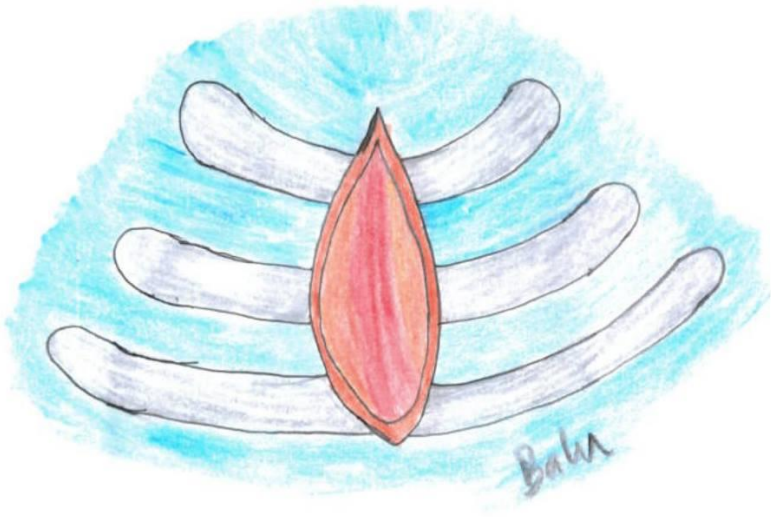


Balu

The Wave

Dharma, Kama and Moksha



“The mind is like the sea—waves of thoughts rise and fall, much like the disturbances we face in life, leaving us in a state of confusion.”

(Cover Photo: The Third Eye

First, my apologies to any religious fundamentalists—I will be slightly modifying some mythological stories in this book to enhance the reading experience.

Dear readers, you can think of this as more of a short book or an extended article. I'm not strictly following conventions in my writing here. I want to talk about three key concepts: "Dharma" (our duties or, simply put, the path we choose in life), "Kama" (desire), and "Moksha"

(liberation or a state of fulfillment where one feels complete).

Let me share with you the story of the legendary battle of Kurukshetra, fought between the five sons of Pandu and the one hundred sons of Dhritarashtra—cousins locked in a bitter struggle. Before I begin, I want to make it clear that this story is not meant to glorify war or violence. Indian philosophers often interpret this battle as a symbol of the internal conflicts that take place within our own minds. It represents the

ongoing battle in the human mind, the inner battlefield, where struggles happen, have happened, and will continue to happen.

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, the greatest archer of all, Prince Arjuna, found himself in a state of confusion. He was unable to engage in combat against his cousins, friends, and revered teachers. In that critical moment, his charioteer, Krishna helped Arjuna remember his true identity and reminded him of the path he was meant to follow.

Let me give you a brief overview of Arjuna. He grew up alongside his four brothers and his cousin Duryodhana, along with his ninety-nine siblings, in the kingdom of Hastinapura, located in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent, just south of the great Himalayas. During their childhood, all the princes were sent to their teacher, Guru Drona, to master various combat skills such as archery, sword fighting, and wrestling. Guru Drona decided to separate the children into different

categories based on their individual interests and talents.

All the princes received basic training in various disciplines. One day, Dronacharya, gathered everyone on the training ground to assess their skills in archery. He instructed them to focus on a wooden bird perched high in a tree and aimed to shoot its eye. One by one, he called them forward and asked, “What do you see?”

The eldest, Yudhishtira, stepped up first. He replied, “I see the clear sky, numerous birds flying, trees, and the wooden bird.” Dronacharya instructed him to step aside. Next was Duryodhana, who said, “I see the sun, clouds, trees, and the bird.” Again, Dronacharya told him to step aside. This continued until it was Arjuna's turn.

When asked what he saw, Arjuna confidently replied, “I see the eye of the bird.” Dronacharya commanded him to release the arrow, and

without hesitation, Arjuna struck the bird's eye perfectly. That day, Arjuna's path to becoming a master archer was set. Under Dronacharya's guidance, he received the essential knowledge and training to excel in this discipline, and over time, he emerged as one of the greatest archers of all time.

However, the desire to claim ownership of the throne of Hastinapur created a rift among the cousins, ultimately leading to the epic battle of Kurukshetra.

On the first day of battle, the Pandavas (Arjuna and his brothers) and the Kauravas (Duryodhana and his brothers) assembled on the battlefield. Guru Drona, Bhishma (the overseer of Hastinapur and uncle to both Pandu and Dhritarashtra), Karna (an archer equal to Arjuna and also his brother), and many others stood with Duryodhana, each guided by their own sense of “Dharma,” the path they had chosen in life.

Even though Arjuna had defeated the Kauravas in numerous skirmishes, he understood that this war was different. It held a weight of significance; there were two possibilities before him: either he would emerge victorious over the bodies of his beloved kin or face death himself.

In that moment, Arjuna, the great archer, was engulfed by confusion. He questioned himself: Should I fight? It wasn't fear that gripped him; rather, it was a deep longing for his

own blood and beloved ones. Overwhelmed, he lowered his bow in the chariot and turned to his friend and charioteer, Krishna. "I don't want to fight anymore," he said. "I can't bear the thought of achieving victory through the death of those I hold dear. I wish to abandon this path and choose a different one—one of renunciation."

Krishna replied to Arjuna, "At this critical juncture in your journey, it is unwise to abandon your path. Remember the day you began your training with Dronacharya and the

guidance you received along the way—this moment is the culmination of that journey. This war is not merely a battle; it is the final challenge you must face to achieve excellence."

The dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna is known as the "Bhagavad Gita," in which Krishna imparts profound wisdom about the importance of dharma and the pursuit of excellence. He reminds Arjuna that he has the choice to

either continue on his path or abandon it.

Ultimately, Arjuna chooses to uphold his duty and fight. The war rages on for 18 days, claiming many lives, but in the end, the Pandavas emerge victorious. Thus concludes this powerful tale of duty, choice, and self-discovery.

If we reflect on this story, we notice that many others stood on the battlefield of Kurukshetra alongside Arjuna—figures like Drona, Bhishma,

Duryodhana, Yudhishtira, and Karna. Each of them was also pursuing their own path to excellence, yet none of them wavered or questioned the path they had chosen. They remained steadfast in their decisions.

However, it was Arjuna alone who was granted the opportunity to hear Krishna's enlightening words. His inner conflict and doubt set him apart, and in this moment of hesitation, Krishna imparted wisdom.

The conflict in Arjuna's mind was born from his deep sense of attachment and incompleteness (Kama). He saw his opponents not as enemies, but as his own—his family, friends, and teachers. His desire to avoid losing them created a powerful emotional barrier, becoming an obstacle in his path to excellence. It was this inner turmoil, the clash between his duty and his longing, that clouded his resolve and made him question his path.

This story serves as a reminder of the path I've chosen. Like Arjuna, I find myself stuck—held back by desire and confusion. After 16 years of walking this road, I now question whether I should continue or take a different direction. Did I choose the right path? This book is my attempt to find the answer to that question.

I'll be a bit philosophical—bear with me.

"Who am I?"—a question most of us ask at some point in life. To comfort ourselves, we often come up with various answers: "I am the 'great me,' I am a scientist, a carpenter, I am the earth, atoms, stardust, or I am made of quarks and leptons," and so on.

There are countless answers to this question, and they vary from person to person. But the most important thing to note is that our brains have evolved to ask, "Who am I?" We are self-aware, conscious of our existence in this very space and time.

Let me refer to the "virtual construct" our brain creates as the "mind" (like the concept of the matrix from the 1999 movie), where the "I" exists. And here I am, trying to answer the question, "Who am I?" Indian philosophy offers an answer (though you can disagree): "I am that" (Tat Tvam Asi). But who is "that"? Who am I? The answer: You are Brahman. Brahman, often equated with God in Western thought, is not some distant force—it's you. Not just you

as you are, but your better self. It's as simple as that.

Indian philosophy offers a set of guiding principles designed to help you discover and realize your better self.

These guiding principles aren't meant for just anyone; they are for those **committed** to excelling in their chosen path by upholding "Dharma"—the duties and actions

necessary to walk the path toward excellence.

As I mentioned before, the "I" exists within a virtual construct called the mind. Imagine the mind as a vast ocean, with you as a traveler navigating toward your destination on a small boat. When the ocean is calm, you can easily sail toward your goal. But if **huge waves** arise, your journey becomes difficult and unpredictable. Similarly, when "I" embark on the path to excellence, many obstacles—like those

waves—can arise, making it harder to move forward and progress.

I often find myself questioning whether I've chosen the right path. Sometimes, I doubt the decisions I've made. Why does this uncertainty linger inside me? Is it because of the pain I've carried for so long? Could this pain be stirring up turbulent waves in my mind, clouding my clarity and causing all this confusion?

Thirty-four years ago, I came into this world with no pre-existing knowledge. From the moment I emerged from my mother's womb, a flood of sensory information—sights, sounds, smells, touches, and tastes—rushed in through my sense organs. My brain must have worked hard to process it all, using this constant flow of data to build its own internal "matrix." It was preparing my mind, patiently awaiting the birth of "I," the emergence of self-awareness.

I don't remember the exact moment I became self-aware, but with that awareness came a host of things: my likes and dislikes, a sense of what is mine and what is not, and, most importantly, my ego. Yet, even with this newfound awareness, I still didn't know which path to choose. My senses remained wide open to the world, gathering information, perhaps preparing me for the journey ahead and the path I would eventually take.

At the age of four, I was sent to school to begin learning what society deemed important. I met many other children like me, all equally confused. It was the start of a long process—one that would eventually lead us to choose our own paths in life.

By the age of fifteen, I had decided on my path: to become a physicist. My parents warned me it would be a long and difficult journey, but my curiosity about how the world works drove me forward. The desire to

understand the mechanisms behind everything fascinated me, and that fascination became my guiding force.

As time passed, various emotions began to evolve within me: love, compassion, empathy, arrogance, anger, happiness, hatred, and most notably, attraction toward the opposite sex.

Of all these emotions, the one I find hardest to understand is the attraction to the opposite sex. Perhaps it's just brain chemistry, something beyond my awareness.

But this emotion often brings confusion and pain, leaving me to wonder why it exists at all. It creates a sense of incompleteness, a longing for a companion that seems to be always just out of reach.

To this day, I've stayed committed to my path, striving for excellence. However, the longing for a companion has often slowed me down. Sometimes, I question my choices. Had I listened to my parents, maybe I would have settled down sooner and found a partner. I

don't know. Most of my peers avoided science, choosing engineering for stable jobs and an easier path to settling down with a companion. Meanwhile, I'm still struggling to find stability in my career.

When feelings of attraction surface and cause me pain, I often shift my focus to something else—music, drawing, writing, or exploring new interests. These distractions help me stay grounded and keep me on the path I've chosen, at least

temporarily. But I find myself still searching for a more permanent solution.

This was when I began to develop an interest in Indian philosophy. Its stories are rich with wisdom, guiding one to stay true to their path (dharma), free themselves from desire (kama), and ultimately attain moksha—liberation from the very path itself.

Indian philosophy teaches that when you're in conflict with your thoughts, you should find a calm place and look within yourself to understand the root cause of the turmoil. As I delve into my own mind, I realize I'm not alone; there are two sides to me—one consumed by emotions and the other guided by logic. It's as if a battle, much like the Kurukshetra war, is raging within me. The root cause of this internal conflict is my desire, a sense of incompleteness. It seems that my emotional self is overpowering my logical self.

This internal struggle is hindering my progress on my chosen path. Like Arjuna, I find myself contemplating whether to abandon my journey and questioning the very path I've taken. But what is desire, exactly?

I hope you're not too bored yet, so let me share another story with you. Let's journey to the Indian subcontinent, where the majestic Himalayas rise, their peaks blanketed in snow. On one of these

heights lives a man, the guardian of a nearby cremation ground. His body is adorned with human ash, and he wears a tiger skin as a cloak. A snake hangs around his neck like a necklace, and he keeps a trident and a small drum by his side.

This man is in deep meditation, yet he is engulfed in pain, mourning the loss of his beloved wife from years ago. His immense sorrow has paralyzed him, making it difficult for him to fulfill his duties. Within him rages a great Kurukshetra war, a battle between his grief and his

responsibilities. However, he possesses a unique gift: a "third eye" that allows him to look within himself. For years, he has observed his own thoughts and emotions, seeking understanding amidst the chaos.

This man is known by many names. Some refer to him as Rudra from the Vedic texts, while others call him Kalantaka, the conqueror of time. He is also known as Adhi Yogi, the first yogi. Personally, I prefer to call him Shiva, as do many who revere him.

Shiva, the god of destruction and transformation, embodies the essence of renewal and change.

Before he fell into deep meditation, Shiva lived with his wife, Sati, on the majestic Mount Kailash. He dutifully fulfilled his role in the world by destroying what needed to be destroyed—philosophically, the destruction of one's ego, that inflated sense of self. Shiva and Sati led a blissful life together.

One day, King Daksha, Sati's father, hosted a grand ceremony and invited all the gods except for his son-in-law, Shiva. From the very beginning, Daksha had harbored disdain for Shiva, viewing him as an outcast. He perceived Shiva as a wild spirit, dwelling in cremation grounds and mingling with ghosts and demons—an uncivilized figure who refused to adhere to the laws set by the king.

Upon learning about the ceremony and realizing her husband had not

been invited, Sati felt a surge of anger. To her, it felt like a public disavowal of her husband among the other gods. Shiva, sensing her distress, urged her to remain calm. However, in this world, few could rival Sati's fury; she embodied the very energy of the universe, making her quick to ignite with rage. Whenever she became angry, it was always a challenge for Shiva to soothe her, but this time was different.

Unable to contain her emotions, Sati left Mount Kailash and journeyed to

her father's palace. There was no chance that Daksha would relent and invite Shiva. In a moment of unchecked fury, Sati reached a breaking point. In an act of defiance, she chose to burn away her mortal form, transcending to her divine essence as Goddess Shakti, the embodiment of cosmic energy.

The death of Sati plunged Shiva into profound sorrow, awakening a sense of incompleteness within him for the very first time. Overwhelmed by grief, he wandered the Earth like a lost

soul, devoid of direction or purpose. His duties were forgotten, as the weight of his loss consumed him. Ultimately, he retreated to a remote location in the Himalayas, seeking solace in isolation. There, he entered a deep meditation, one that seemed to have no end, lost in his inner turmoil and the search for understanding.

When emotions overpower logic, a person can behave like a "stubborn monkey." This is a common proverb in my hometown. When a monkey

clutches something, it refuses to let go, no matter what. Even if you beat the monkey, it would rather endure the pain than release what it's holding. Similarly, when we let emotions rule, we cling stubbornly to our desires or decisions, no matter how irrational they may be.

It is said that Shiva, immersed in deep meditation, was unwilling to accept his loss for ages. Eventually, he fell into a state known as "virakti"—a state of complete detachment, free from desire. While

this may seem like an ideal state, being without desire can also be detrimental. To walk any path, we need a certain kind of desire, not the kind that hinders progress but the kind that fuels it. Perhaps it's more akin to passion—the driving force that leads us toward excellence.

When I look within, I see huge waves – towering crests of happiness followed by deep troughs of sadness. My mind oscillates between these two states at a dizzying frequency. What causes these waves? Desire,

perhaps. More precisely, my old nemesis: Love. Even at 34, I still don't fully understand it. Is it hormones? The need to care and be cared for? Lust? Or is it the feeling of incompleteness itself? I don't know. All I know is that, once again, I find myself drawn into the orbit of a new girl.

She probably has a boyfriend. Is it even possible to find a girl who's single these days? I know I need to summon the courage to ask her directly, but what then? What if she

says she does have a boyfriend? How will she see me after that? And more importantly, how will I feel? I honestly don't know.

People always say, "Move on." But is it really that easy? I've heard stories of people going through breakups and sinking into deep sorrow. Is their pain the same as mine? In the end, pain is pain—whether from a breakup or rejection. You can't glorify one over the other because it's the person enduring it who has to overcome it.

I've experienced the pain of rejection many times, yet I've always managed to overcome it with time. However, this healing came at the expense of my dharma and my future. Now, it's time to put an end to this pain and misery.

What should I do?

How can I extinguish my longing for a girlfriend?

I'm not the mythological god Shiva, who can burn away his desires with a mere glance from his third eye. I'm just an ordinary man, weighed down by emotions. These emotions feel like a heavy rock, chained to my leg, making it difficult to walk the path toward excellence.

I tried ignoring people, shutting everyone out of my life. I withdrew into solitude, focusing only on academia. My once "beautiful" smile—my mother always says I have the most beautiful smile (you

know how mothers are; they never want to see you sad)—faded from my face.

If you see me smiling, know that it's coming from my heart. I only smile when I'm truly happy inside. My smile isn't like a Parisian's casual "bonjour." If I smile at you, it means I'm genuinely happy with you. Just a bit of self-boasting.

But I don't think this is a permanent solution. You need to socialize and

be part of society. Why isolate yourself in the midst of a crowd just because of one girl? There are plenty of girls out there. Still, there's a lingering fear that I may never find one.

But as someone once said, life must go on.

I need to break the cycle of birth and death—or rather, the cycle of falling for someone, regaining my peace of mind, and then falling again.

I've realized my problem: I fall for someone without truly knowing her. This girl might be completely incompatible with me. I need to talk to her, see if she has the qualities I value—empathy, compassion, passion for something in life, and the drive to pursue excellence, along with understanding. After all, not all that glitters is gold.

Somehow, I managed to convince myself (it wasn't easy, but my logical

mind won over my emotions). Now, I can feel the waves beginning to calm down. You might ask how I regained this peace. Well, I took a short walk and saw many girls passing by. I appreciated each one's beauty. I realized that the problem arises when you focus on just one girl. When you spread your attention across many, the intensity of desire for any one person decreases—it's simple math.

I don't know how many of you might be thinking, "Creepy guy" or "Pervert." But honestly, I only looked

at their faces, and only when they were at a distance.

I regret not realizing this sooner: love isn't the divine, selfless concept I once believed it to be. It's just a name created by some drugged poet.

What matters is finding someone with whom you don't need to lie, someone with whom you can share anything. The key is patience. You might feel frustrated as time passes, but sometimes all you can do is wait.

In the meantime, focus on the path toward excellence—your "Dharma."

I hope to meet “the girl” at some point in my life—someone with whom I can pursue our goals, supporting each other along the way. I envision us going on vacations together, lying on the seashore while gazing at the stars, starting a family, growing old together, and finally resting side by side for eternity.

Now what? There's no longer a rock chained to my legs; I am free to move, free to walk toward my path of excellence. But then what? After striving for years, what remains? The final step—"Moksha"—liberation from the very path you've followed, the freedom to release the journey itself.

But I am still young, with a long way to go and much to accomplish. There are goals to reach, challenges to overcome, and experiences yet to be lived. I hope that when I'm old and

feel that I've done enough, maybe then it will be time to seek Moksha, when the journey comes to its natural end. And then, to rest—perhaps in a quiet retirement home, by the side of my Gauri.

"For Gauri, who is imaginary, yet holds
a special place in my heart."