

# The Yuktas and Ayuktas in Life

*B Mahadevan<sup>1</sup>*

Several people in this world are considered achievers. They have been very successful in their life throughout. They were bright students and went to some of the best institutions in the country to have their education. They got good jobs, had a great professional career which enabled them to work in some of the well-known organizations in the country and abroad. Some others have occupied very senior positions in the public domain or are celebrities. Perhaps they were able to earn in great measure, lead a very comfortable materialistic life and could also build valuable assets. These are apparent signs of success that the outside world has recognized in them.

However, many among them have a personal dimension which may be in stark contrast to this glory that the outside world sees of them. In their hearts they feel defeated at the end of the day and feel internally wanting in achieving despite their successes and endorsements of the outside world. In some sense there is a nagging feeling in them of not being a fully flowered personality. It is quite possible that many of us have similar feelings, albeit in varying degrees.

## The Notion of Yukta and Ayukta

In order to make sense of this apparent conflict in an individual's personality we need to first understand the term *Yukta*, which is referred by Shri Krishna a few times in *Bhagavad Gītā*. The word *Yukta* is a derivative from the Samskrit verbal root *yujir* (युजिर् – योगे), which means "to make into one" or "connect". The word *Yukta* denotes a person who is well connected. The question that naturally arises out of this definition is connected with what? There are a few ways one can articulate the idea of getting connected:

- The first aspect is getting connected with one's own inner-self. This means we are able to resonate with the inner voice, be in sync with the world inside or align the thoughts, deeds and actions with the inner self. What this would ensure is that a person will not suffer from internal conflicts. Also, there will be no dilemmas and confusions arising out of a split personality.
- The other aspect is getting connected with the Divinity in things that we do in our life. Establishing this connection provides one with a sense of purpose of life, a larger perspective to events and outcomes in one's life and clarity and courage with which one can face situations as they unfold on a day to day basis.

There is an unseen but a wonderful order with which the whole universe sustains itself. Be it rising of the Sun or the Moon, the advent of seasons or any aspect of sustainability. All these are governed by this divine and universal law called *ṛtam* (ऋतम्). It is the same world order which governs our "world inside" also. In a nutshell, being a *Yukta* is all about being connected, aligned and in sync with the natural rhythm, characteristic of this world order.

---

<sup>1</sup> *B Mahadevan is a Professor at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore.*

In contrast, an *Ayukta* is one who has either missed this aspect of life or failed to recognize and make this connection. For such a person, the world inside will not sync with the world outside and will often present conflicting scenarios for decision making. Under such a condition, a person may ignore the inner voice and be guided by certain other extraneous considerations to make his/her priorities in life. This can cause internal conflicts, unsettle the mind and confuse the individual at times. It can also create moral and ethical dilemmas and in the absence of a robust basis lead the individual to certain decisions, which he/she may repent later.

There are several reasons for us to become disconnected with the natural rhythm of the world order. In *Bhagavad Gītā* Shri Krishna mentions some of them. We shall see one such instance from chapter 5.

### **Resolving Internal Failure Vs External Success**

When we engage in work, there are goals, expectations and targets for us. In reality these are things that are to unfold sometime in the future. The moot question is should we dream, think, worry and calculate about this future event or engage ourselves in the dynamics of the present (which is doing work without these distractions). Shri Krishna says that those who are able to keep these results oriented thoughts at bay (*karmaphalm tyaktvā*) and engage in the work are indeed *yuktas*. He further says that such people will experience peace and tranquility (*śāntimāpnoti*) on account of focus and steadfastness (*naiṣṭhikīm*).

On the other hand, a person who is conscious of the results and outcomes (*phale saktaḥ*) on account of personal desires (*kāmakāreṇa*) gets bound by the work (*nibadhyate*). Shri Krishna says this is one reason for us to become an *ayukta*. By this, He indicates that becoming too much result conscious will increase one's propensity to get disconnected from the world order. This needs to be understood in some detail.

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।  
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥ 5.12

*yuktaḥ karmaphalm tyaktvā śāntimāpnoti naiṣṭhikīm*  
*ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate*

The moment one is overpowered by personal desires he/she becomes outcome conscious and outcome oriented. This will psychologically push a person towards achieving the results by hook or crook. This is an ideal condition to destroy the rhythm and engage in unethical, immoral and wrong acts. While the results will be achieved and momentary joy and celebration will happen, it will also leave another impact on an individual. There will be an internal conflict as the inner world will recognize that the success is at the cost of disturbing the inner world order.

These experiences will slowly accumulate as such events repeat in an individual's life. This conflict grows in strength over time and lead to an unexplainable internal guilt or regret

much later in life. This is what causes the conflicting scenario of recognitions in the outside world and internal feeling of self-defeat. This way of organizing our life and responding to various events in life is not worthwhile. This is like performing a successful operation on a patient and the patient eventually dying. Of what avail is this surgery? Here lies the crucial difference between a *yukta* and an *ayukta*. An *ayukta* will end up with an irreconcilable difference between internal failure and external success. On the other hand, a *yukta* will intelligently avoid such a scenario in their life.

### **Becoming a yukta**

The question that may come to our mind is “How does one become a *yukta*? There is nothing like becoming a *yukta*, rather the issue is how to get out of the *ayukta* state. Once we get out of the *ayukta* state, we will automatically begin to behave like a *yukta* because, we are by default wired to be a *yukta*. That is our natural state of vibration. When a mirror is very dirty its inherent nature of reflecting the images of objects placed before it is severely impaired. The solution to this problem is not injecting a layer of glass on the top to make it reflect images of objects as this property is already there in the mirror. We need to take a clean wet cloth and wipe it as much as required to remove the dirt to restore its natural property. We need a similar approach to solve the problem on hand.

We need to develop a high degree of discrimination between *nitya vastu* and *anitya vastu* when we engage in various life pursuits. This will provide us the much needed clarity and help us to set our priorities and to slowly distance ourselves from result orientation. This thought must pervade us and the idea must be experimented from time to time. Even if we are able to distance a little bit away from this result oriented way of doing things, we will pleasantly discover a wonderful experience of peace and tranquility in our mind. We must be aware of this possibility and subtly tune ourselves to look for it. Once we experience it even a little bit, we will set ourselves in this journey of becoming a full blown *yukta*.