

## Technological Transformations and Human Agency: Insights from Dnyaneshwari

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### ABSTRACT

This philosophical paper interweaves “*Chidvilasvad*” and “*Ashwattha Tree*” from the literature of Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, the 13th century Saint from Maharashtra, India to elucidate the dynamic interplay between “Technological transformations and human agency” in pursuing Self-realization by enabling adaptation which helps to become resilient in the 21st century. *Chidvilasvad*, the radiant play of divine consciousness, envisions technological transformations as a creative extension of Brahman, empowering human agency to innovate and adapt, harnessing the digital world, AI, virtual realities, and global networks to enhance physical comfort and also to explore metaphysical truths. In contrast, the *Ashwattha Tree*, portrayed in Chapter 15 of Dnyaneshwari (*Purushottam Yog*) as an inverted illusion, depicts the virtual world’s digital branches as *Maya*, ensnaring the Self in transient and virtual identities, obscuring the eternal *Ātman*. Human agency, conscious and adaptive, navigates this paradox by mastering every technological transformation for material well-being while channeling it towards Self-discovery. Technology becomes a conduit for every act as devotion articulated as “... *karme ishu bhajava*” (Dnyaneshwari Chapter 18-1444), which urges selfless action as a methodology in the form of worship, transcending structured rituals.

Digital platforms have revolutionized the way we access and interact with various resources, and their impact on productivity; Their adaptability and resilience is truly remarkable. By hosting spiritual texts and meditative apps, these platforms foster a sense of inner stillness and tranquility, allowing individuals to connect with their deeper selves. By synthesizing Technological transformations, an extension of *Chidvilasvad* as divine co-creation with the *Ashwattha Tree*’s admonition to transcend illusion, this paper reimagines human conscious agency as a philosophical nexus: dynamically wielding technology as a luminous weaver, perpetually innovates and adapts every technological transformation for physical harmony while wielding technological innovations for selfless actions as a sacred tool for Self-realization. As human conscious agencies continue to embrace technological transformations, it enhances adaptability resulting in a more compassionate and resilient society.

**Keywords:** *Conscious Agency, Chidvilasvad, Ashwattha Tree, Karme Ishu Bhajava*

## Introduction

The 21st century is an era of unprecedented technological transformation, fundamentally reshaping human existence across every dimension of human agency which includes identity, communication, interpersonal relations, work, and spirituality. Innovations such as social media, cloud computing, Artificial intelligence (AI), Metaverse<sup>1</sup> (combination of digital technologies today with augmented reality AR and virtual reality VR), and global digital networks have catalyzed a progress to achieve physical comfort and expanded human capabilities to address complex challenges and explore uncharted frontiers.

e-Commerce for e.g. simplified not only buying but also selling process. These include innovations such as instant delivery of purchased goods (Blinkit) and even requesting on demand services like carpentry, cleaning etc., (Urban Company), these have improved customer comfort and experience. AI, for instance, powers predictive and preventive analytics in healthcare, enabling early disease detection and preventive measures (with the help of Apple Watch), while metaverse (Meta) creates immersive environments for education and mental health therapy. Global digital networks like 5G and the internet connect billions, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing. These technological advancements amplify human agency and its capacity to act intentionally. They shape one's destiny, and help pursue self-realization by providing tools to transcend physical and intellectual limitations. For example, AI-driven platforms like AI writer from DeepAI enhance creative expression, while online learning portals like Udemy and Khan Academy democratize education, empowering individuals to redefine their identities and careers.

However, these technological transformations carry significant drawbacks. For e.g. AI's opaque algorithms risk perpetuating biases, as seen in flawed facial recognition systems<sup>2</sup>, undermining fairness. VR, while immersive, can foster escapism, detaching users from reality, with studies<sup>3</sup> linking excessive use to social isolation. Machine Learning and AI algorithm need

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<sup>1</sup> Metaverse is a name given specifically by company named Meta for this specific technology

<sup>2</sup> Gender Shades: Intersectional Accuracy Disparities in Commercial Gender Classification, Proceedings of Machine Learning Research 81:1–15, 2018 Joy Buolamwini & Timnit Gebru

<sup>3</sup> Miller MR, Jun H, Herrera F, Yu Villa J, Welch G, Bailenson JN (2019) Social interaction in augmented reality. PLoS ONE 14(5): e0216290. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216290>

energy-intensive processes leading to issues related to environmental concerns such as water conservation and global warming. Global networks enable surveillance and data exploitation, as evidenced by scandals like Cambridge Analytica<sup>4</sup>. These cons threaten human agency by fostering dependency, eroding privacy, and creating digital illusions that obscure authentic human agency.

This duality of pros and cons raises profound philosophical questions: Does technological transformations enhance freedom or trap human agency in new forms of bondage? How can we align it with our deepest aspirations while avoiding drawbacks that come with technological transformations? Who controls the ethical boundaries of innovation? Can technological transformations foster spiritual journey of awakening, or does it distract from the eternal truth? By engaging these questions through the lens of Dnyaneshwari, first non-Sanskrit (Marathi) translation of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, we can explore how human agency can navigate this transformative landscape with wisdom and purpose to achieve resilience.

To address these questions, this paper turns to the Dnyaneshwari, a 13th-century Marathi commentary on the Bhagavad Gita by Saint Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, a revered Saint, philosopher and poet from Maharashtra, India. The Dnyaneshwari offers two rich philosophical themes which describes reality: *Chidvilasvad*, the radiant play of divine consciousness, is a more positive approach towards this real world, and the *Ashwattha* Tree, the inverted tree of illusion or *Maya* described in Chapter 15 *Purushottam Yog* of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita / Dnyaneshwari. These concepts illuminate the dual nature of each technological transformations as both a divine tool for co-creation and a potential source of *Maya* (illusion). Additionally, the principle of “*karme ishu bhajava*” (selfless action as worship, Dnyaneshwari 18:1444) provides a practical guide for navigating this duality, aligning technological innovation with spiritual purpose.

This paper argues that human agency, when informed by the Dnyaneshwari’s wisdom, can dynamically wield technological transformations as an extension of *Chidvilasvad* to foster material and spiritual progress, while paying attention to the *Ashwattha* Tree’s caution to transcend illusion. By integrating *Bhakti* as selfless action, individuals and societies can

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/20180410-technology-facebook-privacy-scandal-beyond-cambridge-analytica-cubeyou-aggregate-harris>

harness technology for physical and social harmony and self-realization, threading the eternal quest for *Ātman* (the true Self) through the temporal tapestry of existence. As human conscious agency continues to embrace technological transformations, it enhances adaptability resulting in a more compassionate and resilient society.

### ***Chidvilasvad: Technological Transformations as Divine Co-Creation***

Dnyaneshwari's original contribution to idealistic Indian philosophy is theory of 'Chidvilasvad' or the divine play of pure intelligent *Ātman* or consciousness. This is a more positive approach over Adi Shankaracharya's *Mayavād* i.e. theory of ignorance. Adi Shankaracharya's significant philosophical statement is "*brahma satyam jagan-mithyā jivo brahmaiva nāparah*" meaning "Brahman is the ultimate reality; the world is an illusion." This assertion embodies the core principles of Advaita Vedanta, highlighting the non-dual character of reality and the fundamental unity of the soul (*Ātman*) with the supreme consciousness (*Brahman*). According to Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, the world is not caused by the mystic *Maya* but it is an expression of divine infinite joy and love. Thus, Shankaracharya's attitude leads to asceticism while Dnyaneshwar's angle of vision leads to path of loving devotion and selfless activism.

This resonates deeply with the principles of Kashmiri Shaivism, particularly as articulated by the 10th century philosopher Abhinavagupta. *Chidvilasvad*, derived from "Chit" (consciousness) and "Vilas" (divine play or sport), translates roughly to the "Divine Play of Consciousness." This concept underscores Dnyaneshwar Maharaj's unique contribution: a dynamic, experiential non-dualism that bridges the static unity of Shankaracharya's Advaita with the vibrant, immanent cosmology of Kashmiri Shaivism.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj uses *karma* as foundational principle to derive the real nature of this world from Chapter 8 Shloka 3 of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, when Krishna refers *karma* as an action which is linked to the creation of this physical world.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच ।**

**अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते । भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ Shrimad**

**Bhagavad Gita 8-3 ॥**

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj made the following comment with reference “Karma” in the above shloka

ऐसा करितेनवीण गोचरु । अव्यक्तीं हा आकारु । निपजे जो व्यापारु । तया नाम कर्म ॥

Dnyaneshwari 8-29 ॥

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj fully embraces the principle of *karma*, defined as the force behind the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the world. He asserts that the universe exists as a result of divine *karma*, with all actions forming part of this cosmic process, likening individuals to "waves in the ocean of *karma*". This perspective underpins his philosophy of *Chidvilasvad*, where the universe is seen as a divine manifestation of the *Chit* (consciousness) principle.

म्हणौनि जग परौतें । सारूनि पाहिजे मातें । तैसा नोव्हें उखितें । आघवें मीचि ॥ Dnyaneshwari

14-127 ॥

There are few verses in Dnyaneshwari which talk about *Chidvilasvad* for e.g. above verse in 14th Chapter. It says - So it is not that I am to be seen by setting aside this world. My reality is not like that. This whole universe is myself.

Through his concept of *Chidvilasvad*, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj presents *karma* as the divine play of consciousness or God, shaping reality. While this differs ontologically from Adi Shankaracharya's Advaita, both philosophies metaphysically converge on the singular truth of Advaita - *Brahman*, or Pure Consciousness, characterized as *Sat-Chit-Anand* (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss).

For Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, simple acts of *Karma* (action) transcend their mundane nature and becomes a *Karmayoga* when performed with the awareness of *Chidvilasvad*, transforming them into a pathway to divine realization. He refers to individuals who embody this understanding as *Dnyani* (those with divine knowledge) and *Karmayogi* (those who practice selfless action). A true *Karmayogi*, in Dnyaneshwar Maharaj's view, is not merely one who acts without attachment to results (*phala*) or ego (*Ahamkar*), but one who perceives every action as an expression of the cosmic play of consciousness, aligning with both the immanent divine in the material world and the transcendental divine characterized as *Sat-Chit-Anand*.

This transformative vision elevates even the simplest acts into profound spiritual practice. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj's philosophy suggests that the *Karmayogi* engages with the world as a manifestation of divine consciousness, seeing no separation between the self and the universe. By relinquishing ego and the desire for outcomes, their actions become a form of worship, harmonizing the individual soul with the universal spirit. In this sense, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj's powerful thoughts and divine understanding could transform ordinary, unrefined ideas (like base iron) into something incredibly special and valuable, like gold. His teachings reveal that through the lens of divine awareness, every action, no matter how small, reflects the eternal interplay of divine consciousness thus guiding the *Karmayogi* toward liberation while remaining fully engaged in the world as mentioned in the below verse.

**हें विहित कर्म पांडवा । आपुला अनन्य वोलावा । आणि हेचि परम सेवा । मज सर्वात्मकाची ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 18-906 ॥

Oh Pandava, perform every duty with unwavering truth, infusing each action with boundless energy, pure intentions, and a heart free from selfish desires. Dedicate your efforts to the upliftment of others, offering them as a sacred act of devotion, a true bhakti. Such sincere and wholehearted endeavor, rooted in selflessness, is the supreme service to the divine essence, me, the immanent Super *Ātman* that resides within all.

**जेणें जग हें समस्त । आंत बाहेरी पूर्ण भरित । जालें आहे दीपजात । तेजें जैसें ॥ Dnyaneshwari**

18-916 ॥

Divine consciousness is the all-pervading essence, like a lamp's flame, illuminating and permeating the universe, both within and beyond all existence. It unifies everything, transcending boundaries, as the singular, eternal source of all creation and awareness.

As mentioned above through various verses in Dnyaneshwari, technological transformation embodies *Chidvilasvad* in its capacity to amplify human agency. Many Web Portals, Digital applications or Mobile applications provide physical comfort, preventive alerts and better experience in every aspect of life including education, government welfare schemes implementation, social networking, health, wealth and spirituality. Thus, by harnessing digital

platforms, individuals engage in *Chidvilasvad*'s playful creativity, co-creating solutions for material comfort and spiritual growth.

Moreover, technology serves metaphysical exploration, a key aspect of *Chidvilasvad*. Meditative apps like Headspace or Calm guide users toward inner stillness, while virtual communities on platforms like Reddit or Discord nurture collective spiritual inquiry.

For instance, artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare, such as IBM Watson, analyzes vast datasets to personalize cancer treatments, enhancing patient outcomes and empowering individuals to reclaim agency over their health. Virtual reality (VR) platforms, such as Oculus, create immersive spaces for mindfulness training, enabling users to meditate in serene digital environments, deepening self-awareness. Thus, technology, a direct expression of *Chidvilasvad*, becomes a tool for metaphysical exploration through which individuals exercise intentional agency, aligning their physical well-being (with help of AI in healthcare) with their broader pursuit of self-realization and VR supports the journey toward self-realization, allowing individuals to connect with their inner selves in a way that transcends physical limitations. The immersive nature of VR serves as a bridge between the external world and the internal quest for spiritual or existential insight.

Global digital networks, exemplified by platforms like Shodhganga, Philpapers, democratize knowledge, allowing individuals to engage in *Jnana Yoga* (path of knowledge) by accessing spiritual texts or scientific research, thus expanding intellectual and spiritual horizons. Open-source software, like Deepseek, Llama, Linux, reflects selfless creativity, empowering communities to collaboratively innovate for societal good, mirroring *Brahman*'s boundless generosity.

These technologies enhance human agency by enabling intentional action and self-discovery. For example, AI-driven apps like Duolingo empower language learning, breaking cultural barriers, while IoT-based smart agriculture optimizes crop yields, ensuring food security for marginalized regions. By wielding these tools with discernment, humanity channels *Chidvilasvad* to create solutions that uplift both the material and spiritual realms, aligning innovation with *Brahman*'s divine play for the benefit of all.

Technological transformation, as noted earlier, embodies this *Chidvilasvad*, serving as a divine extension that amplifies human agency, the capacity to act intentionally and pursue self-realization.

This perspective aligns with philosophical inquiries into technology's role in human freedom, as explored in Martin Heidegger's *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954), where technology is a mode of revealing truth, akin to *Brahman*'s self-expression. Similarly, Don Ihde's *Technology and the Lifeworld* (1990) posit technology as a mediator of human experience, shaping agency through its transformative potential. These technologies enhance agency by enabling intentional action and self-discovery. However, Heidegger warns of technology's "enframing (*Gestelle*)," where it risks reducing humans to resources, necessitating discernment to avoid ego-driven misuse (Heidegger, 1954). Ihde's phenomenological lens further emphasizes intentional engagement to preserve agency (Ihde, 1990). By wielding technology with *Viveka* (discriminative wisdom), as Dnyaneshwar Maharaj advocates, humanity channels *Chidvilasvad* to co-create solutions that uplift both material and spiritual realms, aligning innovation with *Brahman*'s divine play for universal well-being.

However, *Chidvilasvad* demands intentionality. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj warns that creativity, when driven by ego or attachment, deviates from its divine source. As mentioned in below verse of Dnyaneshwari, thus both things namely the "pride of the being the doer" and "the hope for enjoying the fruit" are binding, when action is performed. Thus, these two things should be avoided consciously when action is done. Else these become a major roadblock towards spiritual progress or liberation.

**तैसा कर्तृत्वाचा मदु । आणि कर्मफळाचा आस्वादु । या दोहींचे नांव बंधु । कर्माचा कीं ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 18-205 ॥

In technological transformations, this manifests as over-reliance on tools, such as delegating ethical decisions to algorithms or prioritizing profit over societal good. To align with *Chidvilasvad*, human agency must adapt technological transformations with discernment, ensuring it serves *Brahman*'s universal harmony rather than narrow interests.

### **The *Ashwattha* Tree: Technological Transformations as *Maya***

In contrast to *Chidvilasvad*'s luminous vision, the metaphor of “*Ashwattha Tree*” referred in Chapter 15 *Purushottam Yog* of the Dnyaneshwari symbolizes the illusory nature of the material world. Described as an inverted tree with roots in the divine and branches extending downward, it represents *Maya*, the transient, deceptive reality that obscures the eternal *Ātman*. Few key verses that describe *Ashwattha Tree* in Dnyaneshwari Chapter 15 are as follows

**तरी माया ऐसी ख्याती । नस्तीच यथा आथी । कां वांझेची संतती । वानरें जैशी ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 15-80 ॥

*Maya*, in Vedanta, is the illusion that hides reality, falsely attributing existence to the unreal, like saying a barren woman has a child. This deceptive veil obscures the eternal truth of *Brahman*, leading to misperception of the divine reality.

**ऐसा मूळाचिया गाटिका । विकल्परस कोंवळिका । चित्तचतुष्य डाहाळिका । कोंभैजे तो ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 15-97 ॥

From the original root, which is at the top, the offshoots of the branches of the four parts of consciousness (*mana, buddhi, chitta, ahankar*) grow and they are heavily saturated with the juice of *Vikalpa* (doubts), on this tree of worldly life.

**मग आकाश वायु द्योतक । आप पृथ्वी हें पांच फोंक । महाभूतांचें सरोख । सरळे होती ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 15-98 ॥

Then there are straight greater branches of the five fundamental elements (*panchamahabhute*) namely, the sky, air, fire, water and earth.

**तैसीं श्रोत्रादि तन्मात्रें । तियें अंगवसां गर्भपत्रें । लुळलुळितें विचित्रें । उमळती गा ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 15-99 ॥

On these straight branches, there are the various leaves, which are curved inside and they consist of the five-sense organ such as skin, nose, tongue, ears and eyes, and their objects. These leaves are strangely fascinating and very delicate.

In above verses, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj explains that the tree's branches are like sensory pleasures, desires, and identities which entangle the self, preventing realization of its true nature.

In a technological context, the *Ashwattha* Tree manifests as the digital world's seductive illusions. The virtual realm, with its social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp etc., Large Language Models such as ChatGPT, Gemini or Llama etc. are creating completely new digital world and realities, virtual friend or companion, virtual teacher or coach, immersive games, and curated algorithms, mirrors the *Ashwattha* Tree's branches. Social media, for instance, fosters transient identities through views, likes, followers, and curated personas, ensnaring users in cycles of validation and comparison. Large language Model algorithms exploit psychological vulnerabilities, nudging behaviors through targeted ads or content, often without transparency. Virtual realities, while innovative, risk detaching users from physical reality, creating a *Mithya* (false) world that distracts from the ultimate truth.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says in the following verse of Chapter 15 that such illusions or new digital realities, which may be deceiving at times are ever increasing in these technological transformations like an ocean. For all of them the root cause is *Maya* which is created due to our ignorance, and thus this *Ashwattha* Tree is ever growing.

**कां समुद्राचेनि पैसारें । वरी तरंगता आसारे । तैसें ब्रह्मचि होय वृक्षाकारें । अज्ञानमूळ ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 15-107 ॥

The reason behind name “*Ashwattha*” as per Dnyaneshwar Maharaj is as mentioned in below verse, i.e. for this virtual tree there is no permanence and it never remains the same even till tomorrow. It is constantly changing i.e. in continuous destruction and creation.

**तरी २वः म्हणिजे उखा । तोंवरी एकसारिखा । नाहीं निर्वाहो यथा रुखा । प्रपंचरूपा ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 15-111 ॥

Modern technological transformations, particularly its virtual manifestations, mirrors this *Ashwattha Tree*, with digital platforms like social media, apps, and virtual realities weaving a seductive web of *Mithya* (falsehood). These technologies, while innovative, pose significant

challenges to human agency, fostering entrapment akin to the tree's illusory branches. Thus, this technological *Maya* threatens human agency by fostering passivity and distraction.

For example, excessive screen time correlates with reduced attention spans and mental health challenges, as studies at National Library of Medicine<sup>5</sup> indicate. The dopamine-driven feedback loops of apps like TikTok or Instagram mimic the *Ashwattha* Tree's allure, pulling users away from self-awareness. Moreover, AI-driven surveillance systems, such as those used in predictive policing, can erode autonomy by profiling individuals based on data, reducing them to deterministic patterns.

Social media platforms like Instagram cultivate transient identities through curated personas, likes, and followers, fuelling addiction and loneliness. Research links excessive social media use to increased depression and anxiety, particularly among adolescents<sup>6</sup>. Smartphone apps, designed with dopamine-driven feedback loops, exacerbate addiction, with users averaging over 4 hours daily on screens, contributing to health issues like digital eye syndrome<sup>7</sup>. Virtual realities, while immersive, risk escapism, with studies indicating heightened social isolation among frequent users<sup>8</sup>.

In the paper "Happiness and Technology: Special Consideration of Digital Technology and Internet" the author, Francisco Mochón<sup>9</sup>, discusses some of the negative impacts of the technology on happiness and well-being as below.

Digital deficits impact on cognitive abilities including analytical thinking, memory, focus, creativity, reflection, and mental resilience. These deficits are a result of the intrusive

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<sup>5</sup> Devi KA, Singh SK. The hazards of excessive screen time: Impacts on physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. *J Educ Health Promot*. 2023 Nov 27;12:413. doi: 10.4103/jehp.jehp\_447\_23. PMID: 38333167; PMCID: PMC10852174.

<sup>6</sup> Increases in Depression, Self-Harm, and Suicide Among U.S. Adolescents After 2012 and Links to Technology Use: Possible Mechanisms, Jean M. Twenge, Ph.D.

<sup>7</sup> Demystifying the New Dilemma of Brain Rot in the Digital Era: A Review by Ahmed Mohamed Fahmy Yousef, Alsaeed Alshamy, Ahmed Tlili and Ahmed Hosny Saleh Metwally

<sup>8</sup> Social Interaction in VR Euggy HanEuggy Han and Jeremy N. BailensonJeremy N. Bailenson Stanford University, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.1489>, Published online: 22 May 2024

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329353139 Happiness and Technology Special Consideration of Digital Technology and Internet](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329353139_Happiness_and_Technology_Special_Consideration_of_Digital_Technology_and_Internet)

connectivity of the digital society, which has been found to have harmful cognitive and emotional consequences

Digital addiction is a phenomenon in which internet businesses use dopamine-dosing tools designed to hook the public, causing addictive effects. While digital communication offers convenience, it can also lead to reduced face-to-face interactions and a sense of isolation. A small number of powerful companies control these tools, leading to a reduction in personal agency

Digital distrust/divisiveness is characterized by a reduction in personal agency and strengthened emotions such as shock, fear, indignation, and outrage. The reliance on digital technologies makes individuals vulnerable to cyberattacks, hacking, and identity theft. Although technologies are intended to advance our understanding of mood and cognition, they may ultimately be used to reduce wellbeing

Digital duress is caused by information overload and declines in face-to-face skills. Automation and AI have the potential to replace certain jobs, leading to unemployment and economic inequality. This can result in increased levels of stress, anxiety, depression, inactivity, and sleeplessness. Organizations actively compete for people's attention, distracting them with notifications, personalized news, addictive games, and fake news

Digital dangers refer to the ever-evolving threats to human interaction, security, democracy, jobs, and privacy that are brought about by the structure of the internet and the pace of digital change. The widespread collection of personal data by tech companies has raised significant privacy issues, with potential misuse and data breaches.

The journey of digital technology from punch cards to quantum computing has been transformative, offering both opportunities and challenges. As we continue to innovate and embrace new technologies, it is crucial to address the associated risks and ensure that advancements benefit society as a whole. By balancing progress with ethical considerations, we can harness the power of digital technology to improve individual lives and create a better future.

If we further analyze this topic, we find out that such negative impacts on well-being are not inevitable or inherent to digital technologies themselves but are rather a result of how these technologies are designed, marketed, and used.

Despite its potential, technological transformation poses challenges to human agency. The digital divide which leads to unequal access to technology limits human agency for marginalized communities, perpetuating inequality. Cybersecurity threats, such as data breaches or deepfakes, undermine trust and autonomy. Moreover, the rapid pace of innovation outstrips ethical reflection, risking unintended consequences, as seen in debates over AI's societal impact.

To transcend this *Maya*, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj advocates *Viveka* (discriminative wisdom) to cut this virtual tree by removing the ignorance about this virtual tree as mentioned below.

**आपुलिया अज्ञानासाठीं । नव्हता थांवला किरीटी । तरी आतां आत्माज्ञानाच्या लोटीं । खांडेनि  
गा ॥ Dnyaneshwari 15-248 ॥**

In technology context, this involves limiting screen time, questioning algorithmic biases, and prioritizing real-world connections. By recognizing the virtual world's impermanence, human agency can resist its illusions, using technology purposefully to align with the eternal truth. This also means cultivating critical awareness of technology's influence by questioning algorithmic biases, limiting digital consumption, and prioritizing authentic connections. By recognizing the virtual world's impermanence, human agency can transcend *Maya*, using technology as a tool rather than a master.

**“Karme Ishu Bhajava”:** Technological Transformations enabled action as Worship

The Dnyaneshwari offers a practical path to navigate the tension between *Chidvilasvad* and the *Ashwattha* Tree is through *karma* (action) as articulated below.

**जे देहवाचामानसे । विहित निपजे जें जैसे । तें एक ईश्वरोद्देशे । कीजे म्हणितले ॥ Dnyaneshwari  
18-1442 ॥**

The Lord Shri Krishna says that the regular actions which are performed by the body, speech and mind should be offered to God as and when they are performed

**हेचि ईश्वरीं कर्मयोगे । भजनकथनाचे खागे । आदरिले शेषभागे । चतुर्थचेनी ॥ Dnyaneshwari**

**18-1443 ॥**

The sweet dish of the description of how through the path of yoga of action (*karmayoga*) worship of God is done, is offered in the last part of the 4th Chapter

**तें विश्वरूप अकरावा । अध्यावो संपे जंव आघवा । तंव कर्मै ईशु भजावा । हें जें बोलिलें ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 18-1444 ॥

The same teaching that “God should be worshipped through the performance of action” is continued unto the end of the 11th Chapter, which describes the seeing of universal form of God

This phrase, meaning “offer actions to the divine as worship,” redefines Karma Yoga as selfless action performed with clear and pious mind and without attachment to outcomes. Unlike structured rituals, this form of Bhakti is fluid and uncontrived, transforming every act—mundane or profound—into an expression of devotion. In a technological context, “*karme ishu bhajava*” reimagines human agency as wielding technological transformations for societal good and self-realization, aligning with *Brahman*’s universal will.

**तें अष्टाध्यायीं उघड । जाण येथें देवताकांड । शास्त्र सांगतसे आड । मोडुनि बोलें ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 18-1445 ॥

So, from the fourth to the eleventh chapter there are eight chapters which form the second division of Bhagavat Gita dedicated to God by performing every action including *Vihit* (prescribed duties), *Nitya* (daily obligations like prayers) and *Naimittik* (occasional rituals, e.g., during eclipses). These acts, when undertaken without attachment, serve to purify the mind and attract divine grace, a process that the Dnyaneshwari elucidates as the dissolution of all doubts and objections.

These 8 chapters talks about all actions; hence Dnyaneshwar Maharaj gives importance to *Karmayog* and prescribe to pray to ultimate truth (*Sarvatmaka Deva*) through all these *karmas*.

Worshipping the divine through sincere performance of prescribed duties, like offering flowers, deeply pleases the divine consciousness. Such acts, done with devotion and righteousness, align the soul with the eternal, fostering spiritual fulfilment and divine connection. This is mentioned in the following verse

तया सर्वात्मका ईश्वरा । स्वकर्मकुसुमांची वीरा । पूजा केली होय अपारा । तोषालागीं ॥

Dnyaneshwari 18-917 ॥

Here, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj underscores integration (*samanvaya*) of all paths (*karma*, *dnyan* & *bhakti*): one worships the Divine by selflessly performing prescribed duties with pure intentions, like offering untainted flowers. This devotion earns divine grace, cultivating steadfast faith in *Dhyana* (knowledge), guiding the soul toward spiritual enlightenment and liberation.

स्वकर्माच्या चोखौळीं । मज पूजा करूनि भलीं । तेण प्रसादें आकळी । ज्ञाननिष्ठेते ॥

Dnyaneshwari 18-1247 ॥

Digital platforms exemplify this principle by enabling selfless action. Open-source software communities, such as those behind open source Large Language Models or Wikipedia, embody *Karmayoga* by providing free tools and knowledge for collective benefit. Technology solutions for sustainability such as smart grids, precision agriculture, or carbon-tracking apps reflect selfless (for the benefit of the entire planet) action by addressing global challenges like climate change. These efforts align with Dnyaneshwar Maharaj's call to act for *Lokasangraha* (the welfare of all) without self-centered motives as mentioned below in his universal prayer called *Pasaydan* in Chapter 18 of Dnyaneshwari.

किंबहुना सर्वसुखीं । पूर्ण होऊनि तिहीं लोकीं । भजिजो आदिपुरुखीं । अखंडित ॥

Dnyaneshwari 18-1899 ॥

This verse captures the profound essence, where Dnyaneshwar Maharaj weaves together the preceding teachings, culminating in the principle of "*Karme Ishu Bhajava*" In these lines, the Dnyaneshwar Maharaj employs the word "*Kimbahuna*" - meaning, in essence, that all the actions and noble deeds described in *Pasaydan* i.e. universal prayer (at the end of Chapter 18 in Dnyaneshwari) are ultimately expressions of devotion. Here, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj transcends the boundaries between *karma* (action) and *bhakti* (devotion), proclaiming that to see God in every being and to perform one's *swadharma*, one's own rightful duty which is to live in a state of perpetual worship.

With this realization, every act, whether humble or grand, becomes an offering to the divine. “*Bhajijo Adipurushī*” devotion to the Supreme Being is no longer confined to rituals but is woven seamlessly into the fabric of daily life. All deeds be they acts of kindness, support, virtue, or selfless service are, in themselves, acts of bhakti. When this spirit pervades every action, individuals from all three realms Earth, Heaven, and the Beyond are uplifted, experiencing true happiness and spiritual bliss. In “*Karme Ishu Bhajava*,” Dnyaneshwar Maharaj urges us to recognize that devotion and duty are inseparable, guiding humanity toward a life of harmonious fulfillment. Do every action as a selfless act and that itself becomes a Bhakti or devotion with an attitude of surrender

Spiritually, technology supports *Bhakti* by fostering devotion and surrender. Online repositories like the Digital portal “Sacred Text Archive” host spiritual texts, including the Dnyaneshwari, making them accessible globally. Meditative apps guide users toward inner stillness, while virtual *Satsangs* (spiritual gatherings) on Zoom or Discord nurture collective devotion. These platforms enable uncontrived acts of surrender, as users engage in practices without the constraints of physical rituals. For instance, a virtual *Kirtan* session, where participants chant devotionally, mirrors “*karme ishu bhajava*” by adapting each technological transformations into a conduit for worship.

However, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj cautions that *Bhakti* requires purity of intent that is Pure Knowledge/Consciousness. Actions tainted by human agency’s ego or desire deviate from devotion. In technology, this translates to avoiding exploitative practices such as data monetization or addictive app designs that prioritize profit over human agency’s dignity. By prioritizing ethical innovation, human agency can ensure that technology serves as a sacred tool, aligning with *Brahman*’s harmony.

The synthesis of *Chidvilasvad*, the *Ashwattha* Tree, and “*karme ishu bhajava*” reimagines human agency as a luminous weaver, dynamically navigating the paradox of technological transformation. This metaphor captures agency’s dual role: innovating for physical harmony and wielding technology for self-realization. Like a weaver threading a tapestry, human agency integrates the temporal (material progress) and eternal (spiritual awakening), creating a cohesive fabric of existence. Selfless act bridges this polarity, transforming technology into a conduit for selfless action. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj’s philosophy urges mankind to offer actions to the divine without ego countering *Maya*’s allure.

In practice, this weaving manifests across domains. In healthcare, AI-driven diagnostics enhance patient outcomes, reflecting Chidvilasvad's creativity, while ethical oversight ensures alignment with *Bhakti*'s selflessness. In education, digital platforms empower learners, but critical media literacy counters the *Ashwattha* Tree's illusions. In spirituality, virtual communities foster devotion, but disciplined use prevents digital distraction. Digital platforms like Kiva enable micro-financing for underserved communities, embodying selfless service. Meditative apps like Insight Timer, used intentionally, guide users toward inner stillness, aligning with Self. Virtual *Satsangs* on Zoom foster collective devotion, transcending physical barriers. These acts reflect *Karma Yoga*, where technology serves *Lokasangraha* (universal welfare). These examples illustrate agency's adaptability of human agency, balancing innovation with discernment.

These selfless actions with the adaption of technological transformations would make human agency more resilient and create a sustainable ecosystem for every being (not just human species) in this universe. These are very well concluded by Dnyaneshwar Maharaj in following verses

**ऐसी मोक्षाची योग्यता । सिद्धी जाय तया पंडुसुता । अनुसरोनि विहिता । कर्म यथा ॥**

Dnyaneshwari 18-905 ॥

Lord Krishna says to Arjuna that if you do your work as per your duties, you are qualified for the liberation.

### **Conclusion**

In an era of rapid change, the Dnyaneshwari's wisdom remains vital. The Dnyaneshwari offers a timeless lens to navigate the interplay between technological transformation and human agency. *Chidvilasvad* casts technological transformations as a radiant play of divine consciousness - a divine tool for co-creation, empowering innovation and metaphysical exploration. The *Ashwattha* Tree warns of its illusory pitfalls, urging discernment to transcend *Maya*. "...*Karme Ishu Bhajava*" helps us to look at technological transformations as an accelerating tool for human resilience through every act like "worship complimented by technology", aligning actions with Brahman's harmony. Together, these principles reimagine human agency as a luminous weaver, perpetually innovating physical and spiritual harmony.

Technological transformations is accelerated by the use of personal computers, mobiles and internet. Computers birthed digital realms, their ethical codes countering exploitation. The internet wove a global web, democratizing wisdom via numerous digital platforms, while *Viveka* pruned misinformation's *Maya*. Mobile devices and cloud computing empowered connectivity and scalability, with digital literacy and security protocols mitigating addiction and breaches. Now, artificial intelligence, exemplified by tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, augments creativity to the next level while helping accelerate spiritual quest.

This evolution transcends mere utility, embodying a philosophical quest for Self-realization amidst temporal flux. Each technological transformation, a spark of *Chidvilasvad*, has expanded human agency from most primal innovation i.e. fire's warmth fostering survival to AI's precision nurturing self-realization. Yet, the *Ashwattha* Tree shadows greed, isolation, surveillance and lurk, demanding selfless action to offer innovations to the divine. By synthesizing Technological transformations, an extension of *Chidvilasvad* as divine co-creation with the *Ashwattha* Tree's admonition to transcend illusion, this paper reimagines human conscious agency as a philosophical nexus: dynamically wielding technological transformations as a luminous weaver, perpetually innovates and adapts technological transformations for physical harmony while wielding technological innovations for selfless actions called here as “..*Karme Ishu Bhajava*” as a sacred tool for Self-realization. As human conscious agencies continue to embrace technological transformations, it enhances adaptability resulting in a more compassionate and resilient society.

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