

## **BACHELORS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

### **Semester I**

#### **Foundation Course I - Indian Ethos in Management**

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## INTRODUCTION

*The focus here is on the takeaway as the as the previous units have focused on the understanding and analysis. Takeaway is the chain of memories and the eventual bonding. Takeaway is the brand recall that one creates for anything. Decisions are in many instances not taken on the same platform as the sales pitch, but within the internal team on the basis of the takeaway from the sales pitch. Takeaway is hence very critical and what makes the 'real difference'. If the focus is on the long term recall, then to maximize the recall, we need to summarize at regular intervals. While all the relevant terms have been explained wherever they are appearing, this unit will focus on summarizing all the critical concepts and thus maximize the takeaway.*

## FROM BATTLEFIELD TO BOARDROOM

It has been always said by many that Bhagwadgita is as relevant in the board rooms of the twenty-first century as it was on the battlefield of ancient times. We have deliberated on various concepts as they were presented in Bhagwadgita and their application in the current business world in the previous three units. Now within this unit, we will draw a complete picture out of the different pieces to sum it all. We will now see exactly how the Bhagwadgita, an ancient scripture has focused on the takeaway to improve the overall understanding of the various concepts affecting the mankind, more importantly in a very simple and practical manner.

The 18 chapters of Bhagwadgita teach us how to emerge from a state of utter apathy, gloom, sorrow and dejection to a state of perfect engagement, understanding, clarity, wisdom, renewed strength and triumph. Bhagwadgita is a powerful tool for change management and hence gives many important lessons for organizational transformation. It teaches us how to balance the individual needs with the needs of the society and/or organization. It employs an inside out leadership development approach based on self-knowledge and self-mastery, the two highly important areas for practicing true self-leadership. **The Bhagwadgita is a non-sectarian** (it's not connected or affiliated with any particular religious or political belief) **spiritual text with a universal message**. Let us see how Bhagwadgita has achieved this.

### Understanding the War Concepts & Strategies

War is generally characterized by extreme violence, aggression, destruction, and mortality. The aim of the war is often achieving an objective through the use of force. It is also important to understand that the mind is the starting point of all war and all strategy.

The following concepts are an integral part of any war:

- It is a time where two armies are fighting against each other
- It is a symbol of suffering of the worst kind as the participants often experience the highest sorrow i.e. the loss of human life. The sorrow can often overshadow the happiness of any gains in the war

What an entrepreneur should understand from the war setting as shown in Bhagwadgita is that:

- In war it is important to understand the enemies (**Arjun and Duryodhana understanding their enemy in Chapter 1**)

*Thus an entrepreneur should always do a detailed SWOT analysis of the situation, to understand one's strengths and weaknesses in order to successfully benefit from the opportunities and face the challenges successfully.*

- Have a strong intelligence strategy (**Krishna the best strategist was on the side of the Pandavas**)

*Having a smart team is important for succeeding in today's dynamic business world.*

- One needs to face the past, else the past can haunt you in the war (**Arjun's attachment to the Kauravas, his own great Grandfather, his Guru were all elements from the past. Arjun lost the motivation to fight on facing them due to his attachment to them).**)

*A leader should be well aware of one's own as well as the teams' trigger points to be able to lead the team to success.*

- Amidst the havoc caused by war, one should not lose the presence of mind (**Krishna represented complete control and presence of mind in the havoc of war. Even when the war cry happened, Krishna didn't rush Arjun to the war. He ensured that all of Arjun's doubts were answered before launching the attack.**)

*A plane headed for crash requires a pilot to be calm and composed to guide all onboard to a safe landing.*

- Hence working on mind control is of utmost importance. (**By making Arjun understand the continuity of the soul and the Unity of each person with the Almighty, Krishna removes the confusion and insecurity within Arjun's mind and helps him develop control over his mind, to fight resourcefully and strategically.**)

*Colgate Total resisted the instinct to retaliate the aggressive strategy of Pepsodent against Colgate Total. They instead continued to look into serving the customer's requirements and the results are for all to see. While the shelf space for their brand has expanded, Pepsodent has suffered in a big way.*

- One needs to often act instantly. Living in the mistakes of the past or procrastinating or waiting to do things in the future can many times be fatal. **(Arjun's facing his past and understanding the true meaning of the continuity of the soul removed any hesitation and thus helped to act strategically and quickly).**

*An entrepreneur needs to understand that success as well as failure is not permanent. Even the best can fail and ones at the lowest can succeed.*

- Speed and suddenness can help win over the enemy **(The formation of Chakravyuh after driving Arjun away from the main battlefield helped the Kauravas in inflicting a terrible wound on Pandavas)**

*An entrepreneur needs to develop the agility to react swiftly and should also be always ready to spring surprises. That way it will be difficult for competition to anticipate the actions and in return increase the chances of success for the business.*

- Team effort can be successful only when the team is proactive, organized, responsive, creative and most importantly motivated. **(Krishna's act of triggering the mental breakdown of Arjun prior to the beginning of the attack was a proof of this).**

*The world has seen the commitment of Covid warriors all over. The latter helped us to reach the current stage of reopening of many places of the world again.*

- Even in the chaos there has to be a complete control **(Krishna all along was in total control of the situation and did not unduly use his Godly powers.)**

*While many of us and even the state mechanisms were struggling to get a hold of the Covid situation, the leaders at the Centre could not afford to let the chaos affect them.*

- Careful utilization of resources and right prioritizing is often utmost essential to turn the tables (**Had Arjun understood the game plan of Dronacharya, he wouldn't gone away from the main battlefield and would have saved Abhimanyu's life**)

*In times of epidemic or major crises, the only way to succeed is to have the right business continuity plan to get the business back to normalcy, as soon as possible to cut down on the losses.*

- Creating a terror can also work at times instead of a full blown war (Calling **Ghatotkach in the war forced Karna to use the special weapon given by Indra and eventually save Arjun**)

*Covid which many reports have shown originated from China, was an attempt by China to cripple the world by terrorizing it and to control it without waging a war.*

- You can lose a battle to win the war (**Pandavas lost many battles, be it the killing of Ghatotkach, Abhimanu or even the various other sufferings they had to go thru before reaching the stage of Kurukshetra, but they won the war.**)

*The aggressive campaigning of Pepsodent as well as the new niche marketing of Close-up was definitely eating into the share of Colgate Total initially. However they continued on the path to serving the customers and thus won the war against competition.*

- Proactively understand the war dynamics to get an upper hand to surge ahead of enemy (**Under the guidance of the Shri Krishna, Arjun and the Pandavas kept surging ahead in the war and also kept on moving towards the realization of the ultimate truths of life**).

*No one and no business can afford to relax and revel in the past glory. They need to continuously push the envelope to improve their brand recall and thus stay ahead of completion. While social distancing and closing the boundaries was critical to handling Covid pandemic, the market leaders were fully aware that they have to prepare for the time the opens up. Hence working on identifying and developing futuristic capabilities has been very important.*

- Identify the weakness and hit at it **(The defeat of Bheeshma or Dronacharya or Jaidrath, Karna as well Duryodhana were all examples of this.)**

*Colgate understood the niche strategy of Close up and came up with its innovative way to handle it. For example, while Colgate Max Fresh comes in fresh color to win over the youngsters, even in that they have not missed the opportunity to show their experience by using star power of Ranveer. Ranveer represents the category of young stars with experience unlike Sushant and Kriti in the Close-up ad.*

- Identify and destroy the source of power **(The defeat of Bheeshma, killing of Karna, the driving of Arjun away from the main battlefield were all examples of this).**

*Understanding the core strengths of competition helps in staying on top of the game. The strengths may be technology, connection with the customer, core work force and so on.*

- At times, single out the enemy or divide it to weaken it and then attack. **(The driving of Arjun away from the main battlefield and the eventual killing of Abhimanyu were all examples of this).**

*Any problem can be solved by breaking it into manageable parts and trying to resolve the smaller problems.*

- Proactively work on your own weaknesses to not give the enemy a chance to attack at them. **(The mistake committed by Arjun of not transferring the knowledge of Chakravyuh to anyone else cost the Pandavas dearly).**

*Be it customer connect, legal requirements and so on... identifying the core weaknesses and working on fixing them is critical to succeed. Amazon understands that every product has an expiry. Hence it has ventured into many related products and services to give customers more reason to stay linked to Amazon,*

- Keep up the pressure **(The transfer of Commandership from one strong warrior to the next after the felling of the previous was an example of this).**

*Business always needs a Plan B and Plan C and so on, however strong and invincible the Plan A may appear.*

## Challenges & Solutions for various Business Situations

We saw in Unit 1 how Bhagwadgita teaches the business world in the following aspects:

1. Competency Mapping
2. Mind mapping
3. Skilled manpower
4. Self-motivated leadership
5. Substantial leadership
6. J-Curve
7. Competency assessment and roadmap
8. Human Behavioral Analysis
9. Power of Habits
10. Mind Control

Besides the above if we apply the war setting lessons to the business world here is a list of the challenges and the solutions to the various situations:

1. Having the right mix of dedication, versatility and adaptability (verse 2.47):  
After having an approximate idea of the outcome, one should concentrate on the process, perfecting each step and completing the milestones. This can be done by having a micro view of the project.  
*At the same time, one needs to be aware of the overall business environment (macro view) and should be adaptable as well as decisive to take quick actions at the right time to respond to the dynamic market.*
2. The faster you adapt to a change, the better it is. Remember, change is the only constant. (verse 2.22)  
*Do not be adamant; be innovative, open minded and ready to absorb experiences like a sponge, as that will help a businessman to survive the continuously changing market.*

3. Never take decisions when in emotional situation, particularly anger (verse 2.63).  
*“Anger leads to clouding of judgment, which results in bewilderment of the memory. When the memory is bewildered, the intellect gets destroyed; and when the intellect is destroyed, one is ruined.”*

*At the negotiating table, on losing a negotiation, or on losing a game, one may be tempted into an outburst that can eventually sour the relations. However by keeping calm one keep the relation open for further business in future.*

4. While it is important to be passionate, one should work with an open mind. As per verse 3.19, attachment does give strength to work and love beyond ourselves, but it also limits us and makes our journey and growth difficult, especially if the object of our desire is taken away from us. Too much desire can be bad, as it turns into greed. Greed takes you away from your true calling and dream, be it to achieve, create or innovate.

*As Amazon founder has always said, everything comes with an expiry. Hence it is important to let go, when we still have the strength to work, else it might be too late, and the delay might be fatal.*

5. As per verse 3.38, knowledge should be free of desire, as that is harmful.

*For example, a psychiatrist with the ability to read the mind can help others to grow by guiding people to the right thoughts. However if the same person, due to uncanny ability, begins manipulating the actions of people for his personal gains, would fail in his ability as a doctor, that will eventually be harmful for him and his business.*

6. As is stated in the verses 8.7 and 8.8, when a person understands the concept of Unity as is explained in this verse, one is able to be just to everyone, as one sees the presence of divinity even in the bad.

*Thus in business, instead of personalizing the attack against competition, if one concentrates on serving the customer by solving the later’s problem, there is a greater*

*trust and loyalty built with the customer. Further it helps the business to stay ahead of the other competition too.*

7. As is stated in the verse 6.17, anything in excess is lust and it leads to eventual doom.

*What it means in business is that, an entrepreneur should not be for example too focused on gains in business. Such a behaviour can lead to an unhealthy imbalance and loss of vital resources, that can threaten the existence of the business in future.*

8. One can make the right choice only by seeing the complete picture, and to see that one needs to totally submit oneself to the process of finding truth, without any bias. (verse 2.7)

*For an entrepreneur it means to evaluate the prospects and opportunities without any inner bias. Any bias can lead to grave blunders that will eventually harm the business and every stakeholder associated with the business.*

9. As per the verse 11.41 and 11.42, we often forget to notice the immense contribution of the people closest and dearest to us. That shouldn't be done as they are the core reason for one's growth in life.

*Thus a business head should never forget the contribution of the internal customers or the employees, as they are the ones that help the business to cater successfully to the external customers.*

10. As per verse 12.13 and 12.14, the person in unity with the divine forces, is always friendly, compassionate, forgiving, content, devoid of ego and overall happy. Such a person is generally liked by many.

*Business will go thru many weathers due to the fierce competition. It is therefore important for a leader to have followers who will stand by the leader even in tough times. That can be done only by building the bridges with others during the good times. Only then the leader and the business can expect solidarity in the solitude of a storm.*

## DOING THE RIGHT THING

*This unit concentrates on pushing the students to research and analysis to enable them to define their understanding of ethics and goals and to “choose their own way”. The “choosing one’s way” also called as “Free will” is clearly implied in the verse 18.63 of Bhagwadgita. It is an expression of Krishna’s intent to develop the decision making skills in Arjuna.*

It is also important for a leader to understand that what is right from one’s perspective may be not right from someone else’s perspective. This is particularly of utmost importance when the people involved belong to different cultures and experiences. Further what is right in set of conditions may not be in the changed set of circumstances.

Most importantly the teachings will concentrate on developing a nature to work passionately towards achieving one’s goal with a DETACHED self to really succeed in the global business environment of today. *Passion with only the detached attitude will help one develop the flexibility and adaptability even after being deep into a project. This attitude is an absolute necessity in today’s dynamic global business environment.*

### Understanding the Fundamental Problem

The fundamental seeking of all human beings is ***security, peace/happiness, and liberation***. All human pursuits can be essentially reduced to these three basic endeavors. More often, we tend to search for these goals among external sources such as objects, people, and situations. However ***Bhagwadgita clearly states and in fact reiterates many times over that permanent and complete happiness and fulfillment is within us – by complete development of one’s being.***

***THUS THE FOCUS OF THE BHAGWADGITA IS ON THE INTRINSIC DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-MOTIVATION.***

It is the self-ignorance that covers our intrinsic fullness of being. Self-knowledge can lift the veil and lead us to the eternal fountain of abiding security, peace, and happiness that lies within us all. One's knowledge of one's own SWOT can help him/her identify the right path to success and help achieve it. ***The Bhagwadgita teaches us that the fundamental human problem is the lack of Self-knowledge and the resultant extroverted-ness of our search for happiness and the mistaken way we relate to the world.*** In all our quests, we approach people, objects, and situations through the prism of our likes and dislikes (rāga-dvē a) which leads to attachment or aversion. Attachment leads to sorrow and sorrow leads to delusion which in turn compounds our misery. When the Self-knowledge (ātma-jñāna) dawns, we realize that whatever we have been seeking is already within us.

*In today's collaborative world, where the technologies are continuously changing and teams are now "work teams" (work teams are a group of people coming together temporarily for the completion of a task. E.g. a group of people inclusive of the ward boy, nurse, doctor, specialist, anesthetist, super-specialist and so on, coming together in a hospital to perform an operation), an entrepreneur has to be very assertive to stay firmly grounded against competition and also very adaptable to survive in the constantly changing business environment.*

The following paragraphs encompass all the characteristics that the entrepreneur needs to work on to become such a person. The points described here essentially remove all the confusion in the leader's mind and guides him/her on the path to becoming a leader with equanimity and steady wisdom.

### **Doing Good and Feeling Good are Connected**

In the scheme of the Bhagwadgita, ethical conduct (dharma) furnishes the essential foundation for the quest for spiritual freedom. It is interesting to note that the very first letter of the first word of the first shloka of the Bhagwadgita—'dharmak etre' (1.1)—and the very last letter of the last word of the last shloka of the Bhagwadgita—'mama' (18.78)—virtually form the word 'dharma.' Hence, the dharma (innate moral duty or righteousness) is the province of the entire Bhagwadgita! In the

Bhagwadgita's terminology, the performance of actions selflessly as a service to the Supreme purifies the mind and makes it a fit vessel for the reception of Self-Knowledge which alone is the means to spiritual freedom. Shri Krishna, the BEST teacher in the Bhagwadgita, does not merely want to make us philosophically learned but to help us realize the Truth experientially and practically.

The teachings in Bhagwadgita are meant to be followed and a definite path to realizing life's ultimate goal. After presenting the entire teachings of the Bhagwadgita, Shri Krishna points out, *"Thus has this wisdom, more mysterious than the mystery itself, been imparted to you by Me. Fully pondering over it, do as you like." (18.63). This statement is the best proof of promoting free will by the best leader, for willful ethical actions can only lead to one's internal growth and can lead to a feeling of **security, peace/happiness and eventual liberation.***

***Imagine a leader who is secure, at peace with one's action. Such a leader will never have the fear of someone overshadowing him/her. For example, imagine the coach in an army training camp. He in almost all instances trains cadets to become his senior. However he fulfills his duty by teaching the cadet all he has to become the best soldier.***

- ***Who would not want to follow such a leader?***
- ***Who wouldn't trust such a leader?***

This implies that Shri Krishna essentially wants each person to take one's own decision, an essential trait of a successful leader.

## Ethical and Spiritual Disciplines

Right from the first word of the Bhagwadgita “**dharmak etre**” (1.1) to the last word is mama (18.78), meaning “mine.” Bhagwadgita signifies: “**my moral duty,**” **my svadharma** .i.e. the focus is completely on self .

**The other thing that Bhagwadgita refers to is “Yoga”.** The word “Yoga” is used in several shades of meanings in the Bhagwadgita. While the basic meaning of the word is ‘union.’, the word Yoga does imply other meanings at different places.

For example:

- **Verse: 2.48:**, Shri Krishna states “samatva yoga ucyate”—“**equipoise**” or “**equanimity**” is called yoga.
- **Verse 6.23:** ta vidyā.h du khasa yogaviyoga yogasa jñitam—Freedom from contact with sorrow (of this body and material world) should also be known as yoga. According to the Bhagwadgita, the complete freedom from sorrow is possible only when one is established in the Supreme Self (Paramātman).
- **Verse 2.50:** yoga karmasu kauśalam – quickness or skill in action is yoga. **Does that mean that proficiency in pickpocketing will make the pick-pocketer a yogi? NO.**

Thus *Yoga is just the Path by which man unites his finite self with the infinite being. It is the inner path of which these separate yogas are so many one-sided aspects.* Yoga means union with God, and this union can be affected in various ways. As discussed in Unit 3, it helps us understanding “Unity” *the Bhagwadgita way.*

For example, when a business and its team sees itself as a part of the total marketplace and it experiences the divinity in the entire creation, the business will realize how each of its action will affect the entire market and eventually one’s own business too. The behaviour of the business towards the market will then be the same as the behaviour it expects towards itself too.

*An example of this is the war between Colgate and Pepsodent.*

*Pepsodent v/s Colgate - Advertisement*

<https://youtu.be/R347lsr23X8>

*While Pepsodent at one point in time started directly targeting Colgate in its ads, Colgate continued its campaign to win the trust of its customers by understanding their real pain and real expectations and then catering to those. The results are for all to see. While Colgate continues to thrive, the shelf space of Pepsodent has reduced drastically.*

This takes us to understand that Yoga can be effected thru Karma (work), thru Dhyāna (Bhakti or devotion) and also thru Jñāna (knowledge or takeaway).

*Colgate followed the work ethics and continued to focus on strengthening its own strengths and knowledge.*

### **Three Paths to Liberation (Achieving the ultimate goal)**

Bhagwadgita talks about three entities—the world (jagat), God (Paramātman) and the self or the soul (atman). Karma yoga pertains to the world, Bhaktiyoga pertains to God and Jñānayoga pertains to the inner self.

**Humans have the power ‘To Do’, ‘To Accept or To Believe’ and ‘To Know’. For the proper use of these powers, human beings are endowed with a physical body to ‘do,’ a heart to ‘believe’ and an intellect to ‘know’.**

Thus the three paths for the achieving one’s goals are related to the three human abilities.

- The human ability “To Do” leads to the Path of Action (Karmayoga)

Dedicating what we have received from the world—such as physical body, etc., (*‘To Do’*)—in the service of the world without expecting anything in return, is

called Karmayoga (Bhagwadgita, 3.11; 4.23; 18.45). Karmayogī severs relationship with the world through service;

*In this a business or an entrepreneur or a professional focusses on the “you” attitude .i.e. the business focuses on offering the customer what they need RATHER THAN making the customers buy what the business needs to sell.*

***This is seen in the example of Colgate. It is offering the toothpaste as per the guidance of the dentists that is totally safe for the customers as is shown in their ads.***

- The human ability “To Believe” leads to the Path of Devotion (Bhaktiyoga)

Considering only God as one’s own and dedicating all undertakings and objects to God—and taking refuge in God—this is called Bhaktiyoga (Bhagwadgita, 7.26–27; 18.66). Bhaktiyogi severs relation with the world by establishing relationship with, and surrendering to, the Supreme Lord.

***When the customer sees a sincere intent in the seller and believes that the seller is genuinely interested in the benefit of the buyer, the later automatically becomes a loyal follower and the purchase follows. This is Bhakti Yoga.***

- The human ability “To Know” leads to the Path of Knowledge (Jñānayoga)

To sever one’s affinity with the objects that are transitory and fleeting by not identifying with them as ‘I’ or ‘mine,’ is called Jñānayoga (Bhagwadgita, 3.27). Jñānayogī severs relation with the world through renunciation (of doership).

The continued efforts to research and to find newer ways to apply the knowledge gained to serve the customer without compromising on the quality and ethics is bound to see positive acceptance by the customer.

*Colgate continued its quest to serve customer better by focusing on the customer and the customer needs, instead of getting pulled in the war with competition. This is an excellent example of Jnanayoga or the application of knowledge ethically.*

*Karmayoga is thus the power 'TO DO', Bhaktiyoga is the power 'TO ACCEPT' or 'TO BELIEVE' and Jñānayoga for the proper use of the power 'TO KNOW'.*

### **The Path to Knowledge: Jnanayoga**

The focus is mainly on this aspect, as it is the Jnanayoga that leads one to act accordingly. The positive takeaway will lead to positive action and the negative takeaway will lead to negative action. Hence the most fundamental aspect of Jnanayoga is the complete understanding to get a complete picture. Half knowledge is always dangerous.

In the second chapter of the Bhagwadgita (verses 2.11–2.30), the knowledge of our true Self (sā khya yoga) is expounded. The word sā khya is used in the special sense here. It means knowing a thing completely (**sam = properly/fully/completely; khyā = knowing**). Here it signifies knowing our true nature, the Self, completely. The Bhagwadgita follows a specialized methodology of teaching under which the highest teaching is given first and elaborated later. **This is exactly what a mind map is.**

**Accordingly, Chapter 2 of the Bhagwadgita introduces all its essential teachings in a summary form which are later elaborated in the next sixteen chapters.** This is an important pointer to the understanding of the Bhagwadgita. The teachings of the Bhagwadgita start when Arjuna, confused about his proper duty, beseeches the Lord to instruct him in what is decidedly best for him (2.7). At this point, the sublime message of the Bhagwadgita begins as follows with the highest teachings of Sā khya (2.11–25):

*As one can see in the verse 2.7, Arjun who was himself a knowledgeable person doesn't ask for the easy way. Instead he asks for the best way. Jnanayoga delves into the premise of finding the best way, as only the best way can lead to long term success.*

The wise [who know the Self to be free from death and birth] do not grieve over the coming or going of people, objects, and situations. For, the unreal has no existence whatsoever; and the real never ceases to be. The wise one to whom pain and pleasure are the same and who is not tormented by these is fit for the state of immortality or liberation (mokṣa).

***This is the same policy that has helped in building of the empires like Tesla and Amazon.***

***Elon Musk's Speech Will Leave You SPEECHLESS | Elon Musk Motivation***

<https://youtu.be/vyzdlD44ebk>

Thereafter, in verses 2.12–25, the Bhagwadgita describes the nature of the perennial Self (ātmā) as follows: The Self is nitya (ever-existent), satya (real), avināshi (indestructible), nirvikāra (immutable), sarvagata (all-pervading), and aprameya (indeterminable or unobjectifiable). Therefore, knowing the soul or the self to be thus, there is no cause for grief.

The Bhagwadgita (2.22) tells us that, 'As a person discards old and worn out clothes and takes other new ones, even so the soul, casting off worn out bodies, enters other new ones.' **It is interesting to note that BG (12.3–4) describe the characteristics of the Supreme Self, Paramātmā, as the unthinkable, omnipresent, indestructible, undefinable, eternal, immovable, unmanifest, and immutable Brahman.**

Essentially, the jñāna yoga entails not identifying with the body and the objects as 'I' or 'mine' and realizing ourselves as pure, action-less Self. This understanding, promises the Bhagwadgita, leads to abiding peace and happiness. Through the knowledge of the Self, one realizes that what one is seeking is the very nature of the

seeker and that happiness is not something to be gained from outside—it is the very nature of the Self:

vihāya kāmān ya sarvān pumā ś carati ni sp ha /  
nirmamo niraha kāra sa śāntim adhigacchati // 2.71

One who has given up all desires, free from longings and the sense of “I” and “mine,” attains peace.

There is one more dimension of jñāna yoga that we need to cover to bring it full circle. It entails the understanding of the Self as akartā and abhōgtā (non-doer and non-enjoyer). The Bhagwadgita makes it very clear that all actions are performed by the threefold properties of the material nature. The following two verses provide perhaps the greatest *justification* that all actions are performed by force of inherent qualities:

prak te kriyamā āni gu ai karmā i sarvaśa /  
aha kāravimū hātmā kartāham iti manyate // 3.27  
tattvavit tu mahābāho gu akarmavibhāgayo /  
gu ā gu e u vartanta iti matvā na sajjate // 3.28

All actions are performed by gu as [qualities] of fundamental nature [Prak ti].

One whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks, “I am the doer.” But, one, with true insight into the respective domains of gu as and their action, knowing that gu as as senses merely move among gu as as objects, does not become attached. These verses state that all actions are performed by the interplay of three qualities (gu as)—purity (sattva), activity (rajas), and inertia (tamas). Deluded by our ego sense (aha kāra), we take ourselves to be the ‘doers.’ But those who understand the respective domains of these gu as and their actions do not get attached to them: The knower of Truth, [being] centered [in the Self] should think, “I do nothing at all”—though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, speaking, letting go, holding, opening and closing the eyes—convinced that it is the senses that move among sense objects. (5.8–9).

The Bhagwadgita clarifies that he who sees that all actions are performed in every way by nature (Prakṛti), and the Self as the non-doer, alone truly sees:

prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ /  
ya paśyati tathātmānam akartāraṁ sa paśyati // 13.29

Thus understanding that what happens is the result of the combined action. Hence the definite conclusion in the Bhagwadgita is that **'Liberation is attained only through the knowledge of Reality'**.

*As you can hear in the speech, Jeff Bezos too echoes the same principles stated in Bhagwadgita when he is telling the younger generation to be **NIMBLE AND ROBUST** to be able to survive in the current business environment.*

*The business environment is going to be continuous; however the players and the various conditions affecting the environment will keep changing. **To be successful in the long run, we have to be able to find the longevity for ourselves by identifying the right product and/or service that complements the customer needs in the best possible way compared to competition.***

*This is exactly the principle of Jeff Bezos, the Amazon founder.*

***One of the Greatest Speeches Ever | Jeff Bezos***

***<https://youtu.be/EctzLTFrktc>***

## Three Gunas and the Transcendence

Guṇa also means a rope—that which binds. All guṇas in some measure bind the individual soul or empirical self (jīva) to saṁsāra (the unending cycle of births and deaths).

- Sattvaṅṇa binds through attachment to happiness and pride of knowledge (14.6);
- Rajoguṇa binds the individual soul (jīva) to saṁsāra through attachment to actions and their fruit (14.7);
- Tamoguṇa binds through heedlessness, sloth, and sleep (14.8).

Any binding stops the process of liberation. Hence Bhagwadgita thru the concepts of Equanimity and unity promotes the concept of rising above the control of gunas as stated in the verses 2.45, 14.19 and 14.22 thru 14.26.

However in the verse 18.40 it is categorically stated that there is no being anywhere in the material world can free from the guṇas as they are material nature (Prakṛti) and Prakṛti or Nature is constituted of three guṇas:

- Sattva (purity)
- Rajas (activity, passion), and
- Tamas (inertia, dullness)

**The only way to escape the control of the effect of the gunas is thru mind control.**

In the Bhagwadgita's estimation, to be able to focus the mind is no big deal. ***The big deal according to the Bhagwadgita is the evenness of mind or the equanimity (samatā)—to remain unperturbed and unattached through steadiness of mind.***

If a person is able to attain equanimity—regardless of other virtues—that person is a siddha (perfected being) or sthitaprajñā (established in steady wisdom) according to

the Bhagwadgita. The Bhagwadgita does not regard that person a siddha who has cultivated all other qualities but lacks the essential equanimity!

### **Equanimity (Samatā): The Touchstone of Perfection in Wisdom**

The Bhagwadgita regards 'equanimity' or 'evenness of mind' to be the Yoga (2:48). And the finest teaching on this topic is provided in the Bhagwadgita as follows:

yogastha kuru karmā i sa ga tyaktvā dhanañjaya /  
siddhyasiddhyo samo bhūtvā samatva yoga ucyate // 2.48

Abiding in equanimity and abandoning attachment one must perform actions.

Evenness of mind (samatva ) is Yoga.

Samatā (equanimity) is the "fulcrum" around which the entire teachings of the Bhagwadgita revolve.

Wherever the Shri Krishna has mentioned the highest peaks of the paths of action, devotion and knowledge, he has very carefully interspersed 'samatā' in their consummation (verses 2.48, 53, 57; 5.6, 18-20; 12.13-19; 14.24, 25; 18.10, 26).

So, in Bhagwadgita's estimation, samatā is the litmus-test of perfection (siddhi) in all the paths to God-Realization. Whatever the spiritual practice, if samatā is not there, the goal is still far away.

***This is exactly replicated in the operations of Amazon.***

## Attaining Equanimity through the Path of Action

This is the part that definitely is a reflection of the challenges faced by each one of us.

*The setting of the Bhagwadgita is as follows: Arjuna is a warrior prince who becomes confused about his duty at the outset of the war of epic proportions. He does not know the right thing to do, the perennial dilemma of all managers and leaders. In the heat of emotion, he anxiously decides to quit his duty being a warrior and sits listlessly at the back of the chariot. He does not want to come out of his comfort zone and gives voice to false sense of pity and misplaced compassion. In this state of confusion, he turns toward the Lord Shri Krishna, his friend, philosopher and guide and asks for the advice about the highest good (śreyas).*

***Shri Krishna listens to him patiently and then counsels him about his duty to fight the righteous war and do the right thing. There are several leadership lessons inherent in this setting.***

A very important lesson here for a leader is that:

### **A LEADER NEEDS TO LISTEN**

In practicing the path of action, Arjuna is advised to perform actions as an offering to the Supreme, renouncing attachment to actions and their results, remaining steadfast in equanimity.

The Bhagwadgita tells us that the equanimity (samatā) can be attained both through the Path of Knowledge (Jñānayoga) as well as through the Path of (selfless) Action (Karmayoga). After having explained the Yoga of equanimity according to the Path of Knowledge (involving discriminating reasoning regarding the body and the soul) [2:11–2:30], the Lord now explains equanimity (samatā) from the standpoint of the Path of (selfless) Action (Karmayoga) [2:39–53], following which one overcomes completely the fetters of Karma.

This equanimity has four qualities:

1. Performing actions while established in equanimity, **a person does not get entangled** in the shackles of Karma:

*There is no confusion as there is reason for distraction when one knows one's duty well and decides to do it.*

***It is the duty of Colgate to offer dental protection to its customers. Hence any stand by competition need not shake it from its path of duty.***

2. There is **no loss (forfeiture) of efforts** directed towards attaining this equanimity;

***Amazon has gone thru many upheavals and competition. However its focus is on serving its customers and it continues to do it in the best possible way.***

3. There is **no fear of adverse results** due to any omission in following this path;

When you accept that there everything material comes with an expiry date, you will be better prepared to handle adversity. Proactively preparing for adversity is the best way to handle it.

**PREPARE FOR THE WORST, EXPECT THE BEST AND TAKE WHAT COMES.**

4. Even a little observance of this practice saves one from the great fear (caused by the unending wheel of birth and death). In other words, even a little practice of this virtue of **selfless actions grants liberation.**

The discussion under the previous point applies here too.

Then comes one of the most popular verses about Karma Yoga (2:47):

**Your right is only to perform your allotted duty; that is, your right is for action alone. But you have no right whatsoever to the results thereof; that is, you are not free in this regard.**

Therefore, let not the fruits of action be your motive, i.e., do not become the cause of the fruit of your actions through attachment (with the instruments of actions such as body etc.); nor become attached to inaction (indifference, laziness, etc.).

**It means that ‘doing’ is under our control; ‘happening’ is under the purview of Prārabdha (our earned destiny).**

For everything material, we cannot hold on to it beyond its expiry. We can only ensure proper maintenance along the way and choose to age gracefully. Else the market will destroy our existence.

According to Indian philosophy, there are three kinds of Karma:

- (1) **Sañchita** or accumulated or stored up in past lives;
- (2) **Agāmi** or that which is yet to be done;
- (3) **Prārabdha** or that which is already bearing fruit.

What it means to business:

If a product or a service is born out of proper research and understanding of the customer problem completely (**Sanchita**), and then due diligence is followed in reaching out the customer (**Agami**) positive results are bound to follow (**Prarabdha**).

Bhagwadgita also states that all undertakings, all actions, are tainted with some blemish—this means that all actions are inherently “binding” in effect as they lead to good, bad, or mixed results (18.3; 18.12). But when the actions are performed with pure motivation or intention i.e. as an offering to the Supreme, without attachment to actions or fruits thereof—they become free from the blemish. **This is the secret of Karma Yoga.**

And the finest teaching on this is provided in the Bhagwadgita as follows:

brahma y ādhāya karmā i sa ga tyaktvā karoti ya /  
lipyate na sa pāpena padmapatram ivāmbhasā // 5.10

He who acts offering all actions to the Lord, renouncing all attachment, remains untouched by the sin, as the lotus leaf by water. **Karma Yoga is the secret of becoming free from the effects of the karma. Purification of mind is limit as far it goes.**

### **The Path to Meditation: Dhyānayoga**

Within the Bhagwadgita, the path of meditation or concentration serves as a necessary concomitant to all other paths, since a certain measure of calm concentration is verily required to practice the path of action, knowledge, and devotion in a proper manner.

In Chapter 6, entitled *Atmasa yamayoga* : The Yoga of Self-Discipline, we find the most detailed instructions on the discipline of meditation that culminate in *Bhaktiyoga—śraddhāvān bhajate yo mā sa me yuktatamo mata* : the yogīn who worships Me devoutly with his inmost self abiding in Me, is considered by Me to be the best of the yogīns (6:47).

**As a prelude to the discipline of meditation, we are told in Chapter 6 that responsibility for one’s spiritual welfare and downfall rests with oneself and no one else.**

Therefore, one should uplift oneself by one’s own self (efforts)—and not degrade oneself; for one’s own self alone is one’s friend, and one’s own self alone is one’s enemy (6.5). At the very outset of Chapter 6, by way of the path as well as the goal,

According to the Bhagwadgita, ‘Success in this Yoga of meditation is neither attained by one who either eats too much or does not eat at all, nor by one who either sleeps too much or does not sleep at all. This Yoga (of meditation), which destroys sorrows, is

accomplished only by him who is temperate in diet and recreation, who is disciplined (and detached) in the performance of actions, and is temperate in sleep and waking.’

**In the world of business it means the promotion of calculation risk taking.**

The Bhagwadgita is fully aware that the mind is restless and hard to control. It maintains that the mind can be controlled by constant practice and detachment (or dispassion).

The following two verses provide the preliminary instructions on meditation:

sa kalpaprabhavān kāmā s tyaktvā sarvān aśe ata /  
manasaivendriyagrāma viniyamyā samantata // 6.24

śānai śānair upamed buddhyā dh tig hītayā /  
ātmasa stha mana k tvā na ki cid api cintayet // 6.25

Renouncing entirely all desires, and withdrawing, by strength of mind, all senses from their respective objects, the meditator should, with an unhurried intellect set in firmness, gradually become detached (uparām) from the world. He should then focus his mind on the Supreme Self (Paramātmā) and should not think of anything else whatsoever.

In the chapter mainly devoted to the practice of meditation comes the final assurance about Bhakti yoga:

My devotee is superior to all possible types of yogīs—

Karmayogī, Jñānayogī, Dhyānayogī, Ha hayogī, Layayogī, Rājayogī, etc.

yoginām api sarve ā madgatenāntarātmanā

śraddhāvān bhajate yo mā sa me yuktatamo mata 6.47

Means even among all the yogīs, he who worships Me devoutly with his inmost self abiding in Me, he is considered by Me to be the best of the yogīs.

Meditating is being one with the inner self i.e. being in Unity with the divine energy within. This leads to the ultimate success as one is guided by divine energy in one's actions.

This concluding verse of Chapter 6 prepares the ground for the entire path of devotion comprising Chapters 7–12, as devotion can be best achieved by the support of the divine energy to one's inner self.

***In the business world, one can say that a business that takes care of its internal customers have many more brand ambassadors to promote it. That business has stronger roots that help it to withstand many storms and succeed.***

### **The Path to Devotion: Bhakti Yoga**

Shri Krishna presents the quintessence of path of devotion in the culminating verse of Chapter 11—'He who does work for My sake (pleasure) only, he who looks upon Me as the Supreme Goal, who lovingly worships Me, who is free from attachment (to worldly things) and from enmity to all beings, that devotee verily comes to Me' (11.55).

This concluding verse of Chapter 11 (11:55) represents the essence of Bhakti and is declared to be the very heart, the quintessence of the whole teaching of the Bhagwadgita.

This section on Bhakti Yoga can be concluded by summarizing seven culminating verses Chapter 18: 18.54, 18.55, 18.56, 18.57, 18.62, 18.65, and 18.66.

Verses 18.54, 18.55, 18.56, 18.57, 18.62:

Having become one with the Ultimate Reality, such an aspirant (sādhaka) neither grieves nor desires. Alike to all beings, he attains supreme devotion to Me. By virtue of My devotion supreme, he comes to know Me, what My measure is and who I am in essence. Knowing Me thus in very truth and essence, he enters into Me straightway. A devotee who has taken refuge in Me with exclusive and unswerving devotion, even

while performing all ordained actions, by My Grace, attains to the Eternal, Imperishable Abode (mat-prasādāt avāpnoti śāśvata padam avyayam). Therefore, mentally dedicating all actions to Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, and resorting to the Yoga of equanimity—i.e., by severing affinity with the world—fix your mind and thoughts constantly on Me. By being constantly absorbed in Me, you will, by My Grace, overcome all difficulties. O Bhārata (Arjuna)! Seek refuge in Him alone, surrendering your whole being (sarvabhāvena). By His Grace you shall attain Supreme Peace and the Eternal Abode.’

The final two verses conclude the teachings as follows:

manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī mā namaskuru /  
mām evai yasi satya te pratijāne priyosi me // 18.65

‘Fix your mind on Me—i.e., accept Me as your very own; worship Me with all your actions; and bow to Me with reverence—i.e., be completely surrendered to Me. By turning completely towards Me in this manner, you will verily attain to Me—This is my sincere pledge to you because you are dear to Me.

sarvadharmān parityajya mām eka śaraṇaṁ vraja /  
aha tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayāmi mā śuca // 18.66

Relinquishing all dharmas take refuge in Me alone. I will release you from all sins. Do not grieve.

## Five Practices that Lead to Security, Peace and Liberation

- The Alchemy of Karma Yoga: Renunciation in Action

Karma Yoga is doing right actions with right attitude. Right actions are those which help everyone and harm no one. Why should I do all good and do no harm, one may ask?

Give the customer a product or service that helps the customer solve his/her/their problem(s). Do not try to cheat the customer while trying to achieve one's business targets. Success will automatically be yours and you will also earn the customer loyalty as an additional bonus.

Karma yoga in the ultimate analysis is renunciation is an inner, mental act and renunciation of results and NOT renunciation of actions themselves.

- Becoming a Person of Steady Wisdom and Attaining the Absolute

According to the Bhagwadgita, that person of steady wisdom, whose mind is unperturbed in sorrow, who is free from longing for pleasure, and who has gone beyond attachment, fear, and anger (du kхе v anudvignamanā sukhe u vigatasp ha vītarāgabhayakrodha sthitadhīr munir ucyate, 2.56)—that person attains liberation (moksha):

One who rejoices only in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone—for such a person, there is nothing left to do. Such a person has nothing to gain from work done or left undone and no selfish dependence on any being for any object to serve any purpose.

Therefore, remaining unattached, always perform actions which are obligatory; by performing action without attachment, one attains the Supreme. (3.17–19) Resting in the Absolute, with intellect steady and without delusion, the knower of Self

neither rejoices in receiving what is pleasant nor grieves on receiving what is unpleasant. (5.20).

***In the business world, working with passion and yet being DETACHED helps one to succeed.***

- Attaining True Wisdom & Rejoicing in the Self Alone

Those who are truly awake become aware of the fact that ‘God is all there is’—**(Unity as is discussed in Module 3)** realize the importance of fostering amity, understanding, and harmony in all settings and removing the conflict inherent in the ‘game of one-up-ness’ that plagues most human interaction. This knowledge also removes the psychological and emotional stress is caused by our excessive self-centeredness. Self-centeredness is a condition borne with a deeply ingrained sense of separateness, anchored in self-ignorance. On the other hand Self-knowledge is freedom from self-ignorance. When self-ignorance transforms into self-knowledge, our need to maintain our separateness is resolved into the fullness of our being. We no longer feel the gnawing sense of inadequacy, incompleteness, and insecurity. We have arrived at an unassailable stillness, blessed with the fullness of our essential nature. We have made peace with the universe.

- Doing Our Work Without the Tag of Doership (example of the work of Shri Krishna)

When one realizes that one is simply his/her duty, and “nothing at all” (naiva ki cit karomīti), as everyone who is performing his/her duty, the result is a combination of these actions. Thus one cannot take credit for it, as one cannot have control over others’ actions. This is the true understanding of a person of knowledge.

***In business it means that a business can only control its own operations and try to do them in the best possible way to serve the customer. The business cannot control the actions of competition or the other market conditions.***

- Samatā and Sthitaprajñā: Supreme Goals of the Bhagwadgita

If there are two key virtues that the Bhagwadgita teaches above all, they are equanimity and steady wisdom. Two important verses in Chapter 2 reveal the secret to this supreme goal, as well as the means to the attainment of the goal of sthitaprajñā, as follows:

prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha manogatān /  
ātmany evātmanā tu a sthitaprajñas tadocyate // 2.55  
vihāya kāmān ya sarvān pumā ś carati ni sp ha /  
nirmamo niraha kāra sa śāntim adhigacchati // 2.71

When one completely casts off all the desires of the mind, content in the Self alone, by [the joy of] the Self, then one is said to be established in steady wisdom. One who has given up all desires and moves about free from longings and the sense of “I” and “mine” attains peace.

All schools of Indian philosophy take it axiomatic that the fundamental human error is self-ignorance. Due to this error we are not able to experience our intrinsic perfection and take ourselves to be limited, inadequate, and incomplete beings. Since self-ignorance is the cause of our malady, only self-knowledge can provide permanent solution to this gnawing sense of inadequacy.

A seminal verse captures both the means and the end of Self-Knowledge, as follows:

ātmaupamyena sarvatra sama paśyati yorjuna /  
sukha vā yadi vā du kha sa yogī paramo mata // 6.32

O Arjuna, that yōgī is considered to be the highest among all yōgīs who judges what is happiness and sorrow in all, by the same standard as he would apply to himself.

He looks at the joy and sorrow of all with the same eye, because he feels the pleasure and pain in others same as the pleasure and pain in himself, since he has realized the oneness of all existence. Although the word yōgī occurs 15 times in the Bhagwadgita, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has used the word “parama ” (supreme) along with the word yōgī only once in this very verse. Hence, the utmost importance of this unique verse!

When our mind has become pure and our intellect ‘sama’—‘balanced and equanimous’— we have attained oneness with the highest principle of existence. Such is the supreme importance of samatā.

The value of cultivating equanimity for today’s leaders and managers can hardly be overemphasized. Its importance is evident in every action, every decision a leader makes. Without the evenness of mind, self-awareness and emotional intelligence—two markers of success in leading oneself and others—remain a distant goal.

## Questions

1. What is the most important war strategy that you liked and how is it applicable to the business world. Explain with example. (understand and apply)
2. What is the most important challenge faced by the businesses today and explain the solution provided by Bhagwadgita for the challenge. (understand, analyze and apply)
3. How is the 'Understanding of the fundamental problem' addressed in Bhagwadgita? How is it relevant to the business world? (understand and apply)
4. How are "Doing Good" and "Feeling Good" connected? (understand and analyze)
5. What is perinneal self as per Bhagwadgita? How does it apply to the business world. Explain with example. (understanding and apply)
6. What is sthitaprajna as per Bhagwadgita? Why is it useful to the business world. Explain with example from personal life. (understand and apply)
7. How are the Bhagwadgita teachings relevant to the Board Rooms of today? Explain with an industry example. (understand and analyze)
8. What are the Goals of the Gita? Explain with example from the industry. (understand and analyze)
9. What are the key leadership lessons from the Bhagwadgita? Take an industry example to show the relevance of any 2 lessons of the Bhagwadgita to modern industry. (understand, analyze and apply)