

A Season's Harvest

1978



# Natural Action

Talks on the 3rd Chapter  
of the Bhagavad Gita

Swami Venkatesananda

1978

## A Season's Harvest 78

### Contents

Talks on the 3rd Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita

part 4 - Natural Action

Talk 1

Talk 2

Talk 3

## Talk 1

III.2 - vyamisrene 'va vakyena buddhim mohayasi va me tad ekam vada niscitya yena sreya  
'ham apnuyam

The student, who is Arjuna, asks the teacher Krishna, this question, 'Tell me, what is sreya?' This word has been interpreted in various ways, but let us use the word 'right'. What is the right thing to do in any given situation? One must arrive at the point where one begins to ask this question within oneself. There is always a tendency to answer that question very quickly - 'Well, ask father and mother, or ask a priest, they are omniscient, they will answer all our questions'. And so we go to these great people, asking them questions like, 'Shall I go to England or not?' or 'My daughter is getting old you know, when will she get married?' Most likely the wise person is not able to answer that sort of question even for himself. If he knew all the answers, he would be a very prosperous and happy man. He is himself puzzled and unhappy, and you are going to him in the hope that he will solve your unhappiness. It is not possible.

So the question has to arise in one's mind and there should be no anxiety to answer that question quickly. One should not make a hasty decision. I do not know what this word 'decision' really means. I know what incision means. To cut. So, the word decision must also come from the same root - cutting into two perhaps. When you make a decision, you have cut that silly thing into two, and it is quite possible that they will not join again - so be a little more careful. In other words, do not let impulse govern the decision. That may be a wrong approach. Take your time. Find the answer in the way in which Krishna suggests. This method is what we are going to discuss.

Arjuna had suggested a certain course of action, based on the prevailing concept or philosophy. That concept or philosophy prevails even now all over the world - the concept of karma. We are not suggesting that this theory or concept itself is wrong, but there is something else. The concept of karma is quite simple. Every farmer knows it, and if you are a student of physics, you know it too. It is also found in most of the scripture to - 'As you sow, so shall you reap'. I am not sure of that, so I have slightly modified it to say, 'As you sow, so shall it grow'. After all, I do not know if I want to reap it. I do not know if I will reap it. You plant a mango tree and it comes up; it is not inevitable that you will be here to reap the fruit. But this much is inevitable, that if you put a mango seed there, you are a hundred percent certain that a Banyan tree will not grow out of it.

Starting from the concept of karma, some people concluded that we should not do anything at all, we should not sow any seed because it may lead to complications. Similarly, you have the law of action-reaction in physics, which states that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Now I am miserable and unhappy. According to this law, this unhappiness arises from an action done previously, and because the reaction is said to be equal and opposite, the action performed earlier on was to make myself happy. I did something to make myself

happy then, and the reaction has come back to me in the form of unhappiness. I see this. Or rather, I do not know if I see this, but I think I see it. Afraid to make the next move, I do not do anything. If you do not want unhappiness, do not commence any thing at all - do not start anything, do not do anything, renounce it, keep quiet.

Krishna suggests that that may not be the right approach. He starts the teaching in the 3rd chapter with a beautiful declaration:

III.4 - na karmanam anarambhan naiskarmyam puruso 'snute na ca samnyasanad eva siddhim samadhigacchati

Do not think that by merely not commencing an action, by not engaging yourself in action, you will escape from all action and reaction, because the roots are elsewhere.

The roots of action are not found in you. You cannot say, 'I am not going to do anything from now on, for that also is an action. Idleness is also an action. So Krishna says:

III.5 - na hi kascit ksanam api jatu tisthaty akarmakrt karyate by avasah karma sarvah prakrtijair gunaih

You are a living being, you cannot refuse to participate in life.

I think one has to study that statement very carefully. Krishna is not suggesting here that you should not refuse to participate in life. He is pointing out that such inaction is impossible. He is making a statement of the following nature. He is not saying that there is water which can be boiled, but that you should not boil it. He is saying that water cannot be dehydrated. You can dehydrate milk and turn it into milk powder, you can dehydrate potatoes and make them into powder, but you cannot dehydrate not water. I must see that it is not possible for me to do nothing. Doing means doing something. You may not work, you may not study, but you may sit idly - sitting is an action. It will have its own reactions.

What is right action? We shall find the answer, not by refraining from participating in the activities of life in the flow of life, but by finding where right action commences, how it arises. Later on, in the same chapter, Krishna describes how life flows on and in the flow of life action arises.

III.10 - sahayajnah prajah srstva puro 'vaca prajapatih anena prasavisyadhvam esa vo 'stv istakamadhuk

The Creator, having in the beginning created mankind, together with sacrifice, said: 'By this shall ye propagate. Let this be the milch cow of your desires.

This is how life has been made to flow. And Krishna uses a very beautiful expression:

III.9 - yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra loko yam karmabandhanah tadartham karma kaunteya  
muktasangah samacara

If you live in such a way that your whole life is one of worship, you are not bound and there is no problem.

It is not a question of deciding what is right action.

III.15 - karma brahmodbhavam viddhi brahma 'ksarasamudbhavam tasmat sarvagatam brahma  
nityam yajne pratisthitam

It is a question of finding the source of action; what makes me do this?

Consider what this yajna or havan, the fire ceremony means. You collect all sorts of things and pour them into the fire, reciting 'Om swaha, Om swaha'. In fifteen minutes your havan is over, and you go away thinking that everything is alright now, without understanding the significance of it. 'Swaha' - I am trying to destroy swartha. It is like the French word 'soi', which means self. Ha means destroy it, offer it, sacrifice it. So swaha means the sacrifice of the self. The real meaning of the word 'sacrifice' is to make it sacred.

Now in the Hindu tradition you sacrifice ghee and food grains into the sacred fire. If you are intelligent, this thought or feeling must also arise in you - that I am not only throwing ghee and food grains into the fire, but I am also throwing ghee and food grains into something else, into my mouth, where there is gastric fire. Let us look at the two different forms of sacrifice. In both cases there is a fire which consumes what is being offered. Here there is a fire, which you can see, and there is a fire which you cannot see, though you feel its heat in the body. What is offered into this havan-kunda, the religious fire which sits in front of you, is at once reduced to sacred ashes, clean, pure, and beautiful. You take them and put them onto your forehead. That is visible.

What happens to the ghee that is poured into this other digestive fire? It becomes the most unsacred thing in the world, the body, rubbish, filth. It takes a lot of imagination to understand that the food grains that have been poured into this body have been sacrificed; they have not become sacred at all. If you have any doubt, ask your cosmetician. They sell all sorts of deoderants on the understanding that the body exudes filth.

If the food is offered into the body as a sacrifice, how must I live so that this may also be a sacrifice? One has to discover this oneself. Why is it that, when these things are offered into the gastric fire, they become so filthy? I must answer that question myself and understand it. Then it is possible for me to live in such a way that the ghee which is poured into this digestive fire may also become sacred? If that energy is also utilized properly, then that also could become sacred. If my whole life is lived as a sacrifice, then it is possible for all the food that is consumed to be regarded as sacrifice.

Krishna suggests: 'Regard your whole life as sacrifice'. That is, life itself, every action, should be made sacred. Is that possible? You think, 'I am doing this', and when you think that, naturally there is an understanding or a perception of a motivation. 'I am doing this because ...', because I want to get some pleasure or some profit but of life. Some of you are doing business here and we are doing business elsewhere. Such statements are found in all scriptures. Do not think that I am only belittling this statement in the Bible. They point out that if you do some charity here, you will get a reward in heaven, and then you will be born a very rich man in the next birth. As the Bible puts it, 'If you give, it shall be given back to you a hundred fold.' There is a similar tradition amongst the Hindus, that if you feed a holy man, it is equivalent to feeding five hundred people. So, it is a very simple and economical way. When you give in charity to a poor man, observe your own mind and see what you are doing. Can you visualise yourself doing this charity because the Bible says it will be returned to you a hundredfold? Are you doing charity at all then? This man in front of you has completely disappeared, instead you are seeing money pouring from somewhere. Such an action is hypocrisy.

That is the danger in all teaching. In order to promote charity and goodness, one has to say something like, 'Be good, you will go to heaven.' The moment you are told that, you are not doing good at all, you are only busy going to heaven. That action is impure. It is not right action. You are not even acting in the proper spirit. You have a motive. That motivation builds expectation, hope, fear, disappointment, despair and frustration. Outwardly it may appear to be wonderful. You may be doing phenomenal charity, fantastic social work, but it is absolutely useless if it arises from a motive. Motive means selfishness. Is there an action which is not linked to such motivation, which is right in itself, whose rightness or wrongness does not depend upon a result?

It is not like an exam, where you only know if you have done well or not by the result. I cannot do that in life. I wish you would not do it in the exam either. When someone gives me a drink, how do I know whether it is poison or coconut water? You are telling me, 'Well drink it, we will see'. I must know right now. 'By their fruits you shall know them' - but by then it is too late. I want to know as I continue to live, as life flows on, that this is right action. Some of you may be students. If you write an exam anxious to pass, you will fail. The anxiety kills you, destroys your initiative, your intelligence, your energy, your zeal - everything. The more anxious you are, the more certain it is that you will fail.

So, I am not certain at all that the action is right action or wrong action, but I am observing to see where it arises. Does it arise in instinct? Instinct in the usual sense of the word) What is instinct? It is possible to misunderstand this instinct and confuse it with what we might call spontaneous action. Spontaneous action is possible only for a little baby, but it is very difficult for you and me. For instance, I was brought up in an orthodox Brahmin family and we would not even sip from a glass, we used to pour from above our head. You bite something and say, 'Oh, it's lovely, won't you have a bit?' Now, between the two of us there is a problem.

To you it looks like a good action - 'I took a bit of the cake, it is so delicious; so instinctively I offer it to you.' Won't you have a bit?' Instinctively I shrink from it. It is a good case in point. The action is not right action. It is not spontaneously wishing to offer someone a piece of this cake, but rather it is a sort of instinctual action. That is, there is conditioning or training in it. There is blindness in it. Instinct is always blind. It may be rooted in the body. The body instinctively turns away from something which is painful to it; or it may be rooted in the mind which is corrupted by prejudice.

Again we go back to this question of where does this action arise? Does it arise in instinct? Then it is mechanical. The intelligence is not working at all, it is blindly following a tradition. Does it arise in emotion? Then it has got a motivation. Does it arise in the mind, in the thought process? Then it is calculating, it is working towards a result, a goal, and must lead to frustration. Is there something other than all this from which action arises? Krishna suggests that there is. He also suggests that all these various things - instinct, emotion, thought-process - can all be grouped into this one single thing - 'I'.

## Talk 2

What is the source of action? There is a beautiful passage in the Bhagavad Gita:

III.14 - annad bhavanti bhutani parjanya annasanbhavah

Yesterday we discussed that we - in the sense of the body - are made of food. If there is no rain, there is no food. These two statements are obvious. They are followed by other statements which are not so obvious:

III.14 - yajnad bhavati parjanyo yajnah karmasamudbhavah

Krishna tells us there that rain falls because of yajna. What is yajna? In the havan ceremony, you pour something into the fire saying, 'May I live without selfishness, may my actions be not motivated by selfishness, may I offer into the sacred fire, called the world, every one of my actions as an offering. This is yajna. If this is done, there is rain-fall. So, Krishna seems to take us from the obvious to the not-so-obvious, and finally to the subtle principle. The body, the gross physical thing, is always obvious; the non-physical thing, the me, the mind, the spirit, is not obvious, That the rain-fall is dependent upon our spirit of self-sacrifice is not so obvious. That we do not see what makes rain fall does not entitle us to doubt this statement. There may be some truth in the fact that it is the spirit in which we live that governs rain-fall or sunshine and so on. What is unselfishness if it does not spring from action? Unselfishness is seen in one's action. The spirit of unselfishness needs action for its manifestation. If there is no action, one does not know in what spirit one live.

III.15 - karma brahmodbhavam viddhi brahma 'ksarasamudbhavam tasmad sarvagatam brahma nityam yajne pratisthitam

The literal translation of this phrase is 'Remember that action springs from God. Brahman is the all-pervading, essence'. Brahman is another synonym for God, or God is another word used to denote what Brahman stands for here. Does action spring from the thinking instrument or mind? The mind always creates division. Or, the mind works in terms of division based on the past and the future. If this action, called speaking, arises from the mind, then it is not right action. Or this action, if it is not in the thinking sphere, may be an emotional thing. You are doing it only because it gives you a nice feeling. Or, while the action flows, you raise a nice feeling within yourself. In this action which takes place inevitably in life, the heart or the feeling comes up and says, 'Ah, it feels good.' That action is wrong action, that attitude is a wrong attitude. Action being inevitable, it is a motivation or the other interfering factors that are deadly.

There are two points of view here concerning action. One view is that everything is predetermined. The other is that you have the freedom of choice. One can look at it from both points of view. Whether I have a freedom of choice or whether the action is inevitable, I do not know. But I know this much, that action is inevitable - life is motion and action. I must find out where action springs from. Is there

interference with this action by thought or feelings? If these two are kept aside, then action arises and happens.

You have probably used these three words together: thinking, feeling and willing. I do not like the last word. So I changed it to 'thinking, feeling and living'. Where did that action come from? Surely from living. Can we prove this? No. But one can live this life without thought and emotion interfering with action. When these two are kept strictly away, then life flows on. Such a life is free from selfishness. When the self arises, it begins to think, calculate, it is caught up in its own emotions. When action is not interfered with by these two, then the self is not there, and that is unselfish action.

In that action there is no reaction, except to the extent that if the palm tree falls, there is a sound. If while you are driving along the road, a stone rolls down the hillside and falls in front of you, you do not blame the mountain. If I throw that stone in front of you, you blame me. You recognise that the mountain has no ego. Only egoistic actions are followed by the reaction. Only as long as I am holding on to the action does it bounce back towards me, because the 'me' is there, thinking or feeling: 'I am doing this'.

III.27 - prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah ahamkaravimudhatma karta 'ham iti manyate

Who is it that is sitting here and speaking? Who is this Swami Venkatesananda? It is natural for speech to happen. Yet if only a little nerve in the throat goes out of order, then Swami Venkatesananda would be speechless. Why do I say, 'I am doing this'? It is the throat, the voice, the brain-centre, the brain-cells that are speaking, and if there is something else, it is God that is speaking. It is the idea that arises that 'I am the speaker', that then becomes the speaker, the ego. This ego is totally uninvolved in the action. The action has nothing whatsoever to do with the idea of the self. It is not as though, if I think I am the speaker, I become the speaker. I do not. Whether you are a wise person and you realise that action springs from life or God, or you are a stupid person who thinks that I am the doer, action always springs from God.

It is God who sits in the hearts of all beings, and it is He who makes everybody do whatever is being done, who makes them revolve helplessly. You will be made to do. Do not think 'I will do', or 'I will not do'. These stupid ideas and great feelings are only ideas and great feelings, not action. If you do not want to use the word 'God', then use 'life'. If the inner intelligence is able to detect the ego-interference, in the form of thoughts, ideas, emotions or feelings, then life flows on. In that life there is no problem.

A few minutes ago I quoted verse III.27 - all actions are done by nature. What do we mean by 'nature'? There is unfortunately an error here. I do not know how this corruption arose. You go to the seaside and look at nature. You have not explained whose nature it is, and you excluded yourself, even humanity. If you understand by the word 'nature' all that is natural, then you do not commit the

blunder of excluding yourself as humanity. The human being, being natural, is also part of this nature. Suddenly you find an extraordinary new attitude developing within you. Do not all actions spring from nature? Are not all actions natural? Everything is natural. Natural life does not mean life which is monotonous. It means the recognition that whatever is happening is as it should be. The recognition immediately puts my heart at rest and enlightens my soul.

In that state of enlightenment I see that nature is not a thing in itself. It is an energy, a manifestation that belongs to some being, some entity, and it is that entity which we call God. It is only when we are unable to understand, to appreciate or to raise ourselves to this level - to realise that this is an omnipresent force, that God is an omnipresent being, that we form images of God, and regard God as a physical or psychological image. God is not confined to a temple, to my puja room, to a little statue, or to the havan-kund. God is everywhere, but I am not able to apprehend this. I am not able to realise it, and therefore I make use of all these as aids. All action, and all of life flows not only from Him, but in Him.

You cannot escape from life. You have no free will to change what has to happen. You may perhaps have no choice concerning the way life has to flow, but one has a choice - either to live an enlightened life or a stupid life. There is only one choice there - I can realise that it is the will of God that prevails here and therefore I can totally surrender to life, to God, and participate in His will; or I might think this is right, that is not right. I want to do this, I want to gain this, I want pleasure, power and money, and so I get worried about all these. Krishna tells us:

III.20 - karmanai 'va hi samsiddhim asthita janakadayah lokasamgraham eva 'pi sampasyan kartum arhasi

Even great sages like Janaka were active, and in and through that action they realised the source of action, that is God. We are all searching and looking for God. Krishna made it very simple and clear in verse III.15 - God is the source of life, the source of all action; action arises from God. While you are busy in this world, doing whatever has to be done, constantly look into the springs of action. Action is not only good for the world, but it is also the path to God. By following the course of action, by looking for the source of action, one discovers God. There have been kings, dacoits, householders, swamis, farmers, tradesmen, craftsmen, cobblers and scavengers who have been enlightened. It is not the privilege of the priests or the swamis, but it is open to everybody.

III.25 - saktah karmany avidvamso yatha kurvanti bharata kuryad vidvams tatha saktas cikirsur lokasamgraham

The enlightened man is not to be distinguished or recognised by the clothes he wears, or even by the type of action that he performs. It is almost a commandment that the enlightened man should behave externally in a way similar to that of an unenlightened person. The difference is in the inner attitude or the inner enlightened state. The one has found God, the other has not. The one

realises that this is life, this is how it flows; the other is still caught up, trapped in his own ego-sense, in his own private idea. He is attached to the idea and the image that he has of himself, to the right action that he is supposed to do. Since he is attached, the action comes back to him as a reaction. The enlightened man is free from that attachment. He also behaves in exactly the same way as the unenlightened man, appears in the same way, does what the unenlightened man does, but in a completely different spirit.

### Talk 3

Natural action which happens and which arises from life itself is right action. In that there is no conflict, no confusion. As a matter of fact, action in itself does not create any problem. My sitting here and talking creates no problem. When the mind or the emotion interferes in it, then with these two the self arises, 'I am talking to you'. Then there is a problem.

The following example has often been given in spiritual literature. Though you have two eyes, they somehow create a single vision. It is an extraordinary thing. We never think of these simple every-day phenomena, and therefore they go unnoticed. When the eyes are open and there is light, there is looking, there is seeing, and in that sight there is no discrimination - discrimination in a certain special sense.

The seeing itself does not tell you, 'He is a good man, he is a bad man', or 'She is beautiful, she is ugly', or 'This is good, this is evil'. That is, the eyes can look at something which the mind considers evil, and at something which the mind considers good without any problem whatsoever. The problem arises elsewhere.

Natural action is God's action. That is what is called God's Will. 'Prakrti' is natural. When life flows on and action arises in that life, it is prakrti, the prakrti is active; that is, when the wind blows and the leaves shake, that is prakrti, natural. There is nothing wrong in it and there is nothing right in it either. We do not know if this is true of the animal kingdom or the vegetable kingdom, but in our case there is a further complication and that is known as vikrti, which roughly could be translated as perversion. As a human being, you are born with a certain tendency and that is alright for the human being, that is natural. How do I find out that it is natural? That is a very difficult question to answer. Vaguely, all human beings behave in the same way. For instance, all mammals give birth to infants, not eggs, so that you can say that anyone who gives birth to a baby instead of an egg is, let us say, a human being. The mammals also do, but let us confine it to human beings. If someone looks like a girl but lays an egg, she is not a human being. Maybe it is grotesque but it underlines the point. It means a human being behaves in exactly the same way wherever he is found.

Now, when you come to the human being, it is extremely difficult to find this because we have been perverted beyond recognition. It seems to be necessary not to take for granted anything as natural but to look for it. Yesterday it was said that if a man got drunk and started hitting other people, that is natural for a stupid person. 'I am born vicious and rude.' Can I then bring that as an excuse? I guess you can, provided you are prepared to admit to yourself that you are stupid. Does it not hurt you to realise, 'I am stupid and therefore behaving in this manner?' In the case of these people who bring in an excuse that 'This is my nature', they do not believe that that is a stupid person's behaviour. Within themselves in their own mind, they say, 'Oh no, I am only telling him that I am stupid and therefore it is natural to me, but in myself I think I am very clever'.

That is what is called perversion. If you realise that you are stupid, and therefore you are doing that, you will immediately want to get out of that situation.

Then you would say that God has created diversity in this world, and this is part of the diversity. God has created diverse temperaments, diverse elements, one that is cold and one that is hot. It is quite possible that even in the human kingdom God has created some people with aggressive temperaments and some people with docile, passive temperaments. If that is so, there is absolutely nothing wrong in it. The world, this creation, has need for all these things. A scorpion stings, that is natural to it. If you spit on that scorpion, saying, 'You wretched scorpion, you vicious thing', it does not get upset. It moves on. Can you do that? Then it is alright. God has created everything as it should be, but there is a certain perversity within myself which creates a problem, which brings about psychological unhappiness.

III.27 - prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah ahamkaravamudhatma karta 'ham iti manyate

When the eyes are open and there is light, there is sight, and the fool thinks, 'I see'. Now, where does this ahamkara arise? One must distinguish between what is ahambhava and what is ahamkara. The similarity is in the 'aham'. What is 'aham'? 'I am.' It even sounds similar - aham - 'I am'. Just as in nature, there are the various elements in this human personality, and also there are the same corresponding elements. For instance, there is light, and within you is sight. There is sound, and within there are not merely the ears, but the sense of hearing. The sense of hearing is already a complicated affair. It is not what your ear represents. Even if you are stone-deaf, you are probably hearing something within yourself. Even if you are absolutely blind, you are seeing something. That is, the instrument, the origin of vision, is defective, but the indriya, the sense of sight is active. It is that sense of sight which is seeing, because it is part of that total nature in which there is light. The same light is within me. This is an absurd expression because there is no division here, but I am creating it. Within me is the sense of sight and they interact constantly, just as in the total nature there is light which interacts within itself as light and sight.

Even so, in this cosmic nature called prakrti there is ahambhavana. There is the notion, the feeling, an awareness 'I am'. That is individuality. That is a pure sense of 'I am'. That is also part of cosmic nature. There is light throughout the universe and that light is found in all beings as the sense of sight. There is individuality throughout the universe and that individuality pulsates as 'I am'. There is no problem in that. This 'I am' is therefore a natural feeling.

Ahamkara is different. That is, whereas this 'I am' pulsates naturally, this ahamkara is a feeling or a notion or a thought that says, 'I am doing this'. That is perversion. If you go to the seaside you will probably appreciate it better. The ocean has the characteristic of throwing up waves. This is natural to it. What flows onto the seashore, what breaks on the seashore? The waves being the ocean, it is the ocean that lashes on the seashore, not the waves. Somehow, in the

case of the human being, a feeling arises, 'I am seeing'. Whereas it is the totality that is responsible for the seeing. Even though the feeling 'I am' is also part of the totality, somehow it says, 'I am seeing'. That is, I am an independent entity, distinct and different from the totality; so I am seeing. It is there that the perversion arises.

If this perversion is avoided, one can still be 'I am', one can still function in this world quite harmoniously, beautifully, without the 'I am' arrogating to itself a function. 'I am' is a being, ahambhavana is a being, ahamkara is a function. I have no independent function in this world. I am part of the whole thing; and as a part, whatever happens, happens. When there is no ahamkara or self-arrogating ego, then .I am, and there is function, but that function is determined by the totality which is God, prakrti, or karma.

When nature functions in this manner, there is no sin, no suffering, no defect. When Krishna said this, Arjuna asked a very beautiful question, which must have arisen in our minds also as we heard these beautiful words

III.36 - arjuna uvaca: atha kena prayukto 'yam papam caratipurusah anicchamm api varsneya balad iva niyojitah

If all these things happen naturally, why do people say that he is a vicious man and he is a sinner? If it is natural for him to do it, it is natural. Why should we turn around and say, 'He is a vicious man and what he does is evil'? Krishna comes out with a beautiful answer:

III.37 - sribhagavan uvaca: kama esa krodha esa rajogunasamudbhavah mahahano mahapapma viddhy enam iha vairinam

Nothing unnatural ever takes place on earth - this is important to bear in mind. All that happens, happens because of the divine will; naturally if it is not the divine will, it could not happen. If you are accepting that, something which is not natural can happen, you are creating a counter-force, an equally powerful demon - devil. On the one hand there is God, on the other hand there is the devil, both of them equally powerful. Then there are some divine actions and some diabolical actions. The source of divine action is God, the source of diabolical action is the devil. This leads to all kinds of complications; first of all to this theory or concept that God is not omnipresent.

In the face of this truth, how does one reconcile what is called evil or sin? Krishna gives a very simple answer:

III.37 - kama esa krodha esa rajogunasamudbhavah

Sin is desire or craving and hate - these two are the sources of the perversion called evil. What happens, happens, in spite of you, regardless of your private fancy. If it happens through the instrumentality of what is known as your body or your personality, it still happens. Watch, observe, see what your mind is doing, what your heart is doing in that situation. Is there a craving in your heart which

seems to be the source of this action? Then there is evil. While the action is happening, something cuts through and says, 'I want this to happen, I desire this, I crave for this'. If the craving is not there, there is no psychological disturbance either. Instead of trying to adjust to the action, trying to fiddle around with what I want to do, what I do not want to do, focus all your attention within to see that there is no craving, no hate.

This teaching seems to be almost incomprehensible because we are totally unaware of a psychological condition where there is no love and no hate, no desire and no aversion. We are so heavily conditioned, polluted, or perverted by this notion, that to us pure action is totally irrelevant, non-existent. We are total strangers to this natural phenomenon, to nature, to God, so that this does not make any sense at all. Krishna points out, 'Let action, let life flow on, without being interfered with by kama - craving, desire, and krodha.'

In order not to allow this to arise, there must be the direct vision that whether I wish for it or not that something is going to happen. The sun shines, not because I desire the sun to shine, or not to shine. There is absolutely nothing that I wish or do not wish, which is going to determine whether the sun should shine or not shine. When this inner intelligence sees this fact as a fact - that the world does not exist and function in accordance with what I desire or not desire, that life will continue to flow whether you desire or do not desire, then the desire does not arise. It does not make you lazy, because you are also part of this movement called life, and therefore you will be forced to participate in it, in spite of your private fancy.

Only if you understand this correctly and clearly, does the Mahabarata story for instance make sense. People could fight each other without hate. We are told that gods walked into the bedroom of somebody like Kunti, and gave her a child without any craving, it just happened. In our own mind, these pure actions do not exist.

Our mind is so polluted that we associate these with some kind of hate or craving for pleasure. You may hate me with all your heart's content or wish that I may fall dead right now, but I will still continue to live. You may love me with all your heart and soul, but I will still die. Life flows on totally independent of your love and hate.

Where are these two forces called love and hate, desire and aversion?

III.40 - indriyani mano buddhir asya 'dhisthanam ucyate etair vimohayaty esa jnanam avrtya dehinam

Watch and see. They cloud the sense and the mind, and they cloud a certain natural discriminating faculty called the buddhi. If you eliminate them from there, you are free. It is born of the mind, of the discriminating faculty, but it is found in the sense. You recognise that whereas the sense of hearing is neutral, it can hear anything; there is generated within it this craving for hearing something

and an aversion to hearing something else. It is the craving for hearing something that disturbs the mental equilibrium, creates psychological distress, unhappiness, and perverts the whole situation. It is the aversion to hearing something that generates this distress. I am suffering unnecessarily.

Psychologists tell you that you may go deaf, temporarily deaf, you may go to sleep or you may even become unconscious. All these things happen because of this tremendous inner conflict. It arises as a cloud, God knows how.

These two forces, operating through the senses, the mind and the discriminating intellect, seem to cloud the inner intelligence and create perversion. He who is able to free himself from these is a wise man, and he is a natural person. If craving and repulsion do not arise in us, then life flows on naturally, and happily. Life becomes divine. Life will still flow on, however much I crave for it, however much I hate it. Action will still arise.

So, what is right action? How do I live in this world? This is not a serious question at all, because you are still going to live. You will still do what you have to do in spite of yourself. Is it possible while life flows on, while action flows on in this manner, for me to be observant constantly? Krishna has even shown us where to look. Look at your own senses, look at your own mind, look in your own discriminating faculty, the deciding faculty called buddhi, to see if there is a craving there. Avoid it, eliminate it from there.

Then there is freedom. In that freedom there is natural action and in that natural action there is no problem, there is no confusion. Natural action arises, takes place and fulfills itself without confusion, without inner conflict, because the thought or feeling does not arise there. 'I wish it were otherwise'. Such a life is pure and divine. Krishna points out finally that this is possible, because the truth or the reality or the light within is superior, because it is beyond the senses, beyond the mind, beyond the intellect, beyond the discriminating intellect, the buddhi. The Lord who is seated in the hearts of all is supreme. He is untouched by these private desires, cravings, aversions and petty hatred. Resort to Him, surrender yourself to Him. In that there is freedom, salvation, right action and divinity.