

# Karma

## Metadata

- Author: [Acharya Prashant](#)

## Highlights

What else is life but a continuous flow of actions? — location: [258](#)

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if you insist that unless you are totally clear with your thoughts you will not move, then you have ensured that you are never really going to move; then you will always have a reason to think a little more because thought by its very design can never be fully certain. — location: [265](#)

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Have you ever found thought coming to a final conclusion? That which appears like concluded tonight reopens for discussion tomorrow morning because a final conclusion would mean the death of thought. So, why would mind ever lend itself to conclusion? Thought would always leave a little scope for doubt to remain. And then, based on that doubt, that uncertainty, more thinking can be justified. — location: [270](#)

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think if you must, but never expect thought to come to a solution. Thought is useful, but in matters of living, loving, and Truth, the utility of thought is limited. Do not try to overexploit thought. You will end up being exploited. — location: [273](#)

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Right time, right place, right action—only that is not a crime, only that is not inherently bad. — location: [290](#)

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Where does the right action come from? You will never know. But you can surely know where the wrong action comes from. Where does the wrong action come from? Wrong action comes from one's own personal priorities, one's own likes and dislikes, one's own choices and preferences. Whatever comes from there is the wrong action. Whatever you decide and do for yourself, even with the best of intentions, is the improper action. — location: [291](#)

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The right action always looks strange. The wrong action always looks known because it is a repeated action, a conditioned action: we have seen it, done it, passed through it many times before. — location: [298](#)

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When things actually go right, only your heart knows that everything is going right. In the eyes of others, it is a total devastation: they feel like taking pity on you; they may ignore you; they may even become your enemies. — location: [310](#)

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If all seems to be going comfortably, chances are all is going wrong. If all seems to be nice, proper, sweet, hunky-dory, chances are everything is just patterned, known, conditioned. If everybody is able to tell you, 'Oh, you have such a happy life, we are even envious of you,' if you tick all the right boxes in the social checklist, chances are everything is going wrong. — location: [307](#)

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We can never know where the right action comes from. Never! Don't even try that. — location: [320](#)

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most of the time our actions are just coming from what family, society, church, education, media, neighbours have taught us. — location: [324](#)

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We have a great desire to know from where the right action happens. Do you see why we have that desire? What will you do if you come to know from where it happens? You will go there and sit on it, try to take control of it, do something with it, co-opt it, try to become its master, use it for your own interests. That is why it is such a relief that you can never know where the right action comes from. It is such a relief that God is unknowable. Had he been knowable, you would have gone to him and troubled him so much! — location: [329](#)

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When you are thinking, you must continuously be aware of whether thought is just a tool to come to an ultimate end, or has it become a self-serving machine. — location: [371](#)

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You think about something and that induces fear or anxiety in you, and because of that, you are compelled to think more. And when you think more, it leads to more fear, and then this kind of a needless cycle continues. You find that you are going over the same thoughts again and again, going through the same kinds of imaginations and options and choices and logics

again and again—and all of that is leading to nothing. When you find that you are caged in that kind of a circuit, then you should know that thought has become self-serving. — location: [374](#)

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Thought feels empowered when there are options, but you feel discontented as long as there are options. — location: [382](#)

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For thought to continue, there must be uncertainty. For you to be relaxed, there must be certainty. — location: [383](#)

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You have to earn your spontaneity. If you do not earn your spontaneity, I again repeat, your spontaneity is of the mechanical or animal type. — location: [393](#)

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Our own innate, physical, primordial tendencies are our slave drivers. They command us. — location: [400](#)

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We have two masters: one is our own body, second is the society outside of us. Our body rules us from within, society rules us from without. We do not want either of these slaveries. We do not want to be ruled by our body, nor do we want to be ruled by society. That is freedom. — location: [411](#)

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Decide in a way that your decision is uninfluenced by your physical tendencies and your social conditioning. Only then would your decision bring joy and liberation to you. — location: [416](#)

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we know where passion comes from. It is not internal. Passion, too, comes from surroundings. It is a type of deeply internalized conditioning. — location: [435](#)

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The one who starts living, abiding in this must-ness starts living at the pinnacle of life. It is a different zone of existence altogether: a point where you have just silently achieved all the spiritual goods. — location: [455](#)

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Once you really understand, then you don't own the understanding; the understanding owns you. And once you are owned by understanding, obviously your own personal desires hold no value; now value belongs to the owner. — location: [471](#)

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Observe the world and observe yourself, and you will know what is it that must be done. And then give up the right to un-choose what deserves to be chosen. — location: [480](#)

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Study! And then act with total commitment and determination. — location: [529](#)

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If your action is founded on understanding, then your action becomes vigorous and irreversible. But if it is coming from some flimsy point, then such action has no momentum. It doesn't have longevity because it doesn't have sincerity. — location: [530](#)

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Don't take responsibility for all kinds of random and miscellaneous stuff. Your responsibility is your liberation. Your responsibility is not to meddle in the affairs of Prakriti (physical nature). — location: [545](#)

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the bondage is the meddling, the meddling is the bondage. — location: [546](#)

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You say, 'I will take food at 8 a.m. and dinner at 8 p.m.' Who are you to decide? Let the stomach decide. 'But I follow a strict spiritual routine! At 4:30 a.m. sharp, I take my nimbu pani (lemon water).' No, no, no! Have you asked the body whether it even needs nimbu pani? And if it needs nimbu pani, it will attain it for itself. — location: [552](#)

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if there is physical survival without peace to the consciousness, then it is worse than not surviving. — location: [565](#)

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what is important, and if there is stuff that is not important, why am I in it? What is important? That which corresponds with your liberation, that alone is important. Everything else is just to be kept aside. — location: [590](#)

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the kind of yoga today that says, 'Keep the body healthy, and by keeping the body healthy, ultimately you will be enlightened,' is very false. — location: [606](#)

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the best thing is to leave the body to itself: 'You take care of your business, I will take care of my business. I don't even want you as a servant because you are not an honest servant.' — location: [627](#)

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We have attached too much value to stuff that is inherently despicable. — location: [642](#)

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Forgiveness and aloofness and detachment are not for the weak ones. — location: [656](#)

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You are not the cell. You are not the body. Remember who you are. You are the confined consciousness clamoring for liberation. — location: [657](#)

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If your own suffering does not move you, then look at others' suffering. — location: [661](#)

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Let the suffering be there. Pick up a great mission and proceed with it. Don't bother about whether or not you have any personal suffering. Maybe that's the medicine that your suffering has been asking for. It wants to be forgotten. It wants you to rise above your personal suffering. It wants you to help others. — location: [691](#)

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In the right battle, there can be no wrong result. Defeat is possible only when one is fighting the wrong battle. If you find yourself defeated, and defeated regularly, just know that you have picked up a battle that you should never have been fighting in the first place. — location: [723](#)

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Defeat is hardly ever to be measured in terms of the events that happen outside of you. Defeat hurts exactly because defeat happens inside of you. — location: [725](#)

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every defeat is a defeat right since the inception of the action. — location: [730](#)

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The end will follow the beginning. — location: [733](#)

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When you have begun wrongly, the process cannot correct the beginning. — location: [734](#)

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A wrong battle is one that is needless, just as incompleteness is needless. It is unnecessarily there, it need not be there, it has no utility, it really has no existence. Even if it is not there, there would be peace. In fact, there would be peace only if it is not there. — location: [741](#)

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One feels bad about his condition only when he strongly identifies with his condition. — location: [747](#)

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fighting and conflict have become a necessity in one's mind. — location: [760](#)

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Any challenge is tantamount to a war. — location: [769](#)

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Defeat is not the end of the war. Mostly, defeat lies in the beginning of war. — location: [770](#)

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A needless war, the moment it begins, the point from where it begins, is already a defeat. — location: [770](#)

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The more you pick unnecessary battles, the more you will feel defeated. The more defeated you feel, the more will be the urge to fight another unnecessary battle. It is a downward spiral. Once caught you remain caught. — location: [776](#)

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Value belongs to the place the commitment is coming from, and, therefore, the place the commitment is going to. — location: [787](#)

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After you are devoted to the right thing from the right centre, then comes the question of discipline, of remaining committed, of hard work, diligence, etc. — location: [793](#)

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One has to know the centre one is operating from; otherwise, the action can be very deceptive. — location: [794](#)

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Willpower, commitment, determination, they are of so little use because they are extremely superficial. One can be a very committed person and yet have a very petty mind because one is needlessly committed—committed to the wrong thing from the wrong centre. — location: [796](#)

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It is not a lack of action that bothers you; it is the lack of prescribed action that bothers you, it is the lack of action that 'conforms' which bothers you. — location: [812](#)

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What do you call an action? Achieving something, earning something, rising in career, building a house, conquering a city. Now, all of these, according to you, are gainful, meaningful actions. And the mango tree, you would say, is not acting at all. — location: [816](#)

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Cast away the images that you have, stop having role models, stop believing in fairy tales. Maybe you are too much under the influence of movies—that too action movies. Just live! Just live, action is inevitable. — location: [818](#)

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You cannot stop action even if you want to. It is not within your control. — location: [820](#)

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If you understand what life is and who you are, then you will also understand the right action and when it is needed. — location: [822](#)

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Don't impose upon yourself a code of model action. Remain attentive! Keep asking, 'What is all this?' And then you will find that good, proper, peaceful action will happen on its own. — location: [823](#)

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Action will keep happening; you don't have to push it, you don't have to push at it. — location: [821](#)

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The world is suffering a lot because there are just too many people acting. We need many more people who refuse to act, who are not so obsessed with — location: [836](#)

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So many of mankind's problems would be solved if we just cut down on our actions; not increase them or improve them but simply cease, simply come to a full stop. — location: [830](#)

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Don't rush, don't be impatient. You aren't here to act; you are just here. You aren't here to do something; you are just here. — location: [832](#)

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The world is suffering a lot because there are just too many people acting. We need many more people who refuse to act, who are not so obsessed with acting. — location: [828](#)

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You cannot say that you want to remain fully immersed in just any task amid all the changes, the flux, the ups and downs of life. That won't happen. — location: [848](#)

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You must have something utterly important at hand. It must be something so overpowering that it demands your entire energy, the weight of your total self. Only then will you be able to remain dedicated irrespective of all the distractions and movements around you. — location: [849](#)

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what is it that you do not want to get distracted for? What is it that you have picked up? What is it that you want to stick to? Why do you want to avoid distractions? — location: [854](#)

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Mostly, it is not that the distractions are too powerful; it is just that the task that we take up is so underwhelming, so little that our association with it is very feeble, very powerless. — location: [859](#)

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Your weak association is exposed the moment there is something else trying to claim your attention. — location: [872](#)

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You find that you are attracted towards that other thing very easily; you just slip away. And if you just slip away, it merely means that your fundamental relationship with your task is very



weak. It is weak because the choice of action has come from an unconscious state of the actor; you really have not decided what to do very consciously or honestly. — location: [872](#)

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The sole purpose of work is to bring contentment and completeness to the incomplete psyche within. — location: [883](#)

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the work is beneficial, not the result of the work. — location: [886](#)

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Detachment does not mean passivity. Detachment merely means that now you have your hands free to make the right action. — location: [899](#)

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Detachment is not about passive observation, — location: [903](#)

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Detachment does not mean that now you have nothing to do with the person you are detached from. Detachment rather means that now your love is free to act rightly. In attachment, how will you act rightly? Very difficult. — location: [903](#)

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Love and right action go together. Therefore, there is no love in attachment. Detachment and love go together. — location: [905](#)

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Detachment is not about breaking relationships. Detachment is about setting the relationships right. — location: [911](#)

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You tell someone, 'I am feeling quite attached to you,' and that someone will find it difficult to hide a smile—it is so very flattering! 'You know, these days I am feeling a bit attached to you,' whereas this is the scariest statement you can hear from anybody. When somebody tells you he is feeling attached to you, run away. Tell him to turn around and count till twenty, and say, 'When you reach twenty, I will demonstrate how attached I too am.' Twenty should be enough for you to fly ten miles away. — location: [913](#)

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Detachment and love go together. In fact, you cannot have love without detachment. If you find that you have love accompanied by attachment, then your love is very polluted. Love is

when you do not care about your self-interest and your objective is the welfare of the other. Attachment is when you cling to the other for your own sake. Now, can love and attachment go together? So, stay detached, stay loving, and act fully, act rightly. — location: [918](#)

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Attachment compels you to act and provides you with motive—but only to certain action. — location: [932](#)

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Great action cannot happen in attachment. One is attached always to the little, and only little action is required to acquire the little, so how will attachment lead to great action? — location: [933](#)

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Attachment is surely an agent of movement and action. But, at the same time, attachment guarantees that your action will be confined, limited, and mediocre. You will act, but you will act in a petty way. Your action will never have immensity. — location: [935](#)

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It is of course important that one acts when action is needed, but it is probably even more important that one does not act when action is not needed. — location: [994](#)

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We do not know where our actions come from. We do not know where our thoughts come from. And without knowing, we take them as acceptable; we even give them the status of truth. — location: [1008](#)

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whatever is available to be questioned must be questioned. And don't feel offended if somebody else questions you. You feel offended when others question you precisely because you have never questioned yourself. — location: [1027](#)

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Anxiety is an appearance; anxiety is what comes to you as a result of an unnatural life. — location: [1052](#)

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Ask just this one question: 'Have I been dishonest? Have I been lazy? Am I dozing off?' And if you're not dozing off, then don't be harsh on yourself. — location: [1095](#)

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You must remember that the goal of life is not happiness but freedom—freedom from both happiness and sadness. — location: [1130](#)

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Man has a mind driven by a so-called self-supporting ego. Man is the only creature in existence that feels that he is all by himself. That is why man faces the kind of worries and tensions that no other creature does. — location: [1140](#)

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The more you start living supported by and according to your concepts, ideologies, inventions, constructs, and social orders, the more insecure you become. — location: [1145](#)

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Even your love is man-made. It is a manufactured love, it is a factory love. There is no possibility of reliance upon anything except yourself. — location: [1149](#)

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Do what is right and forget all about the result. If the action is right, then the result is right. The right action cannot have a wrong result. If it appears wrong to you, it is because it is clashing with your beliefs and expectations. It is actually right. The right tree cannot bear the wrong fruit, but it may appear wrong to you if you are expecting mangoes from a guava tree. — location: [1177](#)

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the result of the action. We tend to do that. We say, 'Oh yes, this thing is right, and it must be done. But . . .' If the thing is right and it must be done, from where has this split arrived? What is this 'but'? — location: [1182](#)

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God is nirādhāra (without support). It is a nirādhāra assurance; it has nothing concrete behind it. It rests on nothing and, therefore, it cannot be shaken. That kind of assurance. — location: [1196](#)

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Our confidence is always based on certain things. If those things are taken away, the confidence falls. — location: [1199](#)

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undaunted. This is real confidence, confidence that proceeds from nowhere, nirādhāra . 'I am just confident. Take away everything that I have, and I would still be confident.' Such confidence is called faith. — location: [1214](#)

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The right action is action that brings peace and relaxation to you. The right action leaves you with reasonless contentment. It leads to a diminishing of the inner uncertainty and anxiety. That is right action, and that also conversely defines wrong action. — location: [1238](#)

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when you make a truly right decision, what comes to you is the truly right reward, but that right reward is incompatible with your pre-existing life structure, so you suffer. This explains why people avoid the right action. — location: [1242](#)

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People avoid the right action because it is incompatible with the entire structure of their life. — location: [1243](#)

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the right thing is not bringing suffering to us; the suffering is because we have lived wrongly so far. — location: [1250](#)

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It would appear that life was smooth, there was hardly any suffering, and then I deviated from my normal course, took a so-called right decision, and that right decision has brought unnecessary suffering to me. — location: [1251](#)

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You are somebody who is determined by his history. And if you are determined by your history, then it requires discipline and determination to take the right action. — location: [1273](#)

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The temptation to take the wrong action is very high. Most people succumb to that temptation. You should not. — location: [1275](#)

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Carry the spirit of victory even in your defeat. That is a bigger victory than victory. — location: [1280](#)

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Do not give in easily. And if you do not give in easily, you will find that you are capable of far more than you might usually think of. — location: [1298](#)

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We are all mortal creatures in flesh and blood. We all have our flaws, our weaknesses, our indiscretions. — location: [1306](#)

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Now, let's say, for an evening, we belong to the wrong place. What to do? Don't just keep cursing yourself. Observe. Ask yourself: 'There surely was something in this place that attracted me so much. What was it? There surely is some power in this place that defeated me. What is that power?' Now that you have been forced to come to the wrong place, at least investigate it properly. Let it be some kind of a spy mission. That's the best use you can put your defeat to. I should have been in my study at this time. I should have been with the hills or with the river or at the church at this time. And where am I? I am at a shopping complex or at a liquor party. Theoretically, I very well know I shouldn't have been here at this moment, but I am here, and I can't change the fact of my presence at this place. So, what do I then make of this evening? Study that place. Study that place so that your defeat does not get repeated. That place surely has some power. That place surely has some charm that speaks to some weakness within you. Study that charm. What is it in that place that compels you? Is that charm for real? Often the charm is imaginary, and when you go close to it, it disappears. So, maybe the image of the charm sucked you in. But now that you are there, now that you have indeed been sucked in, use the opportunity and really see whether the charmer is worth it. What else can be done anyway? You are there. You are not with the hills, you are not with the river, you are not with the books, you are not with the saints. You are at that blitzzy, blingy party. So, that is the best use you can put your defeat to. And that is very important for all of us because we will get defeated. Some of us will get very frequently defeated, the others maybe a little less frequently, but there is nobody who is an absolute winner. We all have our moments, our episodes of failures. We all let ourselves down some time or the other. What to do then? Keep fighting. What was rule number one? Do not go down tamely. If there is an inner conflict and you know which side should win, fight hard to ensure that the right side prevails. That was rule number one. Rule number two: Even when you are defeated, keep fighting. Now, of course, frontal warfare is not possible. The direct and obvious battle has been lost, so let there be guerrilla warfare now. The enemy has pulled you to his camp. Now what do you do? Spy. Surveillance. Act as a detective on yourself. 'So, this is the place that overpowered me. What exactly is so enthralling about it? Let me figure out. He is the man who did not allow me to be at a place of peace; something about him just overwhelmed me. What is it about that man? I will not just stay at a seductive distance and allow his charm to continue. I will go close to him. I will figure out whether he is really worth it.' Either you ensure that you remain a long distance away from him—that would be your absolute victory—but if you cannot do that, if he indeed does pull you towards himself, then go totally towards him. Investigate. And if your investigation is honest, the charm will disappear. And if the charm does not disappear even upon really rigorous examination, then maybe the person is worth it! (Laughs) There is no need to run away then. Maybe the one pulling you in is himself a saint in some other form. Fine. If you have a living saint, why do you need to go to a library or some such place? Keep fighting. Keep fighting till your victory, and keep fighting in your defeat. The second part is more important. Keep fighting even

when you have been beaten down. Keep fighting even when yours looks like a hopeless cause, a lost battle. Don't just start wallowing in self-pity and self-abuse. 'Oh, I am such a wretched one! I betrayed God, my Lord!' You did not betray Him; you did what you could. Now continue doing what you can. That's the thing: continuity. Surprise the enemy. Let him think that he has won. And even when it appears that he has won, you must continue fighting. There is no other option. — location: [1307](#)

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who is not going to face adversities or reverses. It is your response to those moments that will decide your fate. In victory, everybody is a champion. You must be a champion even in defeat. That is what is needed. It is a bit of a bravado thing. Quite dramatic. — location: [1370](#)

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Alexander asks him, 'So, Porus, how should we behave with you?' And in that moment when all has been lost, his army is destroyed, his kingdom gone, and he is standing with his limbs tied, Porus replies with his head held high, 'As a king behaves with another king.' — location: [1378](#)

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Maya wants to destroy your morale, crush your spirit. Let that not happen. Let her defeat you materially but never spiritually. Let your spirit never be conquered. That is one thing Maya has no control over. She has all control over situations, she has all control over your thoughts, tendencies, emotions, but she can have no control really over your faith. Let that remain untouched. That is possible. — location: [1382](#)

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Keep fighting till your victory, and keep fighting in your defeat. Keep fighting even when you have been beaten down. Keep fighting even when yours looks like a hopeless cause, a lost battle. Don't just start wallowing in self-pity and self-abuse. — location: [1399](#)

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This is niśkāma-karma (desireless action). The doing is not for some objective outside of itself; the doing itself is the objective. — location: [1421](#)

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work is never very satisfying because work to you is not the last thing; the work is just a middleman for the sake of a result. Therefore, work is just a necessary evil for you. — location: [1423](#)

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Niśkāma-karma means: work is life. — location: [1429](#)

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those who work towards an end find that they are defeated both in the work as well as in the end. Double defeat. And those who work without an end, those who work because the work itself is service and devotion, they win doubly: First of all, work is celebration; secondly, work is the end. — location: [1442](#)

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The destination has to be that attractive. Not only very attractive, but it also has to be that indispensable. — location: [1461](#)

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Those who work without an end, those who work because the work itself is service and devotion, they win doubly: First of all, work is celebration; secondly, work is the end. — location: [1462](#)

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**Completed to Chapter II, Remaining chapters are Chapter III & IV**