what did the Pāṇḍavas and my sons do?
Tell me Sanjaya!

Geetā starts with the two words Dharm-Kshetra and Kuru-kshetra. The first word, Dharm-kshetra, declares the subject matter of Bhagvad Geetā: the domain of spiritual wisdom and moral deeds. The second word Kuru-kshetra suggests a physical field of war, conflict, or struggle between the forces of good and evil. Thus, Bhagvad Geetā synthesizes the field of human thought and action at two levels: the physical and the spiritual.
The discourse of Śrī Krishna addresses the constant struggle in the human psyche between right and wrong.

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Serial numbers of verses in the chapters of this booklet are different from the verse numbers in Bhagvad Geetā. I have marked verse numbers of Bhagvad Geetā as (BG xx). Thus, here BG 1.1 means this verse is from Bhagvad Geetā Chapter 1, verse 1, whereas its serial number in this booklet is B.1 denoting Background chapter, verse 1.
The metaphor continues to the next level, as illustrated in the picture here: Sri Krishna serves as the charioteer of Arjuna’s chariot that is drawn with four horses, as well as his mentor and spiritual guide. Metaphorically, the chariot is the physical body and the horses driving the chariot are the sense organs. The reins of the horses are the nervous system including the brain and the mind. Prince Arjuna, owner of the chariot, symbolizes the ātmā (spirit) dwelling in the body, whereas the charioteer is the intellect; in this case, it is Sri Krishna himself, as Paramātmā, the highest principle guiding a pure ātmā.

Thus, while the physical background presented in the first verse (1.1) was a battle field with two rival armies (representing vice and virtue), the discourse Sri Krishna offered involved the entire field of human actions, reactions, emotions, and experiences involving our physical self (body, senses, mind and intellect, …) and our metaphysical self (ātmā), which is the source of vitality and intelligence (consciousness) permeating every cell in the body.

“Horses which cannot be brought under control (running without reins), a car without brakes, and a person without sense control, are all extremely dangerous and heading for disaster.”  Source: The Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Sri Krishna's discourse in Geeta reveals the mystery that is life and extends to the conduct of human life, to the philosophy of life, by addressing relevant questions: What is the purpose of life? and How to live a life of meaning and purpose? …

Thus the eternal, internal struggle of human beings is the backdrop of the comprehensive divine lecture of Sri Krishna. His words were not only addressed to prince Arjuna but to all humanity. His message contains the over-arching theology of Sanatan Dharma (eternal order or universal principles) i.e., Hinduism.

This verse has a highly significant practical application for daily life. At the end of the day, take time to do some introspection and ask yourself this question: in your thoughts and deeds today, who won: Kauravas or Pândavas? If greed prevailed, Kauravas won. If you did some justice, prevented injustice from happening, or if you helped some one in need, then Pândavas won. Such daily introspection along with some reading of Geeta and meditation will lead you to a righteous life, on the path of spirituality.

Thus, the physical, adhyātmik and divine aspects are all beautifully integrated and interwoven throughout the discourse in Geeta.

From here on, all the verses are spoken by Sri Krishna and Arjuna in a dialog and communicated by the wise minister Sanjaya, with Divya-drishṭi (divine vision), to the blind king Dhrita-râshṭra.
A Deeper Understanding of Kshetra

In his dialog with prince Arjuna, Śrī Kṛṣṇa expanded the notion of Kshetra (field) to the most fundamental level – the field of all existence, including all human experiences – through the human body and the soul (ātmā) in this way:

Verse B.2 and B.3

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेयं क्षेत्रम् इति अभिधीयते
एतत् यो वेति तं प्राहः क्षेत्रज्ज इति तद् विदः

Mahā-bhūtāni āhākaraḥ: buddhiḥ abhyaktaṁ eva ch
Indriyāṇāṁ dāśākhaḥ ca pānta vaccana-gocharāḥ.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa: This human body, O Prince, is known as the Kshetra, the Field of all human actions, or deeds in this life. It consists of the five macro-elements (Table 1).

Table 1
Five Macro-Elements (Mahā-bhūtā) in the Physical Universe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Macro-Elements</th>
<th>Common Translation</th>
<th>Real (Expanded) Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kshiti or Bhūmi</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Solids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jal or Āpah</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Liquids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agni or Pāvak</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Heat, Light, Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samīr or Vāyu</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Gases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gagan or Ākāsh</td>
<td>Sky</td>
<td>Space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The physical body made of five macro-elements is called 'Sthūla Sharīra' or Gross Body. Note that the entire physical universe is also made of the same five macro-elements.
Further Śrī Krishna explained:
The body is supported by ten sense organs: five senses of
cognition and five senses of action (Table 2). Additionally,
it is equipped with the mind that controls the senses, the
intellect that guides the mind, the subconscious that exerts
unseen, hidden influences over the mind, and the ego
which controls the human psyche.

Further more, the Kshetra (Field) also includes the sense
objects embedded in the five macro-elements of the
physical universe. The five senses of cognition constantly
interact with their objects as shown in Table 2 and give us
the sensory perception of the physical world around us.

Table 2
Five Senses of Cognition (Gyāna Indriyān)
and their Objects (Fields of Operation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense Organs</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Sense Objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Field of vision: every thing visible in the physical universe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ears</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>Field of sound: every sound audible to human ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>Field of all good and bad smells: scents, aromas, fumes and perfumes, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>All good and bad tastes: sweet, sour, pungent, bitter, creamy, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin</td>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>Feel of any thing touching the skin over any part of the body: soft, hard, harsh, abrasive, rough, smooth, hot, cold, warm, gentle, loving, caress …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 The concept of Kshetra signifies unity of all energy fields in the universe.
This idea of unity of all energy fields in the physical universe (gravitational field, electromagnetic field, …) was followed by Albert Einstein as he tried to mathematically prove the Unified Field theory. This field of research is still continuing in modern physics.
The five senses of cognition: Eyes always seeing, ears hearing, nose smelling, tongue tasting, and skin feeling through touch (including the functions of nerves and brain) constantly provide us physical perception of the world around us.

Additionally, the five Action Organs (Karma Indriyān) also controlled by the mind are: Hands, feet, and organs of speech, procreation, and elimination.

'Sookshma Sharira' or 'Subtle body' is defined as an aspect of body consisting of eighteen elements: the mind, intellect, and ego, along with the five senses of cognition, five objects of sense cognition, and the five senses of action.

Lord Śrī Krishna further added:
The ātmā governs this multi-dimensional Kshetra of ten senses, together with the mind, the intellect, the sub-conscious, and the ego; therefore, it is called the Kshetragya (the Knower of the Field).

That word Kshetragya, the Knower, refers to the base of intelligence, or consciousness that pervades the Kshetra in every cell of the body, and is called the ātmā. When ātmā departs (at death), the senses, the mind, and the intellect stop functioning, and know nothing, because the 'Knower of the field', the consciousness, has left the body. Read more about it in Lesson 4-A. Knowledge of the Self (ātmā or Spirit).

Thus, at the Adhyātmic level, Kshetragya is ātmā; but at the universal (Daivik, divine) level, Kshetragya is Paramātmā (Infinite Consciousness, Godhead, Brahman).
Hierarchy of Intelligence within the body (Kshetra)

B.4 इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुः इन्द्रियेभ्यं परं मनः
मनसः तु परा बुद्धि: यो बुद्धे: परतः तु स:  (BG 3.42)
Indriyāni parāṇi āhur indriyebhyah param manah
manasah tu para buddhīḥ yo buddheḥ parataḥ tu saḥ.

Srī Krishna further explained the hierarchy of intelligence pervading the Kshetra:

1. The five senses of perception continuously survey and collect information about the world around us and inform the mind.
2. The mind constantly monitors and controls the senses, develops cognition, and feelings of pleasure and pain.
3. The mind is guided and counseled by the intellect, thus intellect is superior to the mind.
4. Finally, superior to the intellect is He (who is the Kshetragya, the divine guide, the conscience, in the form of the soul, ātmā, in the body).
Let Your Conscience be Your Guide

B.5 एवं बुद्धे: परं बुद्धवा संस्तगृह्य आत्मानम् आत्मना जहि शत्रुं महाबहों कामरूपं दुरासदम् (BG 3.43)
Evam buddheh param buddhvā sanstabhya ātmānam ātmanā jahi shatrum mahā-bāho kāma-rūpam durā.sadam.

Knowing that ātmā is superior to intellect, and restraining your lower self (ego, pride, anger, desires) by your higher Self (noble instinct, conscience, and intellect fortified with wisdom),
O mighty-armed Prince, conquer the enemy that is ever present in the form of greed, filled with multitude of desires.

But, be forewarned, this enemy (the greed) is the hardest of all enemies to conquer.

This verse illustrates the overarching metaphor in Geetā: the war in “Dharma-kshetra Kuru-kshetra” is metaphorically the war within one's own self, that which is hardest to conquer, and that which Sri Krisna asks Arjuna, the mighty-armed Prince, to engage in and try to win. Only after discovering our divine existence (higher self, ātmā) can we restrain the lower self (ego, pride, anger, desires) by the guidance of the Divine Self.
Lesson 1
Self-discipline
Controlling the Body and Mind
through the Intellect

Before treading on the path of spirituality, it is an essential prerequisite that one builds a strong foundation with moral values and principles that elevate human consciousness above the narrow bounds of greed, selfishness, and sectarianism. The first lesson contains verses from Geetā that encourage and guide us in developing a disciplined character that leads to success and inner happiness in life.
The Strong Pull of Senses

1.1  इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन् -- मनो अनुविधीयतें
तद् अस्य हरति प्रज्ञां -- वायुः नावम् इवाम्भसि  (BG 2.67)

Indriyāṇāṁ hi caratāṁ yan mano anuvideeyate
tad asya harati pragyāṁ vāyuh navam ivāmbhasi.

Lord Śrī Krishna spoke to Prince Arjuna:
Senses of cognition are constantly interacting with their objects. Any one of the senses, at any given time, tends to pull the mind in its direction - in the same way as a powerful gust of wind pulls a sailboat across the water. At times, driven by the sheer intensity of sense perceptions, one gets carried away – and loses one's intellect.

A sail boat pulled by wind across a body of water
1.2 यत्तो हि अपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः (BG 2.60)
Yatato hi api kaunteya purushasya vipaschitah
indriyani pramatheenii haranti prasabham manah.

Even when a wise person of decent character strives for self-discipline, his mind can get carried away by his senses ... because they (senses) are very powerful and dynamic; constantly churning the stream of thoughts in one's mind. Be constantly on guard, dont get carried away!

The Sequence of Moral Destruction

1.3 ध्यायतो विषयान्तू पुंसः संगः तेषु उपजायते
संगात् सज्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधः अभिजायते (BG 2.62)
Dhyayato vishayantau punah sangah tesu upajayate
sangat Sanjayate kama kamaat krodhah abhijayate.

When a person dwells on an object of sensory gratification (food, music, any attractive object) a sort of attachment starts to build towards that object. From such attachment arises "desire", and when that desire is not fulfilled, it gives rise to anger and frustration.

1.4 क्रोधात् भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात् स्मृतिः विब्रहमः
स्मृति भ्रंशात् बुद्धि नाशः बुद्धि नाशात् प्रणश्यति (BG 2.63)
Krodhat bhavati sammohah sammohah smriti vibhramah
Smriti bhranashat buddhi-nasha buddhi-nashat praanyakhati.

Anger is a powerful emotion. It deludes the mind and destablizes one's mental balance. Even his/her memory is disturbed with thoughts that further fuel the anger.

Due to the loss of rational thinking, episodes of anger can destroy the sanity of a person.
Lift Yourself with your Bootstraps

1.5 उद्दरेत् आत्मना आत्मानमू न आत्मानमू अवसादयेत्
आत्मैव हि आत्मनः बन्धुः आत्मैव रिपुः आत्मनः: (BG 6.5)

One must constantly strive to lift oneself by own higher Self (moral will power and determination), and be always on guard not to let oneself down (morally, spiritually).

Know that one’s own higher Self (will power) is a friend that enables one to grow to one's fullest potential in all dimensions of human development. On the other hand, one’s lower Self (degraded with bad habits) can become the enemy of oneself and totally ruin one’s life!

1.6 बन्धुः आत्मा आत्मनः तस्य चेन आत्मैव आत्मना जितः
अनात्मनः तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेत आत्मैव शत्रुवत् (BG 6.6)

The Self is a friend of that virtuous one who has conquered his lower self (bad habits) with strong will power for positive development.

But, the Self acts as an enemy to the one who has not conquered his lower self, who can not shake off his Tamas based (bad) habits, anger and greed …

The direction that one's life takes, and all major successes and failures in life are determined by which nature (lower self or higher self) is developed, and thus becomes predominant in life. Those who succeed in leading a happy, fulfilling life are the ones who have acquired good habits through self-control, supported by parents and family who provided good examples, and the company of friends who lift one up morally. Conversely, those who have not acquired good habits and self-control end up with unhappy lives.
Simple examples: By eating tamas/rajas foods one can become obese and prone to heart disease or stroke at an early age; indulging in promiscuity one may suffer abortions, divorce, never developing happy, harmonious, deeply satisfying relationships with spouse and children, or friends and extended family.

Students with self-control are able to study, do homework, play, and engage in appropriate extra-curricular activities. Those who do not exercise self-control, do not get good education, do not get professionally satisfying careers, nor do they succeed in personal or family life.9

The extreme examples of not cultivating self-control show up in the nightly news: frequent episodes of gun violence in schools, malls and public places in American society, binge drinking on college campuses, high incidence of fatal accidents and car crashes by American youth, and high incidence of date rapes. In 2010, the US Department of Justice estimated that 25 percent of college women "will be victims of rape or attempted rape before they graduate." Similarly, according to a US Commission on Civil Rights' Report in 2013, 23 percent of women in military reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact since their enlistment.

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Anger & Greed – Enemies of the Self

1.7 काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुण समुदभवः:
महाशानो महापाप्मा विद्धि एतम् इह वैरिष्टम्  (BG 3.37)
Kāma esha krodha esha rajo-guna-samudbhavah
mahāshano mahā-pāpmā viddhi enam īha vairinam.

Greed in the form of insatiable desires and anger (when desires are not fulfilled) are the products of the Rajas Guna*.

Desires have a huge appetite – they are never satisfied. They always demand more.

Greed and anger lead men to the greatest of sins. Know that uncontrolled desires and anger are the greatest enemies of the spiritual Self.

Kāma = profusion of desires not controlled or guided by intellect that is refined through wisdom and practice of Dharma.

* There are three inherent qualities (Guna) that one is born with, but they can also be cultivated through self-discipline and will power.

Table 3
Three Qualities (Guṇa)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guna</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sattva (Purity, goodness)</td>
<td>Pure, virtuous, knowledge seeker, living a simple, moral life of service to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajas (Passion)</td>
<td>Selfish, egoistic, seeking fame and fortune by hook or crook, lacking morals, only serving personal interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamas (ignorance)</td>
<td>Ignorant, evil, immoral, self destructive, not caring for others, ignoring his own and other’s welfare.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Appendix 1 for more details on these three Guna.
The Unending Mirage of Greed

1.8 आशापाश-शते: बद्द्रा: काम-क्रोध-परायणा: 
ईंहन्ते काम भोगार्थम प्रत्येक अर्थ-सङ्ख्यानु (BG 16.12)

Bound by infinite aspirations of acquiring more and more wealth, fame, and power… given to multitudes of desires (and anger when desires are not fulfilled) … the worldly (materialistic, hedonistic) person strives, even by unlawful means, to amass wealth and objects of desire for the enjoyment of the senses: more parties, more liquor, more loud (deafening) entertainment, more and bigger houses, more and fancier cars, bigger boats, fancier yachts, …

Their lives become an unending mirage of acquisitions for gratification. Yet they never find peace - or happiness.

Lesson: Do not strive to collect wealth by unlawful or unfair means.

1.9 अहंकारं बलं दर्पम् कामं क्रोधं च संघ्रिता:
मामं आत्म-पर-देहेषु प्रदिष्टतं अथ्यसूयका: (BG 16.18)

With their minds full of ego, they crave for more power, pride, and fulfillment of sensual desires and fall into fits of anger when desires are not fulfilled.

Such conceited people look down upon and curse every one thus despising the divine who is present in every human soul (ātmā).

The sense of this verse is that God is present in every soul, therefore, everyone is deserving of respect (that’s why we greet every one with Namaste). But, arrogant people, ignorant of the presence of God in their own soul and in others’, despise others, thus despising God.
Controlling Bhoga – Conspicuous Consumption

1.10 भोगेश्वर्य प्रसक्तानां तया अपहत चेतसामु न्यवसाय आत्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विद्येयते (BG 2.44)

Bhoga aishvarya prasaktānām tayā apahrita-chetasām
Vyavasāya ātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidheeyate.

Those who are constantly engaged in the unfettered enjoyment of senses (Bhoga) and in acquiring more and more wealth, fame and glory (Aishwarya), whose minds are deluded by the fallacy (that they can fulfill their desires by doing yagnās or worshipping deities) they can not focus their minds on what is truly important in life: attaining peace in a state of Samādhi: the state of tranquil mind in union with God.

1.11 राग-द्वेष-वियुक्तेः विषयातः इन्द्रियेः चरन् आत्मवश्ये: विद्येयात्मा प्रसादम् अधिगच्छति (BG 2.64)

Raag-dvesha-viyuktaih tu vishayani indriyaih charan ātma-vashyaih vidheyātmā prasādam adhigachchati.

A person exercising self-control avoids strong attractions and repulsions even as his/her senses freely roam through the objects of senses (sights, sounds, smells, …).

By keeping their senses in a balanced state under the guidance of their intellect, they experience the eternal peace (Moksha).

Read the following verse for more specific instructions from Sri Krisna.
1.12 यस्तु इन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्य आरभते अर्जुन
कर्मनिद्रियैः कर्मयोगम् असक्तः स विशिष्यते \( \text{BG 3.7} \)

Yas tu indriyāni manasā niyamya ārabhate Arjuna
karmendriyaih karma-yogam asaktah sa vishishyate.

The one who controls his mind and senses by his intellect and engages his organs of action (hand, feet, speech, etc.) in Karma Yoga, i.e., Selfless Service, without attachment to personal gain, O Prince, he indeed is distinguished and excels in life.

In a well disciplined individual, ego functions under the control of the Divine instinct in him. When that happens, then impure impulses arising from sense objects do not disturb his mental balance or his inner peace.

Thus Geeta teaches a constructive disciplining of body, senses, mind, and intellect to enable a person to attain the highest potential from one's life, and not the denial, destruction, or rejection of life's possibilities.

Read more about
- controlling senses through Meditation in Lesson 2, Dhyāna Yoga and
- about Karma Yoga, selfless service without attachment, in Lesson 3.
Consequences of uncontrolled Greed and Sensory Gratification:

If we carefully analyze the cause of human misery and social strife, we will find that the root cause is the lack of restraint and discipline over Tamas and Rajas tendencies: indulgence in unbridled greed and sensory gratification. For example:

- Americans make up only 5% of the global population, yet they consume 25% of the Earth’s resources. Obviously, this is not sustainable in the long run. As the rest of the world copies this model of development and (over) consumption as the hallmark of progress, the planet Earth can not sustain the population.

- Global warming has the potential to destroy human civilization on Earth. What is the root cause? The greed of industrialized nations who are constantly striving to acquire more and more wealth to improve their standard of living (which is already the highest in the world). They seldom pause to think: what is the purpose of my life? Is chasing after more and more material goods the ultimate objective of life? Or, what kind of planet are we leaving behind for our children? They follow the notion that the objective of life is to get bigger houses, bigger cars, more meat in the family diet, even though it is well established that (1) this mentality produces stress which is the root cause of many diseases, and (2) eating meat is bad for health. The meat industry, along with the fossil fuels, are the biggest enemies of the environment.

- U.S., the richest country in the world, has an epidemic of obesity and the incidence of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease is increasing in all developed (rich) and developing societies of the world. If we examine the root causes, we’ll find a vicious circle: (1) Food processing industry producing junk food - items that are nutritionally deficient, even disease inducing, but appealing to taste buds, so people buy and consume their products in ever greater quantities. (2) Over-consumption of foods that are tasteful but loaded with chemically processed meats, harmful fats, salt and sugar, and food intake that is in excess of the needs of the body. Driven by taste buds, people indulge in junk foods rather than natural foods like vegetables, fruits, grains and beans. At the same time, over consumption produces scarcity of food, raises food prices and deprives poor people in other parts of the world. (3) Stress due to constant striving to earn more, to consume more tasteful processed food, resulting in obesity, diabetes and heart disease. (4) The food industry and the medical, pharmaceutical, and health insurance industries are growing, but there is no cure to the epidemic of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.
Binge drinking on elite college campuses, date rapes, sexual assault in military service, wide spread dissemination of pornographic material on the web, promiscuity in sexual relations, have risen (or have come to light) during the second half of the twentieth century in all progressive societies. Why? The so-called 'advanced societies' have promoted the idea of freedom without cultivating the idea of self-responsibility, self-control, self-discipline, or training in moral values. They are developing über-liberal societies where the philosophy is instant gratification and unbridled enjoyment of the senses.

Moral corruption in business and political leaders is increasing all over the world. Why? Because, the leaders who have the power to accumulate egregious amounts of wealth do not care how their corrupt behavior affects the millions of people in their market or jurisdiction. They have not learned to exercise self-control. The most powerful among men are overpowered by greed. Examples abound: In the twenty first century, we have witnessed greed of the highest paid CEOs on Wall Street, who implemented devious schemes to sell mortgages to poor families who can not afford mortgage payments. They consequently lost their homes and hard earned life's savings while CEOs and high paid executives made millions of dollars in bonuses. The entire US economy, and world economy, went into a tailspin. This illustrates the need for character education in K-12 schools, colleges and professional institutions.

The divide between rich and poor, have and have-nots, is increasing in the world. The reason? Again, those who have the means, but not the moral discipline to control their greed, indulge in hoarding desirable objects and comforts of life for themselves, not caring for others who go without the daily necessities of life. Executives are paid astronomical sums of money while hard working men and women on the assembly lines are not paid enough to pay the rent and buy food for the family.

These examples bring home the need for self-discipline, control of greed, and tempered sense gratification for people who want to lead happy spiritual life, who aspire to preserve the planet for future generations, and who would like to take responsibility to build and lead just and humane societies. The free world must develop such leaders so that the planet Earth can sustain the future generations.

Some people misunderstand that exercising restraint over one's senses means denying themselves all the enjoyments of life. That is not true. On the contrary, a self-disciplined person truly enjoys life as it was meant to be, and fulfills the purpose of life while allowing others in the society to enjoy too.
According to Swami Chinmayananda, self-discipline means that the sense-objects (desirable items: food, sex, money, etc.) and greed should not overpower faculties of rational thinking, neglecting consideration of one’s own health and well being, along with that of others in their families and societies. A self disciplined person is not overwhelmed by greed or desire for sense gratification and does not lose objectivity or power of discrimination between right or wrong in a given situation, or sense of personal responsibility.

Geeta’s essential message is this: One should not fall pray to greed or unbridled sense gratification. Self discipline leads to a balanced human life leading to peace and personal development, peaceful co-existence of all human beings in a civilized society, and preservation of planet Earth for future generations.

References for further reading:
1. “Hooked! Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume” Dr. Stephanie Kaza, Professor, University of Vermont (Shambhala, 2005)

2. “A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety” edited by James J. Heckman, University of Chicago, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), found that children with good self-control grew into adults who were typically healthier, wealthier, more law-abiding and less prone to addictions than their more impulsive peers.

Introducing Four Paths of Yoga

What is Yoga?
Yoga is a Sanskrit word, in the same sense of the English word ‘yoke’. It means Union of ātmā (Self) with Paramātmā (Supreme Self, Brahman, Godhead); That is the final objective of yoga.

Srī Krishna expounded four spiritual paths (yoga traditions) to attain liberation (Moksha) by uniting Self (ātmā) with the Supreme Self (Paramātmā):

1. **Dhyāna Yoga** – By meditating, one attains a tranquil mind, experiences peace, contentment and bliss, and ultimately union (yoga) with Paramātmā, which is the end objective of human life.

2. **Karma Yoga** – By doing selfless service to society: neighborhood, city, state, nation, or the whole world- according to one's ability- one can attain Moksha. Such work is worship.

3. **Gyāna Yoga** - By acquiring the true knowledge of Self (ātmā) and Paramātmā, and Samsāra, i.e., reincarnation of ātmā in the cycle of birth and death, one can become enlightened and attain liberation (Moksha) from the cycle of life and death, and union (yoga) with Paramātmā.

4. **Bhakti Yoga** – By steadfast devotion and loving surrender to God (Paramātmā) in any name and form, or aspect of God (Deva or Devī), one can attain liberation (Moksha).

Bhakti (devotion), by various names, is the common tradition in world religions; Dharmic (Hindu, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist) as well as Western, Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam).

The fundamental set of beliefs in ātmā, Paramātmā, reincarnation and, ultimately, Moksha, comprise the core tenets of Hindu religion. Starting from the Vedas, the most ancient Hindu scriptures, these concepts have been sustained through many thousands of years. They permeate all Hindu scriptures and teachings of swamis, saints and gurus. Many Western New Age ‘Spiritual Gurus’, writers, speakers, and yoga teachers also have learnt from this body of knowledge and it informs the core ideas of their messages (although many of them do not credit the Hindu origins of ‘their’ ideas).
The essence of these Hindu concepts is known as Vedānta (final knowledge of the Vedas). These concepts are expounded in 108 Upanishads and distilled in Geetā. Their variations are also found in other Dharmic traditions of India (Jain, Sikh and Buddhist tradition).

Why Four Paths? Why not just One Path for Every One?

I.1 ध्यानेन आत्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिद् आत्मानम् आत्मना अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्म योगेन चापरे (BG 13.25)
Dhyānena ātmani pashyanti kechid ātmānam ātmanā anye sāṅkhyaena yogena karma-yogena chāpare.

According to their own in-born inclinations, temperaments, tendencies and aptitudes, …
Some behold the Supreme Self in their own soul through meditation; others know the Self through the path of Knowledge (Gyāna Yoga); still others by the path of Selfless Service (Karma Yoga)
And yet others through devotion (Bhakti Yoga)

Of the four yogas:

- **Karma Yoga** is suited to those who are motivated to offer their service to God through selfless service to humanity through their body, mind, and intellect.

- **Bhakti Yoga** is suited to those who are inclined to offer service, love and devotion to God with their heart.

- **Gyāna Yoga** is suited to those who have a keen desire to know why they were born and what is the purpose of their life, and

- **Dhyāna Yoga** is suited to those who want to find the Divine within their own Self (Atma) awakening their higher self through the stages of meditation.

By practicing any one of these yogas, one can attain the Supreme bliss. However, Karma and Gyāna Yoga may be more suitable for the left-brained, and Bhakti Yoga for the right-brained people. Dhyāna Yoga helps balance the right and left brains.

While one can start spiritual practices (Sādhanā) with any one yoga based on their aptitude or personality type, with the passage of time one develops a coherent view and integrates all four yogas in their Sādhanā.
But, what if I can not devote so much time to spirituality?

1.2 नेह अभिक्रम नाशोस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते स्वत्प्मू अपि अस्य धर्मस्य ब्रायते महतो भयातः (BG 2.40)
Neh abhikrama nāshosti pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpam api asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt.

Srī Krishna Says:
Any effort on the path of spirituality never goes to waste, and there is no failure, nor is there any harm. Even a little knowledge and practice of Dharma (spiritual path), will protect you from the greatest fears and worries (what the future holds for me?)

People suffer from many fears even when they have attained material prosperity. Anxiety and depression are the most common ailments in advanced societies. Material prosperity, without spirituality, does not render lasting security. That comes only through spiritual practice!

1.3 प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानु उष्टिवा शाश्वती: समाः शुचीनां स्रीमतां गेहे योग-भ्रेष्टो अभिजायते (BG6.41)
Prāpya punya-kritām lokān ushitvā śāśvateh samāh
shucheenām shreematām gehe yoga-bhraṣto 'bhijāyate.

Even if your spiritual practice (yoga sādhanā) in this life has not reached the height of perfection and you do not achieve liberation (Moksha - union with the Divine), you would have earned merit (punya) that would enable you to go to heaven and experience the divine bliss for a long period of time.

After your merits (punyas) are exhausted, you would be born in to a pure (sāttvic) family so that you could continue your spiritual journey onward.
Lesson 2
Dhyāna Yoga: The Path of Meditation
For Inner Peace

What is Dhyāna Yoga?

Stilling and purifying the mind through introspection, developing transcendental connection and finally union with the Universal Consciousness, the Supreme, Brahman, in the last stages of meditation, i.e. Samādhi, is called Dhyāna Yoga.

In Lesson 1, we learned in the last verse (BG 3.7) Śrī Krishna’s advice to Prince Arjuna to control his mind and senses by his intellect through the practice of meditation. However, meditation can not be learnt by reading a book. It has to be learnt through a teacher, a master, a Guru, and it has to be practiced regularly to gain the experience of peace and tranquility, and ultimately a glimpse of the Universal Consciousness, the Supreme. Therefore, I have selected twelve verses from Geetā that provide the background and reveal the ultimate experience of yoga in the final stage, Samādhi. This would provide a strong motivation to practice meditation regularly.
Before reading the selected verses from Geetä, it is advisable for a student of Dhyäna Yoga to fully understand its context from Rishi (sage) Patanjali’s Yoga Sūtras where he has described the eight limbs (Ashtânga) of Yoga Sâdhana (practice), as follows:

1. **Yama** (five principles of ethical conduct; Hindu moral code): Ahimsā (non-violence), Satya (Truthfulness), Asteya (honesty), Brahmacharya (divine conduct) and Aparigraha (Not greed). More fully described in Appendix 2.

2. **Niyama** (five virtues): Kshamā (forgiveness), Dayā (compassion), Dhriti (steadfastness), Shaucha (cleanliness), and Ishvar Pranidhàn (surrender to God). More fully described in Appendix 2.

Yama and Niyama are the ethical precepts set forth as the first two limbs of yoga. It is essential to practice them before one can progress on the path of yoga, or any spiritual advancement.

3. **Āsana** (physical exercises) required to improve flexibility before one can sit motionless for a long period of time (30 minutes or more) to practice meditation. This is the only practice popularly (but mistakenly) called Yogā in the West.

4. **Prāṇāyama** (breathing exercises) to improve physical and mental health, a prerequisite to Meditation. Breath regulation helps control mental agitation.

5. **Pratyāhāra** (drawing one’s mental activity inward) withdrawing the senses from their objects (as in closing the eyes), introspection.

6. **Dhāranā** (concentration) stilling the chatter of the mind, focusing the mind on breath, or a word (Soham or Hansa or Hongsa), sound (Oum) or a mantra (e.g., Shivoham, normally provided by a Guru)

7. **Dhyāna** (meditation); concentration on the inner Self (âtmā).

8. **Samâdhi**, the ultimate goal of yoga: experiencing bliss in the realm of Universal Consciousness that is Sat Chit Anand (pure, consciousness, bliss).
Scientific experiments conducted during the twentieth century have proven that regular practice of yoga ásanas, Prānāyāma and Dhyāna (meditation) provides numerous benefits for physical and mental health, including prevention and control of stress, and stress-related diseases like anxiety and depression, without using any chemicals (drugs) for treatment.

Therefore these techniques have been widely adopted in Eastern and Western cultures.

However, the benefits of Yama, Niyama, and advanced stages of meditation (Samādhi) are not well understood, appreciated, nor practiced.

The Great Buddha (Daibutsu) seated in a state of meditation. A 44 feet high bronze statue of Amitābha Buddha in Kamakura, Japan. Buddha's teachings of spiritual way of life with yoga and meditation have spread throughout China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia.

10 ‘Zen and the art of management’, by John Paul Rathbone, published in Financial Times September 16, 2013 at this link: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/32e0b9b4-1c5f-11e3-8894-00144feab7de.html#axzz2lfmMvGAc
Introduction to Yoga

2.1 नास्ति बुद्धि:अयुक्तस्य न च अयुक्तस्य भावना
न च अभावयत: शान्ति: अशान्तस्य कुत: सुखम्

(BG 2.66)
Nāsti buddhiḥ ayuktasya na chāyuktasya bhāvanā
na chā bhāvayataḥ shāntih āshāntasya kutakā sukham.

One who is not disciplined, who exercises no control over his mind and senses, can not reach his full potential of intellectual development, or emotional maturity. Such a person can not hope to rise to full spiritual development.

One who is constantly buffeted by the roller coaster of emotions, pursuing sensory gratifications, can not find peace of mind. Without peace of mind, how can one find lasting happiness?

2.2 युक्त-आहार-विहारस्य युक्त-चेष्टस्य कर्मसु
युक्त-स्वप्न-अवबोधस्य योग: भवति दुःख-हा

(BG 6.17)
Yukta-āhāra-vihārasya yukta-cheshtasya karmasu
yukta-svapna- avabodhasya yogah bhavati dukha-hā.

Following a disciplined life with moderate* effort (not too much, not too little) into appropriate, Sāttvic productive work, appropriate and Sāttvic food, Sāttvic recreation, and adequate sleep, the practice of yoga gradually removes all physical, mental and emotional distress and discomfort.

A disciplined life with moderation in food, work, sleep, recreation, etc, is a prerequisite to advancing further on the path of yoga.

* Elizabeth Gilbert (author of “Eat Pray Love”) after traveling to India:
“The race to always be the fastest, richest, most productive and best can become a killing addiction. I push against that force with all my might.”

This is what Buddha called the “Middle Path”: not too much, not too little. Avoid extremes.
Preparation for meditation

2.3 प्रशान्त-आत्मा विगतभी: ब्रह्मचारि ब्रते स्थितः: मनः संयम्य मत् चित्तः: युक्तः आसीत मत् परः:  (BG 6.14)

Prashānta-ātmā vigata-bheeḥ  brahmachāri-vrate sthitah
manah sanyamya mat-chittaḥ  yuktah āśeeta mat-parah.

With a deep feeling of peace in his heart, a calm, fearless disposition, well established in pure (divine) conduct, concentrating his/her mind on Me as the Supreme Goal in life, the disciplined yogi sits down for meditation.

2.4 तत्र एकाग्रम् मनः कृत्वा यत-चित्त- इन्द्रिय-क्रियः: उपविष्य्य आसने युञ्ज्यात् योगम् आत्म-विशुद्धे:  (BG 6.12)

Tatra ekāgram manah kriyāḥ  yata-chittendriya-kriyāḥ
upavishya āsane yunjyāt  yogam ātma-vishuddhay.

Seated in a comfortable position on a suitable āsana (a padded seat or folded blanket) calming the mind and senses to a fully relaxed state, focusing the mind on Me alone, one enters the meditative state (Dhyāna Yoga) for self purification.
How to Control the Wandering Mind?

As Lord Krishna explained the need to control the mind and senses for Dhyāna Yoga, Prince Arjuna expressed doubt and hesitation.

Prince Arjuna raised a concern:

2.5 चन्द्रचलनं हि मनः कृष्णः प्रमाधि बलवद दृढम्
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोः इव सुदुःखकर्मः (BG 6.34)
Chanchalam hi manah krishna pramāthi balavad dridham
tasyāham nigraham manye vāyo iva su-duśkaram.

O' Lord Krishna, the mind is very fickle; its always moving from one thought, or object to another, it is by nature quite restless, dynamic, and also very powerful and tenacious.

Controlling the thought streams of the mind is as difficult as controlling a powerful gust or wind storm.

2.6 असंशयं महाबाहो जन: दुर्निग्रहं चलम्
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येन च गृह्यते (BG 6.35)
Asanshayam mahā-bāho manah durnigraham chalam
abhyaśena tu kaunteya vairāgyena cha grihyatē
to this, Srī Krishna replied:
O mighty-armed Prince, the mind is undoubtedly very difficult to control and it is very restless, indeed. But, it can be restrained with continuous diligent practice, and by developing a rational and objective view of the ultimate futility of all worldly pleasures in providing a lasting source of happiness.12

12 When the Beatles came to the realization that they were not really happy in spite of all the sources of enjoyment for worldly pleasures that they had acquired and experienced in their young life through their phenomenal success in the field of entertainment, they came to the rational conclusion of the ultimate futility of worldly pleasures and followed Maharshi Mahesh Yogi to his āshram in Rishikesh (India) to learn transcendental meditation.
Lord Krishna further instructed:

2.7 यतो यतो निश्चरति मनः चन्द्रलम्ब अस्थिरम्
ततः ततो नियम्य एतत् आत्मनि एव वशं नयेत् (BG 6.26)
Yato yato nischarati manah chanchalam asthiram
tatah tato niyamya etat atmani eva vasham nayet.

O Prince, remember, whenever the mind wanders away,
or becomes unsteady, the practicing yogi gently brings it
back, and again concentrates his mind into the consciousness
of the Higher Self, the Brahman.
Reaching the Final Stages of Yoga (Samadhi)

2.8  यथा दीपो निवातस्थो न इंगते सोपमा स्मृता
     योगिनो यत-चित्तस्य युन्तजो योगम् आत्मनः  (BG 6.19)

Yathā deepo nivāta-stho na ingate sopamā smṛtā
yogino yata-chittasya yunjato yogam ātmanah.

Here is a simile describing the state of *chitta* (deepest levels of thoughts in the mind) of a yogi:

The *chitta* of a yogi absorbed in yoga (union with the Self) remains as steady as the lamp that is placed in a quiet place where there is no movement, no wind gust. The jyoti of the lamp in such place does not flicker, it is completely steady; so is the chitta of the yogi. It is completely steady; it does not deviate from its one-pointed focus on the Self, not at all.
2.9 यत्र उपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योग-सेवया
यत्र चैव आत्मनं आत्मानं पश्यनु आत्मनं तुष्यति (BG 6.20)

Yatra uparamate chittam niruddham yoga-sevayah
yatra chaiva atmanam atmanam pashyan atmani tushyat.

When in *samādhi*, the *chitta* (steady mind), restrained by the practice of yoga, attains quietude, then the yogi sees, or finds, or gets in touch with his inner Self by his own Self (through deep introspection).
At that point, he finds a source of great contentment within his own inner Self.

Ordinarily, the mind of a human being is constantly in flux as Arjuna stated in his question (verse 2.5). In this constantly agitated, perturbed state, one can not see his inner self as one can not see his face in a lake with rippling waves. But when the wind is not blowing and the waves are completely calm, one can see his face clearly in the still waters of the lake.

The same analogy holds here. When the mind is perfectly calm, only then can one see, or get in touch with one's inner self.
The Essential Unity and Equality of All Souls

2.10 प्रशान्त-मनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमं उत्तमम्
उपैति शान्त रजसं ब्रह्म भूतम् अकल्पम्

(BG 6.27)

Prashānta-manasam hi enam yoginam sukham uttamam
upaiti shānta-ajasam brahma-bhūtam akalmasham

Yogi whose mind is completely at peace, who is free from sin, whose passions (Rajas Guṇa) are subdued, whose Tamas is vanquished, such a yogi attains one-ness with the Brahman and experiences Supreme Bliss.

2.11 सर्व-भूत-स्थ्यम् आत्मानं सर्व-भूतानि चात्मनि
ईक्ष्ते योग-युक्तात्मा सर्ववं समदर्शनः

(BG 6.29)

Sarva-bhūta-stham ātmānam sarva-bhūtāni chātmani
eekshate yoga-yuktātmā sarvatra sama-darshanah

A yogi established in deep meditation sees the same Self abiding in all beings, and all beings abiding in one's own Self. Thus, he sees an essential unity and one-ness among all beings everywhere in the world.

To take the first step in the journey to understand and appreciate the equality of all beings at the yogic level, just contemplate on the web of life starting with the simple observation that the air you breath is the same air other human beings (and other living beings) breath; that you breath-in (inhale) the air that was exhaled by other beings. Even trees inhale CO2 and exhale oxygen which supports the life of all humans and other beings on planet Earth.

Ideas derived from the verse:
“Our individual liberty is inexplicably tied to the liberty of every soul on earth.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Lesson 3

Karma Yoga: Work is Worship when it is done in the Spirit of Selfless Service

What is Karma Yoga?

In the west, there is a false notion of Karma as fate. That is totally incorrect. Indeed, Karma is the theory of ‘Action (deeds) and Reaction’ (consequences of the actions one performs). Understanding that good and bad deeds have definite consequences later in this life (or the next life) guides one on the path of right action\textsuperscript{13} and selfless service (as opposed to selfish conduct).

In the new generation, the ‘Me generation’, people ask — what is in it for me? In Geeta, Sri Krishna exhorts Prince Arjuna to devote life to selfless service, rejecting selfish conduct prevalent in the society.

\begin{quote}
“life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others; the rest are more dead than alive.” - Swami Vivekananda
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13} Buddha expanded the concept of Karm Yoga to the “eight fold path” of Right belief, Right thought, speech, action, etc.
Introducing Karm Yoga

3.1 यतः प्रवृत्तिः भूतानां येन सर्वम् इदम् तत्म् स्वकर्मणा तम् अभ्यर्च्यं सिद्धिः विन्दति मानवः: (BG 18.46)
Yataḥ pravṛttiḥ bhūtānāṁ yena sarvam idam tatam sva-karmanā tam abhyarchya siddhim vindati mānavah.

Worshipping through one’s deeds the Supreme from whom all beings evolve, and by whom all this (universe) is pervaded, man attains the ultimate success.

Mahatma Gandhi, a true karma yogi, on protest march against the British colonial occupation of India.

Gandhi drew inspiration from Geeta for all his sacrifice and selfless service fighting evil and violence with peaceful means, without resorting to violence.
Karma Yoga is Selfless Service (Nishkāma Karma)

3.2 अनाश्रित: कर्म-फल कार्यं कर्मं करोति यः
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरगिन: न च अक्रियः: (BG 6.1)

Anāshritaḥ karma-phalam kāryam karma karoti yah
Sa sannyāsi cha yogi cha na niragnih na cha akrīyah

One who works diligently and discharges all their responsibilities as selfless service to others, in a responsible manner, without constantly worrying about the results, is a Karma yogi and a true sanyāsee.

Srī Krishna emphasized that true sanyāsee is not the one who renounces work and family, but the one who performs his responsibilities as above.

3.3 तस्मात् असक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर
असक्तो हि आचरनं कर्मं परम् आपनोति पुरुषः: (BG 3.19)

Tasmāt asaktāḥ satatam kāryam karma samācara
Asakto hi ācharan karma param āpnoti pūrushah

Therefore, always perform selfless actions for others, actions that you are capable of, that are appropriate at your stage of life. Perform them as a matter of duty, without attachment to the results.

By performing selfless actions without attachment to results (selfish motives), man attains the Supreme bliss.
Characteristics of an Enlightened Leader

Karma eva hi samsiddhim āsthitā janakādayah loka-sangraham eva api sampashyan kartum arhasi. (BG 3.20)

Sri Krishna advised Prince Arjuna on how to be a true leader:

O Prince, King Janaka and other great leaders of men have attained Perfection (liberation) by constantly performing actions without selfish interest.

As a leader of society, you must always perform actions with a view to the welfare and protection of the masses, Loka-sangraham.

“Loka-sangraham stands for the unity of the world, the interconnectedness of society. If the world is not to sink into a condition of physical misery and moral degradation, if the common life is to be decent and dignified, religious ethics must control social action. The aim of religion is to spiritualize society, to establish a brotherhood on earth.” Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, author, philosopher, Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at the University of Oxford (1936-1952), President of India (1962-1967).

14 King Janak, the father of Sītā, ruled a state in present day Nepal. He is known as a sage and a king, as he lived the life of an enlightened saint and worked selflessly for the good of his subjects. (Sīta was wife of Rāma, the incarnation of Vishnu many thousands of years ago in Tretā yug). Sri Rāma also demonstrated through his personal example the leadership qualities of an enlightened ruler. He ruled the great state of Avadh with its capital in Ayodhya in such an exemplary manner that, to this day, Rāma Rājya is considered an ideal standard for kings, rulers, and heads of governments. Rāma is called ‘Maryāda Purushottam’ (a man of perfection, with highest ideals, a standard bearer). More than a Billion people in South Asia, South-east Asia, and other parts of the world follow the ideals established by Rāma as their Dharma.
Whatever a great man, a true leader, does, others follow him, emulate his character; whatever standard of conduct he sets up, others try to live up to that.

Ideals of Enlightened Leadership

- In the fifth century BCE, Buddha, born Siddhartha Gautama, a prince in North India, left home and practiced and preached Dhyāna Yoga (meditation, The Essential Unity and Equality of All Beings) and Karma Yoga (selfless service to humanity). The four noble truths Buddha propounded are:
  - Life is a struggle, filled with end-less suffering.
  - Attachment to objects is the cause of suffering.
  - Suffering can be ended by attaining dispassion – performing selfless service to humanity.
  - Dispassion can be achieved with the noble eight-fold path based on principles of Dharma: right belief, thought, speech, action, occupation, effort, mindfulness and meditation.

Today, seven hundred million people all over the world follow Buddha as their spiritual master.

- In the twentieth century, Mahatma Gandhi literally followed Sri Krishna’s advice in Geetā verse 3.20 and 3.21 and launched a Satyagrah (a true revolution) to free India from the clutches of the cruel and unjust British colonial rule. Masses emulated his behavior and followed his courageous, non-violent example of disobeying the laws of a foreign ruler, laws that were aimed at robbing India in order to enrich England. India was freed due to mass uprisings following Gandhi’s peaceful leadership, which was based on universal principles of justice and equality of all human beings. Gandhi worked selflessly, with a duty to remove the unjust occupation of India by a mighty foreign power, while never fretting over whether he would win or lose, succeed or fail, just as advised by Sri Krishna in Karma Yoga in Bhagvad Geetā.
Following his success in removing the unjust colonial rule from India, many world leaders, including Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. in USA and Nelson Mandela in South Africa, followed his example to liberate their people from slavery and colonial rule in a non-violent manner.

Today billions of people all over the world – in Europe, Africa and the Americas – follow the spiritual ideals of fighting injustice, ending slavery, and bringing equality to humanity through non-violent action, just as practiced by Mahatma Gandhi.

On the other hand, in times when selfless service to society was not an ideal of leadership, the selfish side of men has gone to such great extents as to create so many glorified heroes and conquerors who have tried to dominate the entire world for their personal (or national) aggrandizement. Examples abound: Alexander (the Great), Genghis Khan, Hitler, Stalin, World war I, World war II, the Japanese Empire, the Spanish Empire, the British Empire: "the empires on which the sun never sets"!

Ethical leaders create an ethical society
An ethical society creates ethical leaders.

References for further reading:

2. Happiness is You – by Dr. Siddharth B. Gautam, CreateSpace, North Charleston, SC
**DO’s and DON’T’s of Karma**

3.6 कर्मणं एव अधिकारः ते मा फलेषु कदाचन
 मा कर्मफलं हेतुः भूः मा ते संगोस्तु अकर्मणि (BG 2.47)

Karmanì eva adhikārah te mā phaleshu kadāchana
mā karma-phala hetuh bhūḥ mā te sangostu akarmani.

You have certain obligations and responsibilities at every stage in life (Table 4), and freedom of action to choose how you discharge your duties.

However, you must remember that all actions (Karmas) have consequences. (Karma-phala = fruits of your karmas.) The overarching message here is that you shall reap (eventually) what you sow. But, you do not have control over those consequences, because they are compounded, or affected by previous karmas in this life (or a previous life).

Further more, do not perform actions merely for selfish reasons (for the fruits of your actions), nor withdraw into inaction (for fear of failure).
But, also, do not shirk from your responsibilities.
Again, the message is: simply carry out your responsibilities to the best of your abilities, without worrying about the results.

This is called Nishkam Karma Yoga (discharging ones responsibilities in life without selfish motives, e.g., desire for personal credit, or personal gain). This is best illustrated by the sportsman spirit or the ethos of sportsman-ship widely appreciated all over the world:
“Play the best game, to the best of your skills and abilities, in the fairest manner; never mind whether you win, or lose!”
Geetà teaches us to conduct whole life (not just sports) according to this noble spirit.
What is wrong with the selfish motive and attachment to the results?

Again this can be explained more simply with the sports analogy. Now a days, many players have taken to winning the game by any means, at any cost. This includes: taking drugs to build muscle, and psychologically or even physically harming the opponent. Because they are attached to achieving a win for themselves, they do not consider ill-effects of their actions on themselves or others. Sportsmanship teaches otherwise.

The first line of the verse goes against the prevailing norm. In modern societies, every one wants to claim and defend their rights – but not their responsibilities. The last time a western leader courageously spoke out about responsibilities over rights was President John F. Kennedy who, in his inaugural speech, uttered these famous words that energized a whole generation of Americans:

*Ask not what the country can do for you. Ask what you can do for the country!*

His words echo the message of Geetã in verse BG2.47.

3.7 युक्त: कर्मफलं त्यक्तवा शान्तिमु आप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम्
अयुक्त: काम-कारेण फले सक्तो निवच्छयते (BG 5.12)

Yuktah karma-phalam tyaktvam shântim âpnoti naiṣṭhikim
ayuktah kāma-kāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate.

The Karma yogi, practicing selfless service, relinquishing the desire for personal gain (fruit of action), attains deep and lasting sense of internal Peace and satisfaction.

On the other hand, those who constantly strive for personal benefit (even at the cost of others) are bound to experience the Kârmic consequences: stress, worry, dissatisfaction with whatever wealth they may have accumulated, anxiety and depression, yet never achieving the illusive happiness.

These two verses (3.6 and 3.7) very concisely convey the essence of Karma Yoga, and the secret of happiness.
**Table 4**
Some examples of duties and obligations (Purushārtha) at every stage of life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Stage of Life</th>
<th>Examples of Responsibilities</th>
<th>Examples of Freedoms</th>
<th>Purushārtha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth through age 25</td>
<td>Child Student</td>
<td>To parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, neighbors teachers, gurus</td>
<td>To select schools and fields of study</td>
<td>Learn Dharma* and a field of Karma (vocation) for life based on aptitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 25 to 50 years</td>
<td>Householder</td>
<td>To Husband / wife</td>
<td>To choose a spouse, and a profession based on your natural aptitude(s)</td>
<td>Arth: earn a living according to Dharma* Kama: enjoy family life according to Dharma*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent, Wage earner</td>
<td>To raise children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employer, Employee</td>
<td>To work for the good of society through your work, vocation or profession **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 50 to 75 years</td>
<td>Retired Vānprastha</td>
<td>Selfless service to society through your talents and life experiences</td>
<td>Where you serve, how you serve, whom you serve</td>
<td>Seek Moksha (liberation through Karma Yoga (selfless service))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guru, Mentor Social leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 75 years of age</td>
<td>Sanyāsī Swāmi Yogi Mahātmā</td>
<td>Devote your life to service of God in company of spiritual minded souls (satsang)</td>
<td>Choose any yoga(s): Dhyāna, Gyaṇa, Karma, Bhakti</td>
<td>Seek Moksha (liberation through Dhyan, Gyan and Bhakti)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Dharma: Your duties and obligations at each stage of life, with discrimination between right and wrong. Learning Dharma leads to the right knowledge of one's responsibilities. Having right knowledge of responsibilities results in right actions. By utilizing Arth and Kāma following the principles of Dharma, one paves the way for Moksha (liberation).

** In this stage of life where earning a living is required to support family obligations, one accepts fair compensation as an employee, professional or worker, but it's important to keep in mind that the work must be done in the spirit of service. For example, a medical doctor must always act with compassion (not greed) to treat all patients equally as his moral duty and accept compensation according to the patient's ability (or whatever the insurance pays).

See Appendix 3 C: professional responsibilities according to Varna āśram Dharma.
Actions of an Enlightened Karma Yogi

Perform Actions most skillfully

3.8 बुद्धि-युक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृत-दुष्कृते
tasmād yogāy yujyastv yog: karmṣu kauśalam
(BG 2.50)
Buddhi- yukto jahāteha ubhe sukrita-duskrite
tasmād Yogāya yujyasva yogah karmasu kaushalam.

Intelligent individuals with powers of discrimination between right and wrong, discharge their responsibilities without any selfish motive as Nishkāma Karma Yoga. Thus, they do not suffer karmic consequences of their good or bad deeds. Therefore, devote yourself to Nishkāma Karma.

Performing work most skillfully to the best of one’s abilities, and in the spirit of Nishkāma (selfless service to humanity) is Karma Yoga.
Maintain Equipoise in Success and Failure

3.9 योगस्थः कृह कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा धनन्व्य
सिद्धि-असिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते (BG 2.48)

Yoga-sthah kuru karmāni sangam tyaktvā dhananjaya
siddhi-asiddhyoh samo bhūtvā samatvam yoga uchyate.

O Prince, perform action while fully established in the spirit of Nishkama Karma-Yoga, abandoning the sense of attachment (with the fruits of your actions), and maintaining equipoise (sense of sameness) in success and failure. Evenness of mind is yoga.

3.10 सुख-दुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभो जयाजयो
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्वं नैवं पापम् अवाप्स्यसि (BG 2.38)

Sukha duhkhe same kritvā labhālabhau jayājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivam pāpam avāpsyasi.

Maintaining equipoise in pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, you shall not incur sin as you engage in any struggle in life while carrying out the responsibilities of Dharma (as illustrated in Table 4) and for Loka-sangraha (welfare of society) as explained in verse 3.4
Surrender your Work to Brahman. Then, your Work is Worship!

3.11 ब्रह्मणि आधाय कर्मणि संगम् त्यक्तवा करोति यः
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्म पत्रम प्राम्भस। (BG 5.10)
Brahmany ādhāya karmāṇi sangam tyaktvā karoti yah
lipyate na sa pāpena padma-patram ivāmbhāsā.

One who surrenders all his actions to BRAHMAN (Supreme Soul), abandoning attachment to the fruits (selfish interest) of his deeds, is not tainted by sin, just as the lotus leaf remains untouched by the water drops floating on its surface.

The lotus leaf remains untouched by the water drops surrounding it.
3.12 तस्मात् सर्वेऽः कालेऽः माम् अनुस्मर युध्यय च
मयि-अर्पित-मनोबुद्धिः मामेव एष्यसि असंशयः: (BG 8.7)

Tasmāt sarveshu kaleshu mām anusmara yudhya ca
mayi arpita-mano-buddhiḥ māmeva aishyasi asanshayah.

Therefore, remember Me, at all times, as you fight the evils (of the external or internal world).
Thus, your work becomes Worship!
Concentrate your mind and intellect on Me; you shall come to Me, have no doubt!

For Further Study:

- Essential Karma (Meritorious Deeds) – Yagna, Dāna, Tapa (Appendix 3)
- Choosing Vocation According to one’s Natural Aptitude (Appendix 4)
Karma Yoga – Summary

To practice Karma Yoga, it is important to fully understand, reflect upon, assimilate, and imbibe the lessons from all the verses in this chapter:

- Discharge your obligations, what needs to be done as your natural responsibilities based on your station in life (as a son or daughter, a parent, a student or teacher, an employer or manager or employee, an engineer, doctor, scientist, leader or volunteer, etc.).
- Perform your responsibilities in the best possible manner that you are capable of, through your aptitude, skill, and training, with perfection and mastery.
- Take up a profession or vocation that is suited to your inborn talent, tendencies, and aptitudes and grow them to their full potential.
- Do not discriminate against anyone based on their vocation. Treat everyone with respect without regard to gender, caste, vocation, etc.
- Work cooperatively (sahayāna) with other stakeholders so that all succeed (win-win).
- Do selfless service (not attached to personal benefit or self-gain).
- Work in the interest of Loka-sangraha, the good of the community.
- Work with a sense of equipoise, equanimity, i.e., sense of sameness in success and failure, pleasure or pain.
- Offer your work as a sacrifice to the Supreme Lord. Always keep in touch with the presence of the Divine in your heart and offer your work as worship to Lord.

Geeta’s overarching message is that you must perform your duty – not with selfish motives, and not to indulge in sensory gratification – but with the right thought and attitude of saha-yagya (cooperation with others and sacrifice for others) and Loka-sangraha (welfare of society). Additionally, surrendering to Brahman: you must perform your duty as selfless service while maintaining constant awareness of divine presence; i.e., be aware of God’s presence with reverence and joy.

There is joy in doing God’s work, selfless service, as one’s duty each day and at each station in life. That joy supersedes all other kind of worldly joy from selfish gain. In our day-to-day business of life we often lose awareness of God’s presence. That’s why Hindu traditions have developed many rituals, prayers to many deities (with different names and forms), mantras, kirtans, meditation practices, and other spiritual disciplines. They are all valid means of spiritual growth as they help individuals develop and maintain divine consciousness in their life according to their own Guṇas (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas) and aptitudes.
Lesson 4
Gyāna Yoga: The Path of Spiritual Knowledge & Wisdom

What is Gyāna Yoga?

Gyāna Yoga, also known as Samkhya Yoga, is the path of spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Essentially, Gyāna Yoga is about the knowledge of of ātmā (self) and Paramātmā (God) which also explains the theory of reincarnation and gives us an opportunity to reflect upon why we take birth and what is the purpose of life.
4.1 Na hi gyanena sadrisham pavitram iha vidyate
tatu svayam yoga-samsiddha kalen aatmane vindati. (BG 4.38)

There is nothing in this world as sacred and as purifying as (spiritual) knowledge and wisdom. Perfected by yoga, one finds by himself/herself this spiritual wisdom in his/her own Self (atmâ) in the due course of time.

Spiritual wisdom is not obtained through the five senses of cognition or intellectual pursuits. One finds it oneself, in one's own heart.

**Ethical Values for Wisdom Seekers**

Treating Every One Equally with Respect and Kindness

4.2 Vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brahmaṇe gavi hastini
shuni chaiva shva-pâke cha panditâ samadarthin: (BG 5.18)

One with spiritual wisdom (called Pundit) respects every one, treating every one equally, whether one is a Brāhmin endowed with great learning and humility, or a dog eater (i.e., any one eating animal flesh). Such a wise one would be kind even to animals whether a cow, an elephant, or a dog (Srī Krishna affirmed that animals also have souls).
4.3 अहिंसा सत्यम् अक्रोधः त्यागः शान्ति: अपैश्चिनम्
दया भूतेषु अलोलुप्तव् मार्दवं हि: अचापलम् (BG 16.2)
Ahimsā satyam akrodhaḥ tyāgah shāntih apaishunam
dayā bhūteshu aloluptvam mārdavam hreeh achāpalam.

One with spiritual wisdom is non-violent in deeds, speech,
and thought, truthful in speech and thought, of peaceful
temperament without undue anger, frustration or aggravation,
not harassing, intimidating, criticizing, or back-biting others,
not indulging in sensory gratification.

One with compassion towards all, willing to sacrifice self-
interest for the sake of others, with modesty (shame for doing
anything immodest) and absence of fickleness.

Mahatma Gandhi was greatly influenced and inspired by these moral and ethical
values. All his actions reflected these values.

4.4 अमानित्वम् अदम्भित्वम् अहिंसा ध्यानिः आर्जवम्
आचार्य उपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यम् आत्म-विनिग्रहः (BG 13.8)
Amānītvam adambhitvam ahimsā kṣhāntih ārjavam
āchārya upāsanam shaučam sthairyam ātma-vinigrahah.

These are the values of a Gyānī: Humility, unpretentious-
ness, non-violence, forgiveness, uprightness.
Additionally, respectfully serving the teacher, inner and
outer purity, steadfastness, and self-discipline . . .

For a comprehensive discourse on the values in these verses (and also
four more verses on this subject: BG 13.9, 13.10, 13.11), please read:
“The Value of Values” - by Swāmi Dayānanda Saraswati, ārsha Vidyā Gurukulam,
Sайлорsburg, PA and Chennai, India.
Lesson 4-A

Ātmā Gyāna: Knowledge of the Self

Theory of Reincarnation

Fundamental Questions: Who am I?
   Am I this body?
   If not, then who or what am I?

Answers: I am not this body; I am the soul;
   Soul is the inner essence of our existence.
   — We are not our bodies; we are souls – clothed in body suits.
   — The body is the temple wherein God lives as our soul.

4.5 देहिनो अस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमार यौवनं जरा
   तथा देहान्तर प्राप्तिः धीरस् तत्र न मुह्यति

Dehino asmin yathā dehe kaumāram yauvanam jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptih dheeras tatra na muhyati.

Srī Krishna spoke to Prince Arjuna:
As our bodies experience childhood, youth, and old age;
Similarly, after death of this body, the soul passes on to
another body. Wise ones firmly believe in this, they have
no illusions about it.

Our bodies are temporary shelter for the Soul that is
everlasting. We are not our bodies, we are our souls.
4.6 न तु एवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपा:\
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वेष वयम् अतः परम् (BG 2.12)

Na tu evâham jâtu násam na tvam neme janâdhipe
na chaiva na bhavishyâmah sarve vayam atah param.

O Prince, There was never a time in the past, when I did not exist, or when you (your soul) did not exist, or when (the souls of) any of these kings assembled here did not exist.

Nor will there be any time in the future, when all of us, our souls, shall cease to exist.

We (as souls) have all existed before and shall continue to exist in the future! All souls are truly immortal.

4.7 न जायते प्रियते वा कदाचिन्\nनायं भूतवा भविता वा न भूयः:
अजो नित्यः शाशवतः अयं पुराणो\nन हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे (BG 2.20)

Na jâyate mriyate vâ kadâchin
nâyam bhûtvâ bhavitâ vâ na bhûyah
ajô nityâh shâshvato 'yam purâno
na hanyate hanyamâne shareere.

Neither the soul takes birth, nor it ever dies.
Having come into existence once, it does not come into existence again and again;
The soul is unborn, eternal, changeless and ancient;
it does not perish when the body perishes.
Trans-migration of Soul

4.8 वासांसि जीर्णनि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्याति नरोपराणि
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णानि
अन्यानि संयाति नवानि देहि (BG 2.22)

Vāsānsi jeernāni yathā vihāya navāni grhnāti naroparāṇi
tathā shareerāṇi vihāya jeernāni anyāni sanyāti navāni dehe.

As a man casts off his worn out clothes, and puts on new ones; Similarly, the embodied-Soul casts off its worn out (old or damaged) body at death and acquires a new body in the next life.

4.9 नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि
नैनं दहति पावकः
नैनं क्लेदयन्ति आपो
नैनं शोष्यति मार्गः (BG 2.23)

Nainam chindanti shastrāṇi nainam dahati pāvakah
na chainam kledayanti āpo na shoshayati māruthah.

Weapons can not cut It (the soul), fire can not burn It, water can not dissolve It, and wind can not dry It. It is indestructible! It is immortal!
4.10 श्रीकृष्णः: इन्द्रियाणि प्रकृति-स्थानि कर्षिति (BG 15.7)
mama aiva aṃsho jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manah-shashṭhāṇi indriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāṇi karṣhati

Sri Krishna:
In this body, the eternal soul is a minuscule fraction of myself. And it (the soul) binds with the mind and the five senses situated in the material nature.

4.11 शरीरम् यत् अवापनोति यत् चापि उत्क्रामति ईश्वरः (BG 15.8)
Sharīraṃ yat avāpnoti yat chāpi utkrāmati Ishvaraḥ
gṛhitva etāni saṃyāti vāyur gandhān iva āśayāt

As the air carries fragrance from place to place, so does the embodied soul carries the mind and senses with it, when it leaves an old body and enters a new one.

Other Hindu scriptures provide more details about the transmigration of soul at the end of life. As explained in the Background Chapter verse B.2 and B.3, there are three aspects of our bodies:

1. Sthoola Sharīra or Gross Body: the physical body made of five maha-bhootas, macro-elements (solids, liquids, heat/energy, gases and space)
2. Sookshma Sharīra or Subtle body: consists of eighteen elements: the mind, intellect, and ego, along with the five senses of cognition, five objects of sense cognition, and the five senses of action.
3. Kāran Sharīra or Causal body: consists of the accumulated karma (fruits of your deeds) from past lives, including the sanskārs (tendencies) carried forward from previous lives.

At the time of death, the (old or damaged) gross body is left here and becomes one with the five maha-bhootas, but the soul leaves taking with it the subtle and causal aspects of body to the new incarnation.
The Body is the Kshetra, the Soul infuses it with the light of Consciousness

4.12 यथा प्रकाशयिति एकः कृत्सन्तः लोकम् इमं रविः: क्षेत्रम् क्षेत्री तथा कृत्सन्तः प्रकाशयिति भारत (BG 13.34)
Yathā prakāśhayati ekah kṛtstnam lokam imam ravih kṣetram kṣetrī tathā kṛtstnam prakāśhayati bhārata.

Just as the Sun illuminates the entire solar system, so also the Lord-of-the-Field (Atma) illuminates the whole "Field " that is our physical body, O Prince.

Here the word illuminates means that ātmā infuses the (inert) body with consciousness and intelligence in every cell of the body so it can perform its organ specific functions.

4.13 ज्ञानेन तु तदृ अज्ञानं येषां नाशितम् आत्मनः तेषां आदित्यवत् ज्ञानम् प्रकाशयिति ततू परम् (BG 5.16)
Gyānena tu tad agyānam yeshām nāshitam ātmanaḥ teshām āditya-vat gyānam prakāśhayati tat param.

Those whose ignorance has been removed by the Knowledge of the Self, to them that Knowledge of the Self reveals the Supreme (BRAHMAN) as the bright sun repelling darkness, revealing everything clearly.

15 "Proof of Heaven - A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife" by Eben Alexander, MD, Harvard Medical School, Boston; Simon & Schuster publisher. "Consciousness is the most profound mystery in the universe." "in fact, consciousness is at the root of all existence".
Relationship between ātmā and Paramātma is very deep

4.14 उपद्रश्ता अनुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः
परमात्मा इति च अपि उक्तो देहेःस्मिन् पुरुषः परः (BG 13.23)
Upadrashtā anumantā cha bhartā bhoktā maheshvarah
Paramātma iti cha api ukto dehi 'smin purushaḥ parah.

Paramātmā, the Supreme Divinity,
is dwelling in this body as ātmā.
It is the witness, overseer of our actions.
It acts as our conscience.
It supports life and enjoys (or suffers from)
its experiences.

The soul is the indwelling Lord, the Supreme Self.
ātmā is at the microscopic level;
Paramātmā at the macroscopic level.
Lesson 4-B
Paramātmā Gyāna (Brahm Vidyā)
Knowledge of the Supreme Self (Brahman)

4.15 समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्त दर्शवर्मू विनश्यत्स अविनश्यन्त यं: पश्यति स पश्यतिः
Samam sarveshu bhūteṣu tishtthantam parameshvaram
vinash.yatsu avinash.yantam yaḥ pashyati sa pashyati.

Param ātmā, the Supreme Lord, is established equally
in all beings (as ātmā).
He who sees the imperishable (ātmā)
within the perishable (body) of all living beings,
he truly comprehends the Supreme Reality.

4.16 ईश्वरं सर्वभूतानां ह्देशे अर्जुन तिष्ठति
भ्रामयन्त सर्वभूतानि यन्त्र-आरूढानि मायया
Ishvarah sarva-bhūtānām hrid.deshe Arjuna tisthati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantra-arūḍhāni māyayā.

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Prince,
causing all beings, by His Māyā (illusive power), to move
and act, as if mounted on an instrument, or device.

Just think how each one of us goes through the human life cycle: birth, growth,
maturity, old age and death (referred to in verse 4.11 as Kaumāram, Yauvanam,
Jarā (BG 2.13), experiencing the feelings and emotions associated with each stage
of life, as if going through a Disney World ride in slow motion!

In this verse as in all ancient scriptural writings, as well as in poetry, heart does not
refer to the physical organ, but to the faculty of human beings that is the repository
of all positive qualities of love, compassion, charity, generosity, and the like.

The words: The Lord 'dwells in the heart' means, though He is present everywhere,
the Lord is most conspicuously self-evident in the Heart as defined above. This is
realized specially during meditation. See more about Meditation in Lesson 2.
When & Why God Comes to Earth - as an Avatāra?

4.17 यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिः भवति भारत
अभ्युत्थानम् अधर्मस्य तदा आत्मानं सुजाति अहम् (BG 4.7)
Yadā yadā hi dharmasya – glāṇih bhavati bhārata
abhya.ḥ thānam adharmasya – tadā ātmānam sṛjāmi aham.

Sri Krishna said: Whenever there is a decline of Dharma16 (righteousness), and rise of Adharma (unrighteousness) in the world, O Prince, then I manifest Myself as an Avatāra.

4.18 परित्राणाय साधृनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्
धर्म संस्थापन अर्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे (BG 4.8)
Paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya cha dushkritām
dharma-sansthāpan arthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge.

For the protection of all good people
and destruction of the wicked ones,
and to re-establish Dharma (righteousness) in the world,
I come in a human form (as an Avatār) in each epoch.

16 Buddhist view of Dharma: “Because we all share this planet Earth, we have to learn to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature. This is not just a dream, but a necessity.” H.H. Dalai Lama
* Western notion of Dharma from Plato’s Republic: “the ideal community is “a city which would be established in accordance with nature.”
* American notion of Dharma in the Declaration of Independence: “When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people, ... to assume among the powers of the Earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them... We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”
The following verses explain the aspects of Paramātmā as omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent.

4.19 सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सत्त्विष्टो
मतः स्मृति-ज्ञानमृ अपोहनं च
वेदैश्च सर्वं अहमेव वेदो
वेदान्त-कृत वेदविद् एव चाहम्
(BG 15.15)
Sarvasya chāham hridi sannivishto
mattah smritir-gyānam apohanam cha
vedaish.cha sarvair aham.eva vedyo
vedānta-krit veda-vid eva chāham.

I am seated in the hearts of all beings.
I am the source of their memory, intelligence and knowledge (as well as its absence).

Vedas and Vedānta are full of knowledge about me because I am the author of Vedanta;
I am omniscient!

4.20 यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्व च मयि पश्यति
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति
(BG 6.30)
Yo mām pashyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pashyati
tasyāham na pranashyāmi sa cha me na praṇashyati.

He who sees Me everywhere, and sees every thing in Me,
I am not lost to him (not away from his thoughts)-
nor is he ever lost to Me.

This verse reveals the profound unity of all things:
When we are one with the Divine, we become one with the whole universe.
Prince Arjuna Requests for a Rare Glimpse of Sri Krishna’s Divine Splendor

4.21 एवम् एतद् यथा आत्म त्वम् आत्मानम् परमेश्वर 
द्रष्टुम् इच्छामि ते रूपम् ऐश्वरं पुरुषोत्तमं (BG 11.3) 
Ivam etad yatha attha tvam atmanam parameshvara 
drashtum ichchhami te rupam aishvaram purushottama.

Prince Arjuna: 
O Supreme Lord! I can barely imagine your greatness as you have described Yourself. Therefore, I wish to see you in your transcendental (Divine) Form, O Purushottam (greatest among men).

To enable Arjuna to see his transcendental form, unviewable to human eyes, Sri Krishna gave Arjuna Divya Drishti (divine vision) and said:

4.22 इहैकस्थं जगत्कुर्तस्म पश्याध सचराचरम् 
मम देहे गुडाकेश यत चान्यत द्रष्टुम इच्छसि (BG 11.7) 
Ihaika-stham jagat kritsna pashyadya schara.charam 
mama dehe gudakesha yat chanyat drashtum ichchasi.

Sri Krishna: 
Now behold, O Prince, the whole universe established in my infinite Body, the entire universe, including everything that is the movable and everything that is immovable - and anything else that you may desire to see in the universe.
For those readers who relate to the physical better than the abstract, here are some verses that illustrate the concept of Paramātma through metaphors from the physical universe.

Sanjaya also had the divine vision. He saw the universal form of Lord Krishna and narrated his visual experience to the blind King Dhrita-rāṣṭra in this way:

4.23 दिवि सूर्य सहस्रस्य भवेत् युगपत् उत्तिता
यदि भा: सदृशी सा स्यात् भास: तस्य महात्मन: (BG 11.12)
Divi sūrya-sahasrasya bhavet yugapat utthita
yadi bhāḥ sadrishee sā syāt bhāsah tasya mahātmanah.

If the light of a thousand suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, that brilliance might scarcely resemble the splendor of that exalted Supreme Being!

17 Pre-eminent nuclear scientist, Robert Oppenheimer, director of the Manhattan Project that developed the first nuclear device, was a student of Sanskrit at UC Berkeley and became a Geeta admirer. He is said that he uttered this verse of the ‘Thousand Suns’ when he witnessed the first nuclear explosion!
Lord Śrī Krishna had also described himself like this in another context:

4.24 मत्त: परतरं नान्यतत् किंचिदृ अस्ति धनञ्जय
मयि सर्वम् इदं प्रोतं सूते मणिगणा इव (BG 7.7)
Mattah parataram nānyat kiṃcīd āstī dhanāṁ jaya
mayi sarvam idam protam sūte maṇigaṇa īva.

There is absolutely nothing beyond My transcendental existence, O Prince.
This whole universe is structured around Me,
as a profusion of gems arranged by a skilled jeweler
with an unseen string going through them,
holding them together in their respective places (orbits).

This verse clearly explains that the universe is structured in an orderly manner according to a skillful plan by the infinite wisdom and intelligence of the Supreme Controller of the Universe, the Lord, Brahman.

4.25 यत्तु आदित्य-गतं तेजो जगद्द भासयते अखिलम्
यत्तु चन्द्रमसि यत्तु चार्ग्नौ तत्तु तेजो विद्धि मामकम् (BG 15.12)
Yat āditya-gatam tejo jagad bhāsayate akhilam
yat chandramasi yat chāgnau tat tejo viddhi māmakam.

I am the source of that light that illuminates the Sun
which, in turn, illuminates the entire solar system.
I am the source of the light that is in the moon
and in the fire -
know that - that Light originates from Me;
I am the original source!
How are all Souls established in Paramātmā?

4.26 यथा आकाश-स्थितो नित्यं वायः: सर्वत्र-गो महान्।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत-स्थानि इति उपधारय (BG 9.6)
Yathā ākāsha-sthito nityam vāyuḥ sarvatra-go mahan
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni mat-sthāni iti upadāraya.

As the mighty wind, though always moving everywhere,
is permanently established in the space (ākāsha).
In the same way, you must understand, O Prince
that all beings (souls) are permanently established in Me!

4.27 अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमू इत्र च स्थितम्
भूतभूतं च तत् ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च (BG 13.16)
Avibhaktam cha bhūteshu vibhaktam iva cha sthitam
bhūta-bhartri cha tat geyam grasishnu prabhavishnu cha.

Although Paramātmā is Undivided, Infinite, Whole,
Paramātmā appears to exist as if divided in beings (as separate ātmās) in the same way as space appears divided
in rooms separated by walls!

Also, the same Paramātmā appears in multiple forms as:
- Vishnu, the perpetual sustainer of the universe;
- Shiva, continuously transforming the universe;
- Brahmā, continuously generating all that exists.

The oldest Hindu scriptures, called Vedas, proclaimed:
एकमु सत्विप्र बुध्या वदनि ekam Sat Vipra Bahudhā Vadanti
Truth is One. Sages speak of it by various names!
Sri Krishna reiterated the same revelation in the above verse.

18 “Every Act of creation is first of all an act of destruction” - Pablo Picasso,
one of the world’s foremost, pre-eminent, creative artists.
The instant one fully comprehends the fact that the diversity of all existence is rooted in One Supreme Spirit* and that this Universe is the expansion of that One**. In that instant one realizes the Supreme!

* Similar concept behind the “E-Pluribus Unum” (stated in the reverse order “One from many”) the de-facto motto of the United States that adorns the great seal of the United States of America!

** According to the Big Bang Theory, scientists now believe that this Universe is an expansion of an incredibly high energy density field that is homogeneous and isotropic (uniform in all directions).
Arjuna after seeing the Divine Splendor

4.29  
ध्वाः आदि-देवः पुरुषः पुराणः  
ध्वाः अस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्  
वेत्ता असि वेद्यं च परं च धाम  
ध्व्या ततं विश्वम् अनन्त-रूपः  
(TG 11.38)

Tvam ādi-devah purushah purānah  
tvam asya vishvasya param nidhānam  
vettā asi vedyam cha param cha dhāma  
tvayā tatam vishvam ananta-rūpa.

Bhagvān, You are the Original Divine existence.  
You are the most ancient being.  
You are the transcendent upholder of the universe.  
You are Omniscient.

Humanity needs to understand that the universe is pervaded by you in Infinite Forms.  
You, the One Original Divinity, take Infinite forms!
Concluding Verses:
The following four verses summarize the essential knowledge about Paramātmā.

4.30 गति: भर्तर्यः प्रभु: साक्षी निवास: शरण सुहृत्
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजम् अव्ययम् (BG 9.18)
Gatih bhartar prabhuh sakshee - nivasaah sharanam suhrit
prabhavah pralayah sthanam nidhanam beejam avayayam.

Sri Krishna told Arjuna:
O Prince, I am the goal of human life (i.e., Moksha –
liberation from the cycle of life and death, and ultimately,
union with Paramātmā);
I am the lord who sustains the universe;
I am the inner witness and the only true friend;
I am the shelter that provides refuge to all who come;
I am the beginning, the end, and the space in between;
I am the resting place (womb) and the medium of creation;
I am the eternal, indestructible seed (source)
of the universe.

One who has obtained wisdom, knows Brahman is everything!

4.31 ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः ब्रह्माग्नो ब्रह्मणा हुतम्
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्म-कर्म समाधिना (BG 4.24)
Brahmarpanam brahma havir brahmagnaah brahmanah hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahma-karma-samadhinah.

Sri Krishna:
In performing any havan or yagya,
the oblation is offered to Brahman - by the Brahman;
the oblation itself is Brahman;
Brahman is also the clarified butter that is poured in the fire; and also the fire itself is Brahman! Thus, the wise one
who always sees Brahman every where in all forms, and is
totally immersed in the consciousness of Brahman in all his
actions, verily attains Brahman (moksha).
The above verse (BG 4.24) is a traditional prayer before meals. In that context it is interpreted to mean that the food being offered is the five essential elements aspect of Brahman; the individuals eating the food are also Brahman (affirming Aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman) performing this act (lunch, dinner) while remembering, being grateful to, and fully conscious of the omni-present Brahman. We surrender all our actions of cooking, serving, and eating to Brahman. May our Sadhanā lead us to Brahman, the highest goal of human life.

Om, Peace! Peace! Peace!

4.32 ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठा अहम् अमृतस्य अव्ययस्य च
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्य एकान्तिकस्य च (BG 14.27)
Brahmano hi pratisthā aham amrtasya avayayasya cha
shāsvatasya cha dharmasya sukhasya ekāntikasya cha.

Srī Krishna:
I am the BRAHMAN, the Infinite Consciousness, the macrocosm, that which is never ending, upholder of the everlasting, universal DHARMA (laws governing the universe) Immortal, Imperishable, the One who is the source of Absolute Bliss.

4.33 बहुनां जन्मनामः अन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते
वासुदेवः सर्वमृत्यु इति स महात्मा सु-दुर्लभः (BG 7.19)
Bahūnāṃ janmanāṃ ante gyānavaṁ māṃ prapadyate
vāsudevah sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhah.

Srī Krishna:
Hard to find is that great soul (Mahātmā) who has realized that ALL THIS - every thing that exists - is VāSUDEVĀ.

Matured after many births and many lives, such rare souls, perfected in this wisdom, achieve Moksha; i.e., liberation from the cycle of life and death, and merge in My Supreme existence.
Lessons of Gyāna Yoga are beautifully summarized in a Hindi/Sanskrit prayer which is presented below with English translation:

**Q. Who am I? And Who (or What) is God?**

Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham

Amar ātmā Satchidānanda mai hoon,

Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham


Akhil Vishwa kā jo Paramātmā hai,
Sabhī Prāṇīyo kā wahī ātmā hai,
Wahī ātmā Satchidānanda mai hoon,
Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham


Jisē shastra kātē na agnī jalāyē,
Galāyē na pāni na mrityū mitāyē,
Wahī ātmā Satchidānanda mai hoon,
Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham


Amar ātmā hai maraṃsheel kāyā,
Sabhī prāṇīyo kē jo bhūtar samāyā,
Wahī ātmā Satchidānanda mai hoon,
Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham


Hai tāro(n) sitar(o) mai abhās jiskā,
Hai chandā aur Sūraj mai prakāsh jiskā,
Wahī ātmā Satchidānanda mai hoon,
Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham


Jo vyāpak hai kan kan mai āvās jiskā,
Nahī teen kalo mai ho nāsh jiskā,
Wahī ātmā Satchidānanda mai hoon,
Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham Shivoham


Shivoham, as well as Aham Brahmasmi, and Tatvam Asi are Mahā-vākyā (Truth of the highest order)

Aham Brahmasmi = I am Brahm.
Tatvam Asi = Thou art That (Brahman)
Lesson 5
Bhakti Yoga: The Path of Loving Devotion - Surrendering to God

5.1 अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्व प्रवर्तते
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भाव-समन्विताः: (BG 10.8)
Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām bhūda bhāva-samanvitāh.

I am the Source of every thing;
everything evolves, and emanates from Me;
Understanding this, the wise ones worship Me
with deep feelings of devotion and love.
Sri Krishna spoke to Prince Arjuna:

5.2 सर्व-धर्मानु परित्यज्य माम एकं शरणं ब्रज
अहं त्वा सर्व-पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः । (BG 18.66)
Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam sharaṇam vraja
aham tvā sarva-pāpebhya mokṣhayishyāmi mā shuchah.
Abandoning attachment to the fruits of your actions,
take refuge in Me.
I will liberate you from all sins. Do not grieve.
This is the same advice as in verse 3.9

Brahmani ādhāya karmāṇi sangam tyaktvā karoti yah
Lipyate na sa pāpen padma-patram ivāmbhāsā (BG 5.10)
But here it is given from the Bhakti perspective.
Here in Bhakti bhāva, Sri Krishna speaks in the first person:
“Take refuge in me. I will liberate you from all sins.”

5.3 मन्मता भव मद-भक्तः मद-याजी मां नमस्कृतुः
मामेव एष्यसि युक्त्वैवम् आत्मांं मत्परायणः । (BG 9.34)
Manmanā bhava mad-bhaktah mad-yāji mām namaskuru
māmeva eshyasi yuktvaivam ātmānam mat-parāyanah.
Focus your mind on Me alone; be devoted to Me,
bow down to Me;
Uniting your Self with Me, as the Supreme Goal,
you shall come to Me.
5.4 मत-कर्म-कृत्र वश मद्भक्तः संग वर्जितः
निर्विरागः सर्व-भूतेऽयः स माम अति पाण्डवः (BG 11.55)
Mat-karma-krin mat-paramo mad-bhaktah sanga-varjitah
nirvairah sarva-bhuteshu yah sa māṁ eti Pāṇḍava.

One who performs all actions for Me,
completely free from attachment to selfish interests,
who is ever devoted to Me, knowing Me as the Supreme;

And who bears enmity towards none,
O Prince, such a one finally comes to Me.

5.5 भक्त्या मामू अभिज्ञानाति यावान् यः चार्मित तत्त्वतः
ततो मां तत्त्वो ज्ञात्वा विश्वते तद-अनन्तरम् (BG 18.55)
Bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yah caṁśmi tattvataḥ
tato māṁ tattvato gyātvā vishate tad-anantaram.

Through Bhakti (devotion) one can know Me exactly as I am, and having known Me thus in my true essence,
one unites with my Supreme existence.

5.6 अनन्या: चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जना: पर्युपस्ते
तेषा नित्य-अभियुक्तानां योग-क्षेमं वहाम्यहम् (BG 9.22)
Ananyāḥ cintayanto māṁ ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teshāṁ nitya-abhiyuktānāṁ yoga-kshemām vahāmyaham.

Those who meditate on Me and worship Me with full faith and unwavering devotion, their necessities of life and safety/security are easily obtained through divine intervention, Providence.
5.7 अन्त-काले च माम एव स्मरन्त मुक्तवा कलेवरम्
यः प्रयाति स मदुभावं याति नास्ति अत्र संशयः: (BG 8.5)
Anta-kāle cha mām ēva smaran muktvā kālevaram
yah prayāti sa mad-bhāvam yāti nāsti atra sanshayah.

And at the end (time of death) one who leaves his body and departs from this world while remembering Me, attains My Supreme Spirit; there is no doubt about this.

5.8 यो यो यां यां ततुं भक्तं: श्रद्धया अर्चितम् इच्छति
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धा तां एव विद्धामि अहम् (BG 7.21)
Yo yo yām yām tanum bhaktah shraddhayā architum ichchati
tasya tasyāchalāṃ shraddhām tāṃ eva vidadhāmi aham.

Whichever Devā (m) or Devī (f) a devotee desires to worship with faith, I make his faith stronger in that particular form (Devā or Devī) that he is drawn to.
5.9 ये अपि अन्य-देवता: भक्ता: यजन्ते श्रद्धया अन्विता: 
ते अपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्ति अविधि-पूर्वकम् (BG 9.23)

Ye api anya devatāḥ bhaktāḥ yajante sraddhayā anvitāḥ
te api mām eva kaunteya yajanti avidhi-pūrvakam.

Even those who worship with great devotion and faith, other names and forms of God as Devīs and Devatās, they indeed worship Me alone.

O Prince, they may not fully understand or appreciate this fact and, therefore, follow non-traditional forms of devotional practices.
5.10 पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति
तत् अहं भक्ति-उपहितम् अश्नामि प्रयत्तात्मनः ।
(BG 9.26)
Patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktYA prayachchati
tad aham bhakti-upahritam ashnami prayatatmanah.

Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, I accept that offering of the pure-minded, filled with devotion.

5.11 यत् करोषि यत् अश्नासि यत् जुहोषि ददासि यत्
यत् तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत् कुरुष्व मद्दर्पणम्
(BG 9.27)
Yat karoshi yat ashnasi yat juhosii dadasi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva mad-arpanam.

Whatever work you do, whatever food you eat,
whatever Yagna you perform,
whatever charity (Dāna) you give,
whatever purifying austerities you practice,
O Prince, do it always as an offering to Me!

Remember this prayer before starting the days work!
And not only at dinner time, but before all meals.
Concluding Remarks

C.1 इति ते ज्ञानमु आछ्यात्तं गुह्यात्तु गुह्यतरं मया 
   विमृश्य एतदु अश्वेषण यथा इच्छसि तथा कुरु (BG 18.63)

Iti te gyānam ākhyātam guhyātt guhyataram mayā 
   vimrashya etad asheshena yathā ichchhāsi tathā kuru.

Srī Krishna: Thus, I have revealed to you all the wisdom 
   that explains the greatest of secrets to mankind. 
   Now, reflect on it thoroughly; 
   then, act as you wish.

Metaphorically, this verse conveys the idea that the Supreme Lord has given 
   every one full freedom to choose their actions, and thus their own destiny in 
   this life (and future lives). Geetā does not dictate, does not prescribe, does 
   not spoon feed, but gives you the tools and the wisdom to think for yourself 
   and act with your own discretion.

C.2 यः इदं परमं गुह्यं मदु-भक्तेषु अभिधास्यति 
   भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामं एव एष्यति असंशयः  (BG 18.68)

Yah idam paramam guhyam mad-bhakteshu abhidhāsyati 
   bhaktim mayi parāṁ kriptaṁ mām eva eshyati asanshayah.

He who, acting with love and devotion to me, 
   will teach or disseminate this deepest secret knowledge 
   (that is unknowable by human cognitive senses and 
   intellect)to those who seek the truth, shall doubtless 
   come to Me in the end.
C.3 यत्र योगेश्वर: कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः:
तत्र श्री: विजयो भूति: ध्रुवा नीति: मतिर्मम् (BG 18>78)
Yatra yogeshvarah Krishno, yatra Pârtho dhanurdharaḥ
Tatra shrī vijayo bhūtiḥ dhruvā neetiḥ matirmama.

This is the concluding verse of Geetā where Sri Sanjaya opined to King Dhritrāshtra:

Wherever Sūri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga (Unity principle of body, mind, intellect, and spirit, i.e., moral integrity) and Prince Arjuna, a man of right action and conviction (the archer) come together, there surely will come prosperity, victory, and ever lasting happiness because their actions will be guided by right principles; this is my firm conviction.

The symbolism of Lord Krishna (Yogeshvar) and Arjuna (the archer) represents the philosophy of Geetā that whenever a person, guided by a pure spiritual understanding undertakes principled action in selfless service, according to his/her Dharma, success and happiness are assured with the divine blessing.
Synopsis of Geeta’s Wisdom:

Geeta’s subject is the conflict within oneself, the struggle for self identity (who am I and what is the purpose of my life?), steps to self-purification (moving from Tamas and Rajas to Sattva) and ultimately Self-realization or Moksha, liberation, merging in the Supreme Universal Consciousness.

Q. Who am I?
A. I am the Soul, not this body; the body is only a vehicle for the soul.

Q. Why was I born?
A. I was born as a result of my karma (deeds) in my previous life.

Q. What is the purpose of life?
A. To purify your character by following Yama, Niyama, introspection and meditation. Leading a Sàttvic life, discharge your moral duties towards your family and society according to Dharma, without ego, pride, or expectation of anything in return, treating success or failure with equipoise. Offer all your deeds to Brahman, surrendering with devotion, ultimately liberating your soul (Moksha) by uniting with the universal spirit, Brahman.

Q. What happens after death?
A. If you follow the above path as explained in the purpose of life, you will merge with Brahman, the ultimate consciousness (sat, chit, ànand). If you did not achieve that ultimate state, you will go to heaven, experience sat-chit-ànand for a very long time, then born again on Earth as a human in a sàttvic family so you can progress on the path of sàdhana to achieve that ultimate state: merging with Brahman, experiencing sat-chit-ànand, not subject to rebirth ever again.

Thus, the wisdom of Geeta enables one to harness Spiritual Knowledge to strengthen their values and character, and develop appreciation for the Universal Love that is reflected through one’s Service to Mankind.

Hari Om Tat Sat   Hari Om Tat Sat   Hari Om Tat Sat

Om Shantih  Shantih  Shantih
Let there be peace in our hearts!
Peace all around us!!
Peace in the World!!!
References for Further Study

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Appendix 1

Three Inherent Human Attributes (Guṇa)

Personalities of all human beings are derived from combinations of three fundamental Guṇa: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The following four verses expound on these natural attributes and how they affect everything in one's life:

A1.1 सत्त्वं रजस् तम इति गुणाः प्रकृति-सम्भवाः
निबधन्नित्ति महा-बाहो देहं देहिनम् अव्ययम् (BG 14.5)
Sattvam rajas tama iti gunah prakriti-sambhavah
nibadhnanti mahā-bāho dehī dehinam avyayam.

O Prince; Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas are three guṇa (or attributes) born of Prakriti (nature); inherent in every thing in nature. Even though the Self is immortal, it is bonded to the body by these guṇa.

A1.2 सत्त्वात् सम्भायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च
प्रमाद मोही तमसो भवतो अज्ञानमेव च (BG 14.17)
Sattvāt Sanjāyate gyānam rajaso lobha eva cha
pramāda-mohau tamaso bhavato āgyānam eva cha

Sattva gives rise to knowledge and wisdom;
Rajas to greed, selfish interests, and
Tamas to ego, false pride, attachment, and ignorance.
A1.3 पुरुषः प्रकृतिः हि भुक्ते प्रकृतिजानु-गुणान्तः कारणं गुण-संगीतय सत्-असत्-योनि-जन्मस् (BG 13.22)

The Purusha (ātmā) seated in Prakriti (body) experiences these attributes of Prakriti. The attachment of the Self to these Gunas is the cause of one's birth in good or bad places and situations.

A1.4 उद्धवं गच्छन्ति सत्त्व-स्थः मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसः: जघन्य-गुण-दृष्टिस्थः अध्ये गच्छन्ति तामसः: (BG 14.18)

Those who practice Sattva rise up to a noble and happy life and ascend to heaven at the end of life.

Those who are ruled by Rajas remain engaged in fulfillment of desires –yet not finding fulfillment. They return to a similar life after death.

Those enmeshed in Tamas suffer chasing after harmful activities in this life and the next.
Summary of Guṇa:

As human beings evolve during their lifetime through habits, associations, education, profession, influences of family, friends and associates, and vicissitudes of life, they acquire or accentuate some and diminish other Guṇa, thus continuously evolving the combination of the three attributes:

1. **Sattva (pure):** pious, clean, gentle, holding high moral standards, thinking and working for the welfare of all. This is also called the “higher self” with the spiritually inspired thoughts, deeds and conduct.

2. **Rajas (royal):** egotistical, materialistic, selfish, devoting life to greed, sensory gratification, wanting/hoarding everything for themselves.

3. **Tamas (dark):** negative, ignorant, destructive, indulging in work or habits that are neither good for the self nor the society. This attribute is also called the “lower self” or base instinct.

For example:

- **Sāttvic** person eats nutritious vegetarian food, just enough to live a healthy life and not indulge in food, or waste or hoard food items (so that others, less fortunate do not go hungry).

- **Rājasic** eats too much of rich and tasteful foods (loaded with fat and sugar), resulting in obesity and heart disease, and waste or hoard food for themselves while oblivious of the scarcity of food for many in their own communities in the world.

- **Tāmasic** indulge in drugs, alcohol, tobacco, other narcotics, meat eating, etc., not caring for their own health, nor the effect of their lifestyle on others.

The truth expounded in Geetā is that NO ONE is pure Satva, Rajas or Tamas. Every person has a combination of all three Guṇa and the mix continues to change during one's life time, and even during the course of the day.

Eliminating Tamas, reducing Rajas, and acquiring more Sattva should be the objective of an enlightened soul.
Appendix - 2

Yama and Niyama (from Yoga Sūtras)
Ethical Conduct for Hindus

Hinduism's ethical restraints are contained in ten simple precepts called Yama and Niyama. They define the codes of conduct by which we harness our instinctive forces and cultivate the innate, pristine qualities of our soul. They are scriptural injunctions for all aspects of thought, deeds and behavior.

Yama, the Five Principles of Ethical Conduct, Hindu Moral Code:

1) **Ahimsā**, non-violence or non-injury: not harming any living being through thoughts, words or deeds;
2) **Satya**, truthfulness: keeping thoughts, speech, and actions true to words;
3) **Asteya**, honesty: to neither steal nor covet others property;
4) **Brahma-charya**, divine conduct: Sāttvic conduct (see Appendix 1 for Guna); especially, remaining celibate when single, and faithful in marriage; 5) **Aparigraha**, non-hoarding: not collecting more than one needs – thus not depriving others of what they need to sustain life.

Niyama, the Five Virtues:

1) **Kshamā**, forgiveness: pardon, tolerance with people, and patience with circumstances;
2) **Dayā**, compassion towards all humans and animals;
3) **Dhriti**, steadfastness: perseverance, firm in resolution/decision;
4) **Shaucha**, purity of body, mind and speech;
5) **Ishvara Pranidhāna**, devotion, surrendering to God.

Observing Yamas and Niyamas is a pre-requisite, before one can progress on the path of yoga.
Appendix - 3
Essential Karma (Meritorious deeds)
Yagya, Dāna, Tapa

Sri Krishna affirmed three meritorious deeds: Yagya, Dāna and Tapa that every one must perform to the best of their abilities in life.

A3.1 यज्ञ-दान-तपः-कर्म न त्याज्य कार्यम् एव ततः
यज्ञो दानं तपः चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम्
(Yagya-dāna-tapah-karma na tyājyaṁ kāryam eva tat yagyo dānam tapah chaiva pāvanāni maneeshinām.

One should never cease to perform these three sacred and obligatory actions:
1. Yagya: Selfless service for the welfare of society,
2. Dāna: Charity for the welfare of those in need, and
3. Tapa: Austerities for the purification of character.

These activities are helpful in purification of the self, even for those who have attained great knowledge and wisdom.

Yagya = A project of Selfless Service to Humanity,
      performed as a religious duty, as service to God.

A3.2 सह-यज्ञः प्रजा: सुष्ट्रवा पुरोवाच प्रजापति:
अनेन प्रसविष्यस्वसू एष वोस्तु इष्ट-कामधुक्
(Saha-yagyāḥ prajāḥ srishtvā purovācha prajāpatih
añena prasavishyadhvam esha vo'stu ishta-kāmadhuk.

In the beginning of creation, Prajāpati (the Creator),
created mankind with the spirit of cooperation, selfless
service, and sacrifice and said, "By this spirit you shall
always prosper. This will fulfill all your needs".)
This verse conveys the notion that every achievement is possible for men and women in society if they act in the spirit of cooperation and sacrifice, without selfish interest.

Implicit in this verse is also the notion that Prajāpati created the cosmic powers to function in the service of all beings to maintain the harmonious growth of existence. The sun lights and heats the Earth. The moon shines and cools. The lakes, rivers and oceans store water for the planet. The Earth’s gravity holds everything in place. And all this ... purely in the spirit of self-sacrifice and divine love (with no attachment or selfish motive). This is Saha-Yagya.

The veracity and purport of this utterance is exemplified by the Creator everyday: when a mother gives birth to a baby (performing the function of Prajāpati) she is endowed mentally by the spirit of sacrifice for the protection and nourishment of the new born, and physically with milk in her breasts to offer to the baby who has no other means to live and grow! This is true not only of humans, but animals and birds as well!

“The entire cosmos is a cooperative. The sun, the moon, and the stars function as a cooperative. The same is true for humans and animals, trees, and the Earth. When we realize that the world is a mutual, interdependent, cooperative enterprise — then we can build a noble environment. If our lives are not based on this truth, then we shall perish.” – Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

Pleased by the selfless services (yagna) offered by humans, Devas fulfill all their needs. But anyone who enjoys the bounties given by Devas without sharing it with others, less fortunate ones, and without offering selfless service to fellow humans, is indeed a thief!

Mahatma Gandhi’s view on this verse:
Gandhi ji considered the earth a living organism. His ideas were expressed in terms of two fundamental laws: a Cosmic law, and the Law of Species.

- Cosmic Law views the entire universe as a single entity. Nothing could malfunction outside the threshold limits built into the grand system that includes both living and non-living phenomena. He believed that "the
universe was structured and informed by the cosmic spirit, that all men, all life and indeed all creation were one.”

- Regarding the Law of Species, Gandhi believed that without the cooperation and sacrifice of both human and non-human beings evolution is not possible. Being rational human beings, we are the custodians of the rest of creation and should respect their rights and cherish the diversity. It is for this reason that taking more than the required resources is seen as theft.

**Dāna (Donation, Charity)**

A3.4 दातन्यम् इति यत् दानम् दीयते अनुपकारिणे

dेशे काले च पात्रे च तत् दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम्

Dātavyam iti yat dānam deeyate anupakārīne
deshē kāle cha pātre cha tad dānam sāttvikam smritam.

A donation that is given with the feeling that it is our sacred duty to give to the needy, to a worthy person (or organization), at an appropriate time and place, and without expectation of any personal gain in return, is a pure (Sattvic) gift.

**An example of Tapa:**

A3.5 अनुद्वेग-करं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रिय-हितं च यत्

स्वाभाविक-आप्यासनं चैव वाक्यं तत् उच्यते

Anudvega-karam vākyam satyam priya-hitam cha yat
svādhyāy abhyāsanam chaiva vāng-mayam tapa uchyate.

Speech that causes no harmful effect (anger, anxiety) to any one, that is truthful, pleasant (lovingly communicated) and helpful or beneficial to the listener, and speech that is used in reciting and practicing of scriptures is called the "austerity of speech".

Here is homework for students of vedānta desiring to take the first step of spiritual wisdom: Practice such speech at least once a month, especially on occasions when you hold a vrata (fast). Or let this tapa be your vrata.
Choosing a Vocation
According to One’s Natural Aptitude

A4.1 ब्राह्मण-क्षत्रिय-विश्वाय शूद्राणां च परात्पर
कर्मणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभाव-प्रभवाः गुणेः: (BG 18.41)
Brāhmaṇa-kṣatrita-viṣayā śūḍraṇāṁ ca parantapa
karmāṇi pravībhaktāni svabhāva-prabhā vaih gunaih.

O Prince, the division of labor in the society consisting of priests and teachers (Brahmin), administrators and soldiers (Kshatriya), traders (Vaishya) and service workers (Shudra) is based on the qualities of character and natural aptitudes that one is born with.

A4.2 शमो दमः तपः शौचः क्षान्ति: आर्जवम् एव च ज्ञान विज्ञानम् आस्तिक्यं ब्रह्म-कर्म स्वभाव-जमृ (BG 18.42)
Shamo damah tapah shaucham kshāntih ārjavam eva cha
gyānam vigyānam āstikyam brahma-karma svabhāva-jam.

Those born with the qualities of serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity (inner and outer), forgiveness and uprightness are suited for the vocation of Brahmin; that is, acquiring knowledge, learning as well as teaching about science and spirituality, and helping others to attain God-realization.
Those born with physical prowess, splendor, firmness, dexterity, not fleeing from any challenge, who are generous by nature and attract respectful followers, are born leaders suited for the vocation of the Kshatriya, for protection of the weak in the society.

Those born with the aptitude in farming, dairy, or interest in trade, commerce, or business are aptly suited for the vocation of the Vaishyas.

Those who are born with the aptitude and desire to serve fellow men and women are suited for the vocation of Shudra. This would include all vocations in service industries, government service, public service, community service, and vocations like nursing, etc.

As seen from these verses, the concept of four Varnas was created to encourage the development of natural aptitude; not merely following the vocation of the family one is born into. Over many thousands of years, the Varna system became corrupted into the birth based Jaati prathā (or in English vernacular, caste system).
God does not discriminate on the basis of one’s vocation, or gender, …

Any one who takes refuge in Me attains the Supreme Bliss no matter what vocation, gender, creed, community, or status (or lack thereof) in society they belong to, and even if one has committed a sin in this life or previous lives, they can attain the Supreme abode by surrendering to Me with loving devotion.

Society may discriminate against some, but everyone who takes shelter in the Supreme Abode is equal in the eyes of God.

Obviously, this is the precursor to the modern-day concept of Civil Rights in America and other developed nations that declare equal rights to all human beings in the society without regard to race, religion, skin color, gender, vocation, etc.
**Appendix 5**  
**Cosmology and Creation Theory in Geetā**

**Hindu Theory of Creation:** Hindus believe in a cyclic nature of the universe embracing time spans of trillions of years. Hindu scriptures describe time units from the infinitesimal truti, lasting 1/1,000,0000 of a second to a mahā-mavanantara of 311 trillion years.

Sri Krishna described creation as an endless cyclic procession of creation, preservation and dissolution over incomprehensibly large cycles of time spans of trillions of years.

**A5.1** सहस्र-युग-पर्यन्तम् अह: यत् ब्रह्मणो विदुः  
रात्रिं युग-सहस्रान्तां ते अहो रात्रि विदो जनाः: (BG 8.17)  
Sahasra-yuga-paryantam aha yat brahmaṇo viduh  
rātrim yuga-sahasrāntām te aho-rātra-vido janāḥ.  

Those who understand the cyclic process of cosmic evolution and dissolution know that ONE "Day of Brahmā" extends for one thousand maha-yugas (one maha-yuga is 4.32 million calendar years) and the "Night of Brahmā" also extends for the same duration. Thus a 'Day and Night of Brahma= 8.64 billion years.

**A5.2** अव्यक्तादृ व्यक्तय: सर्वा: प्रभवनित्ति अहर-आगमे  
रात्रि-आगमे प्रलब्धन्ते तत्रैव अव्यक्त-संज्जके (BG 8.18)  
Avyaktaḥ vyaktayah sarvāḥ prabhavanti ahar-āgame  
rātri-āgame praleeyante tatraiva avyakta-sangyake.  

At the dawn of the "Day of Brahma", the physical universe with multitudes of forms evolves from the Un-manifested Source (Brahman). And when the "Night of Brahma" begins, all the forms of the universe dissolve and merge back into the Un-manifested formless Source.
A5.3 मया अध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते स-चराचरम्
हेतुना अनेन कौन्तेय जगतु विपरिवर्तते  (BG 9.10)
Mayā adhyāksena prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-čara-čaram
hetunā anena kaunteya jagat viparīvartate.

I preside over the creation of this manifest universe.
Under My direction, the Nature (Prakrti) gives birth
(manifests) to all the moving (beings) and the
unmoving (things like mountains and rivers).
And this is how, O Prince, the world goes around
and around.

A5.4 यावत् सज्जायते किञ्चित् सत्वं स्थावर-जड़गम्
क्षेत्र-क्षेत्रज्ञ-संयोगात् तत् विद्य भरतर्षम्  (BG 13.27)
Yāvat saṃjāyate kinchit sattvam sthāvara-janga.mam
kṣetra-kṣetragya-sanyogāt tat viddhi bharatarṣabhā.

In this world, whatever exists, animate (that moves)
or inanimate, O Prince, it is born from the union of
the "Field" (physical matter) or the Prakriti, and the
Purusha, the Soul, that is the source of life
and consciousness in all beings.
The entire creation is a play of Purusha and Prakriti,
or kṣetra and kṣetragya:

Kṣetra = body, mind, senses, brain cells and chemicals (neurotrans-mitters)
that generate thoughts, emotions, feelings of Rāga (likes), Dvesha (dislikes), as
well as notions of intelligence, knowledge, wisdom, etc.

Kṣetragya = the spirit that manifests as consciousness that gives life to the
body, mind, intellect complex.
**Hindu Cosmology - Theory of Creation**

**Scientist Carl Sagan**, the distinguished Cornell University professor, astronomer and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, expressed the following views while filming the 10th episode of his famous Television series 'COSMOS' in India:

“The main reason that we oriented this episode of COSMOS towards India is because of that wonderful aspect of Hindu cosmology which first of all gives a time-scale for the Earth and the universe -- a time-scale which is consonant with that of modern scientific cosmology. We know that the Earth is about 4.6 billion years old, and the cosmos, or at least its present incarnation, is something like 10 or 20 billion years old. The Hindu tradition has a day and night of Brahma in this range, somewhere in the region of 8.4 billion years.”

“As far as I know. It is the only ancient religious tradition on the Earth which talks about the right timescale. We want to get across the concept of the right time-scale, and to show that it is not unnatural. In the West, people have the sense that what is natural is for the universe to be a few thousand years old, and that billions is indwelling, and no one can understand it. The Hindu concept is very clear. Here is a great world culture which has always talked about billions of years.”

“Finally, the many billion year time scale of Hindu cosmology is not the entire history of the universe, but just one day and night of Brahmā, and there is the idea of an infinite cycle of births and deaths and an infinite number of universes, …”
## Appendix 6. Index of Sanskrit Verses

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