



Ancient Vedic Mantras and Rituals





Shrimad Bhagavad Gita Chapter-3 Shalok-38 | श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता अध्याय तीन-श्लोक अड़तीस | PDF

Chapter 3 – Karma Yoga

Verse 38

Sanskrit Verse

**Dhūmenāvriyate vahnir yathādarśho malena cha |
Yatholbenāvṛito garbhas tathā tenedam āvṛitam ||38||**

Simple Meaning

Lord Krishna said:

Just as fire is covered by smoke, a mirror is obscured by dust, and an unborn child is concealed within the womb, similarly, knowledge is covered by desire. This veil prevents a person from perceiving truth and realizing the true nature of the self.

Detailed Explanation

Desire Covers Spiritual Wisdom

In this verse, Lord Krishna explains how desire (Kāma) hides





the natural wisdom that already exists within every soul.

Knowledge itself is never destroyed, but it becomes covered by the veil of selfish desires and worldly attachments.

Because of this covering, a person fails to recognize the difference between the temporary pleasures of the material world and the eternal nature of the soul.

Three Powerful Examples

To illustrate how desire obscures wisdom, Lord Krishna presents three meaningful comparisons.

Fire Covered by Smoke

Fire continues to burn even when smoke partially hides its light.

Similarly, mild desires can temporarily cloud a person's judgment without completely destroying spiritual understanding.

With sincere effort, the smoke can clear and the fire can shine brightly again.

A Mirror Covered by Dust

A mirror naturally reflects whatever stands before it.

However, when dust accumulates on its surface, the reflection becomes unclear.

Likewise, when the mind becomes filled with attachment,





greed, and selfish desires, it loses the ability to reflect spiritual truth.

Purifying the mind restores clarity and wisdom.

An Unborn Child Covered in the Womb

A child inside the womb is completely enclosed and hidden until the proper time of birth.

In the same way, intense material desires can almost entirely conceal spiritual knowledge.

Although the wisdom remains present, it cannot manifest until the coverings are gradually removed through spiritual practice.

The Effect of Desire

Desire slowly influences the mind and intellect.

As desires increase, attachment grows stronger, and the mind becomes absorbed in temporary pleasures rather than eternal truth.

This leads to confusion, dissatisfaction, and separation from one's spiritual purpose.

Without self-control, desire becomes the root of ignorance and suffering.

Karma Yoga in Practice

Karma Yoga teaches that desires should not simply be





suppressed but purified.

When actions are performed selflessly as an offering to God, attachment gradually disappears.

Through devotion, meditation, discipline, and righteous living, the coverings over wisdom begin to fade.

As the mind becomes purified, true knowledge naturally shines forth.

The Path to Self-Realization

Lord Krishna reminds every seeker that spiritual wisdom already exists within.

The real challenge is removing the coverings created by desire and attachment.

By practicing Karma Yoga with sincerity, one uncovers inner wisdom, experiences lasting peace, and progresses toward self-realization and liberation.

Key Points

Desire covers spiritual knowledge.

Knowledge is hidden, not destroyed.

Lord Krishna compares this covering to smoke, dust, and the womb.

Selfish desires cloud judgment and weaken discrimination.



Purification of the mind restores wisdom.

Karma Yoga removes attachment through selfless action.

Devotion and self-discipline reveal the soul's true knowledge.

Profound Spiritual Meaning

This verse teaches that the soul is naturally filled with divine knowledge, but material desires create layers of ignorance that hide this inner light.

Just as smoke, dust, and the womb conceal what already exists, desire conceals spiritual wisdom without destroying it.

Through Karma Yoga, devotion, meditation, self-discipline, and constant remembrance of God, these coverings gradually disappear, allowing the soul to realize its eternal nature and attain peace, wisdom, and ultimately liberation.

Word-by-Word Meaning

Dhūmena – By smoke

Āvriyate – Is covered

Vahniḥ – Fire

Yathā – Just as

Ādarśhaḥ – Mirror

Malena – By dust or impurity

Cha – And



Yathā – Just as

Ulbena – By the womb

Āvṛitaḥ – Covered

Garbhaḥ – The unborn child

Tathā – In the same way

Tena – By that (desire)

Idam – This knowledge

Āvṛitam – Is covered

Message of the Verse

Lord Krishna teaches that spiritual wisdom is never lost, but it becomes hidden beneath the coverings of desire and attachment. Just as smoke conceals fire, dust obscures a mirror, and the womb encloses a child, desire veils true knowledge and prevents a person from realizing the self. Through Karma Yoga, selfless service, devotion, meditation, and self-discipline, these coverings are gradually removed, allowing divine wisdom to shine and leading the seeker toward inner peace, self-realization, and ultimate liberation.



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