



**Gita**



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## Gita

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## The Central Theme of the Gita

By Swami Ranganathananda, Belur Math  
Abridged

### In Praise of Knowledge

Life, at every step, raises problems, and it is the business of philosophy to find solutions to them. To this end, philosophy seeks a knowledge of truth, which alone can give lasting solution to all the problems of life. Philosophical solutions are not in the nature of promises to be realized when life has ebbed away. Truth cannot be of much consequence to us if it cannot be realized in this life. A solution is no solution in the absence of the problem itself. Truth, as the Upanishads say, is to be realized here and now:

"For one who has realized it here (in this world), there is true life. For one who has not, great shall be the loss."

-Kena Upanishad 2-5

Truth is simple enough and can enter life, silently, without elbowing out any of its other contents, and transform it imperceptibly. This, and not a baggage of outworn and meaningless creeds and dogmas and set rules, is what Sri Krishna offers us when we are at our wit's end.

To go through life steadily and surmount all its obstacles, what is required is a measure of self-confidence. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "We must have faith in ourselves first, before having faith in God." The knowledge of the Atman (Self) which is our true nature is the basis of all manly endeavour and achievement. With this end in view, Sri Krishna shows Arjuna the way to the realization of his true self, leaving Arjuna to apply that knowledge and the faith derived therefrom to the solution of his many problems. This is clear from the 63<sup>rd</sup> verse of the eighteenth chapter, where Sri Krishna says thus:

"Thus has wisdom more profound than all profundities been declared to thee by Me; reflecting over it fully, act as thou likest."

That this teaching had its desired effect on Arjuna's mind is clear from what Arjuna says in the 73<sup>rd</sup> verse of the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter and from his subsequent conduct. Arjuna says:

"Destroyed is my delusion, and I have gained my memory through thy grace, O Achyuta (Krishna); I am firm; my doubts are gone; I will act as thou sayest."

### **The Nature of the Self of Man**

The two important problems which absorb the attention of Sri Krishna are the nature of the Self and the problem of conduct. Of these, he proceeds first to a consideration of the former and disposes of the latter afterwards.

The ego in man is the cause of all errors and the origin of all false values. It is that to which we refer all our judgements regarding everything in our experience; and being itself limited and circumscribed, it cannot confer infallibility upon its judgements. Hence the errors. Hence also doubts, which demand further inquiry. Deeper inquiry reveals the totally unreal character of this ego, thus shifting our sense of self-hood to a deeper reality. Here we come upon the great Vedantic conception of the sakshin (witness or ultimate observer). That the ego is unreal, that man's individuality or self-hood does not consist in the ego, is the central truth in Buddhism.

The two important characteristics of the Sakshin are detachment and universality. It marks the highest point of perfection in the process of de-personalization. Thus, it is the fulfillment of the scientific attitude and outlook. That it is the fulfillment and aim of the ethical, and to a large extent of the religious discipline also will be shown in the sequel.

When Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that the true Self of man is unborn, immortal, and eternal, he is referring to this Sakshin (vide Gita 2-16, 13-22, 15-10, 18-17).

The Gita conceives Reality as that which never changes. The ego, being subject to change, is unreal; so also are all its objects. Hence Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to transcend the dualities of experience like heat and cold, pain and pleasure, and identify himself with the permanent and unchanging Being, the Sakshin (witness).

The sakshin being the ultimate subject or observer, the difficulty of comprehending it truly is well expressed by Sri Krishna thus:

"Some look upon this Self as marvelous; others speak about It as wonderful; others again hear of It as a wonder. And still others, though hearing, do not understand It at all."

-Gita, 2-29.

### **The Philosophy of the Atman (Self): Its Ethical Implications**

Thus does Sri Krishna impart to Arjuna a Knowledge of the philosophy of the true Self (Sankhya-Yoga). Next he proceeds



to draw the ethical implications of his metaphysics. Sri Krishna recognised long ago that a rational ethics must be based on the highest metaphysics. Mankind has been searching for a sanction for ethical discipline. Prophets and philosophers have offered various theories regarding ethical life. All religions and philosophies unanimously teach that unselfishness is the highest virtue for all. But whereas religions seek its explanation in the words of an inspired prophet or a revealed scripture, philosophers like Kant find it in the Categorical Imperative. Both these are unsatisfactory. In Vedanta and the Gita we have a metaphysics which explains the rationale of all ethics and morality.

Ethics has to solve the conflict between the rival demands of self and society, selfishness and altruism. When ethics teaches the suppression of ego as the essence of moral life, it asks us merely to transcend the unreal and find our being in the Real. Since realization of Truth requires the attainment of the detached viewpoint of the sakshin, ethical discipline must be combined with scientific and intellectual discipline for its fullest realization. To the discipline of the intellect which science insists in its pursuit of truth must be added a discipline of the whole life, covering every moment of one's existence. This is Yoga as understood in Vedanta and Buddhism.

Life is a continuous struggle characterized by ceaseless activity. How to order life and its activities so that it may yield its fruit in the shape of the knowledge of Truth- is the great problem and the nameless quest for all mankind. How to make work conducive to individual and social welfare? To this perennial problem, Sri Krishna gives a solution, which is at once original, and unique in the history of thought- I refer to the Gita teaching of Karma-Yoga.

Before inquiry, untutored man takes his ego as real, and all actions and events are judged from that standpoint. At this stage, man works with various motives, and one of such motives at the time of Sri Krishna was the attainment of heaven, which had attained the status of a creed in the Vedic period. But philosophic inquiry in the Upanishads destroyed the basis of this doctrine by showing the impermanence and unreality of the ego. The Upanishads and Buddha taught the unreality of all desire-ridden existence, earthly or heavenly. Sri Krishna and Buddha showed that sacrifices and rituals are not the essence of an ethical life. Moral evolution is to be measured not by outward transference to higher planes of existence, but by an inward penetration by the reduction of the ego. The Gita, through its teaching of Karma-Yoga, helped to transfer the guidance of life from theology to philosophy (Gita 2-39 and 40):

"The wisdom of Self-realization (Sankhya) has been declared unto thee. Hearken thou now to the wisdom of Yoga (practical spirituality), endowed with which, O Arjuna, thou shalt break through the bonds of action." -Gita, 1-39.

"In this (Yoga) there is no waste of unfinished attempts, nor is

there production of contrary results. Even a little of this Dharma saves one from great fear." -Gita, 2-40.

We have already seen in a previous paragraph that the two characteristics of the true Self or sakshin are (1) its detachment and (2) its freedom from limited or circumscribed vision. We have also seen how scientific inquiry helps in a measure to attain this exalted viewpoint. We shall now proceed to inquire how ethical endeavour also finds its meaning and completion in this consummation. A converging life-endeavour towards the conquest of the false self or ego- is the sine qua non for the realization of one's true Self.

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Gita - The central theme of the Gita  
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### **Duty: The First Stage of Ethical Discipline**

To this end, The Gita gives a twofold advice. Firstly, all work, whether pleasant or unpleasant, should be performed in the sense of duty. What does this imply? That work by itself is neither high nor low, but the preferences of the ego evaluate all work according to its whims. It is at this stage that man seeks for a comfortable life and a comfortable religion. The sense of duty teaches us to disregard the false values, which the ego has attached to life and work. This negation of the ego and its values is also the transcendence of the ego itself. This helps us to realize the second characteristic of the sakshin, namely, freedom from limited vision, or, what amounts to the same thing, getting universality of outlook.

Secondly, by not caring for the fruits of our actions or by being unattached to them, we are asked to realize the first characteristic of the sakshin, namely, detachment. The only condemnation the Gita makes of those who work with various selfish motives is that they are men of small understanding, and defines Karma-Yoga as dexterity in action: "Yogah Karmasu Kausalam." The Gita extols this attitude in these words:

"The wise possessed of this evenness of mind, abandoning the fruits of their actions, freed for ever from the fetters of life, attain that state which is beyond all evil."

-Gita 2-51.

### **The spontaneity of Human Life Beyond Duty**

Thus, duty is the first stage in ethical and spiritual discipline. There is a still higher phase of life taught in the Gita which has witnesses among the sages and saints of every religion, but which does not find any serious treatment in any system outside Indian thought. Duty is the hard

school where man learns to crucify his ego. This phase is characterized by ceaseless struggle and tension. But when one succeeds in shifting the centre from the ego to the sakshin, duty fulfils itself, and the individual works from the highest standpoint. The urge to break all bondages and fly into the free air of freedom compels one to criticize and evaluate, at a higher stage, the concept of duty itself. Duty is certainly high as compared with the plane of passions and desires. The moral man transcends the vegetative man. But there is an element of compulsion in it. We may call it inner compulsion (Categorical Imperative) or external compulsion (scriptural or state injunctions and prohibitions), but compulsion it is. Hence it must be transcended. The call of freedom is insistent; all bonds must be broken. The man of duty is at best a disciplined slave.

Hence the Gita teaches man to rise above even this duty and work as a free being. Loving another because of the mandate of scripture or teacher is good; doing so as a result of a compelling prompting from within is better; but it is best when love becomes a spontaneous expression of one's whole being. In the first and second stages, there is a possibility of error and a dilution of selfishness. But with the transcendence of the ego and elimination of self-love, life and love assume an eternal and pure aspect. Life becomes natural and love becomes spontaneous. Such a one can no more stop loving than a rose can stop sending out its sweet smell. For here we are no more on the plane of commands or law, but on the plane of Nature or Expression. The Gita devotes many passages to describe this stage beyond duty – the plane in which Buddhas and Christs live (vide Gita, chapter.2-71, ch.3-17, ch.4-18, ch.6-18, ch.12-13, ch.12-14, ch.12-18 and ch.12-19.)

When one attains the sakshin—consciousness, he finds life in an entirely new perspective. All the false values which the ego had attached to life and its functions get destroyed, and they reveal themselves in their true forms. Such a life is the acme of ethical perfection. Man leaves far behind him all the struggle and joys, hates and competitions, and sorrows and miseries, which is life to every one of us, and learns to view life as a grand harmony—everything in tune with everything else and with himself. Then words of love alone fall from his lips, all his thoughts make for the good of the world, and all his actions seek the welfare of mankind as a whole. They are, in the words of the Gita (Sarvabhutahiteratah) 'ever interested in the good of all beings', and their actions and thoughts have always only one reference (Lokasangrahartham), 'the welfare of mankind'. Truly has been said by Jesus that such men are the salt of the earth.

### **The Grand Spiritual Synthesis by Sri Krishna**

In this philosophy and in this ethical teaching, we have the meaning and explanation of all life's activities. Here, I must mention one important feature of the Gita teaching –its synthetic note. Under the hegemony of his comprehensive philosophy of life, Sri Krishna synthesizes all the aspects of spiritual life- aspects broadly known in India as the paths of **Work, Devotion, Meditation, and Knowledge**, (Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga) and whatever other paths there be – by emphasizing the essential nature and common feature of all of these. Whether we are asked to surrender ourselves to God or work without any attachment, whether we are asked to calm the mind or analyze our

thoughts, what we in essence do and achieve is the elimination of the ego, which is the mask that Truth wears in every one of us. Whatever religious practices we do, whatever phase of life we may live, if once we shift our centre of individuality to the sakshin, we go beyond all the dualities and struggles of life, and attain universality of outlook and breadth of heart. Not only that, all measure of large-heartedness and breadth of outlook we see in the world bespeak only of this attainment in various degrees.

We have here, in broad outline, the Gita teaching and its implications. One thing strikes us, and that is its non-sectarian and non-creedal character. In whatever position of life we may be, to whatever creed or religion we may belong, the Gita teaching is unlimited in its scope. It has only one message- the message of strength- a message that raises man to higher and higher levels of self-expression. It never seeks to make a Jew a Gentile, a Christian or a Muslim a Hindu, a Westerner an Easterner, or vice versa. It appeals to every man and woman to apply its teachings to his or her circumstances and march towards the citadel of Truth, with only one warning, that is, not to rest content on the way. There is no crying quarter in the search for truth.

## Conclusion

Today, the world as a whole is passing through a supreme crisis in all its history. The Old World with its thoughts, opinions and institutions is in a state of rapid dissolution; none can yet see clearly the shape of thing to come. Deeply imbedded in the modern consciousness is the desire for the creation of a stable civilization. Thinkers in the East and the West give expression to this urge when they speak of the future world order. If the future is to witness the emergence of a world civilization, the collective wisdom of mankind has to be utilized for its realization. The greatest contribution shall come not from sects and creeds or parties and leaders, but from the spiritual benefactors of humanity, like Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed.

The present world context, with its gushing passions and high aspirations, somewhat resembles the conditions that obtained in India in the age of the Mahabharata war when the message of the Gita was delivered. In these days of conflict, struggle and confusion, we can have no better guide to show us the path to freedom and peace than the message of the rational, universal, and comprehensive spirituality which Krishna taught in the Gita over 3000 years ago. It is God's message to man- eternal, ancient and ageless. Momentous problems are there before us, which stagger the wisdom of the earth's bravest and best. Let us hope and pray that the new interest that is evident in many quarters in the 'Song Celestial', as Edwin Arnold called the Gita, may be productive of real and lasting benefit to humanity at large.

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## An Introduction to Gita

By Swami Shivananda

The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh  
Abridged

Man is a composite of three fundamental factors, namely

Man is a composite of three fundamental factors, namely cognition, feeling and will. There are three kinds of temperaments- the active, the emotional and the rational. Even so, there are three Yogas- Jnana Yoga for the man of enquiry and rational temperament, Bhakti Yoga for the emotional temperament, and Karma Yoga for a person of action. One Yoga is as efficacious as the other is.

The Bhagavad Gita formulates the theories of the three paths, without creating any conflict among them. It harmonizes most wonderfully the philosophy of action, devotion and knowledge. All three must be harmoniously blended if you wish to attain perfection. You should have the head of Sri Sankara (intellectual, rational), the heart of Lord Buddha and the hand of King Janaka. The three horses of this body-chariot namely action, emotion and intellect, should work in perfect harmony. Only then will it move smoothly and reach the destination safely and quickly. Only then can you rejoice in the Self, sing the song of Soham, be in tune with the Infinite, hear the soundless voice of the Soul and enjoy the sweet music of the Soul.

The central teaching of the Gita is the attainment of the final beatitude of life-perfection or freedom. This may be achieved by doing one's prescribed duties of life. The Lord says to Arjuna:

"Therefore, without attachment, constantly perform action which is duty, for, by performing action without attachment, man verily reaches the supreme."

The Gita is divided into three sections, illustrative of the three terms of the Mahavakya (great sayings) of the Sama Veda- TAT TWAM ASI (That Thou Art). In accordance with this view, the first six discourses deal with the path of action or Karma Yoga, that is the nature of "Thou." This is called the Twam-pada. The next six discourses explain the path of devotion, the nature of "That." This is called the Tat-pada. The last six discourses treat of the path of knowledge, the nature of the middle term "Art." So it is called the Asi-pada, which establishes the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

The eighteen discourses are not woven in a discordant manner. Each one is intimately or vitally connected with its precedent.

### **Essence of the Gita**

The Gita again and again emphasizes that one should cultivate an attitude of non-attachment or detachment. It urges repeatedly that one should live in the world like water on a lotus leaf. "He who does actions, offering them to Brahman and abandoning attachment, is not tainted by sin as a lotus leaf by water." - Gita, 5-10.

Attachment is due to infatuation. It is the offspring of the quality of Rajas. Detachment is born of Sattwa. The former is a demoniacal attribute; the latter is divine one. Attachment is born of ignorance, selfishness and passion, and brings with it death; detachment is wisdom, and brings with it freedom. The practice of detachment is a rigorous discipline. You may stumble like a baby who is just learning to walk, but you will have to rise up again with a cheerful heart. Failures are not stumbling blocks but stepping-stones to success.



Try to dwell always in your own Self. Abide in your centre. Think of the Self constantly. Then all attachments will die automatically. Attachment to God is a potent antidote to annihilate all worldly attachments. He who has no attachments can really love others, for his love is pure and divine. "Therefore, without attachment do thou always perform action which should be done; for, by performing action without attachment man reaches the Supreme." - Gita, 3-19.

Discourses 13, 14 and 15 deal with Jnana Yoga (Yoga of knowledge). He who has knowledge of nature and of God, of the three qualities or Gunas and their operation, and of the wonderful tree of Maya, can transcend nature and the Gunas, can uproot the deep-rooted tree with the axe of dispassion, and attain direct Self-realization, which releases him from the rounds of births and deaths.

Discourse 15 is a very soul-elevating one. It contains the essence of Vedanta. He who rightly understands this discourse will soon attain liberation.

Discourse 18 also must be studied again and again. It contains the quintessence of the whole Gita teaching. It is the pinnacle of the magnificent hill of knowledge of the Gita. It is the crowning jewel in its priceless necklace, and in it is condensed the substance of the teachings of the preceding seventeen discourses.

The Gita is the cream of the Vedas. It is the essence of the soul-elevating Upanishads. It is a universal scripture applicable to people of all temperaments and for all times. It is a wonderful book with sublime thoughts and practical instructions on Yoga, Devotion, Vedanta and Action. It is a marvellous book, profound in thought and sublime in heights of vision. It brings peace and solace to souls that are afflicted by the three fires of mortal existence, namely, afflictions caused by one's own body (disease etc), those caused by beings around one (e.g. wild animals, snakes etc.), and those caused by the gods (natural disasters, earthquakes, floods etc).

The Srimad Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna (the Supreme Soul and the individual soul). It is narrated in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata. It comprises 18 discourses of a total of 701 Sanskrit verses (Shlokas). A considerable volume of material has been compressed within these verses.

The Bhagavad Gita is a unique book for all ages. It is one of the most authoritative books of the Hindu religion. It is the immortal song of the Soul, which bespeaks of the glory of life. The instructions given by Lord Krishna are for the whole world. It is a standard book on Yoga for all mankind. The language is as simple as could be. Even a man who has an elementary knowledge of Sanskrit (language) can go through the book.

The teachings of the Gita are broad, universal and sublime. They do not belong to any cult, sect, creed, age or country. They are meant for the people of the whole world. Based on the Upanishads- the ancient wisdom of the Seers (Rishis) and saints- the Gita prescribes methods that are within the reach of all. It has message of solace, peace, freedom. Salvation and perfection for all human beings.

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Lord Krishna, during the course of His most instructive and interesting talk with Arjuna, revealed profound, sublime and soul-stirring spiritual truths, and expounded to him the rare secrets of Yoga, Vedanta, Bhakti (Devotion) and Karma (Action). The whole world is one huge battlefield. The real Kurukshetra is within you. The battle of the Mahabharata is raging within. Ignorance is Dhritarashtra; the individual soul is Arjuna; the indweller of your heart is Lord Krishna, the charioteer; the body is the chariot; the senses are the five horses; mind, egoism, mental impressions, senses, cravings, likes and dislikes, lust, jealousy, greed, pride and hypocrisy are your dire enemies.

Glory, glory to the Gita! Glory to Lord Krishna, who placed the Gita before men of this world to attain liberation! May His blessings be upon you all! May the Gita be your centre, ideal and goal!

Blessed is the man who studies the Gita daily. Twice blessed is he who lives in the spirit of the Gita. Thrice blessed is he who has realized the knowledge of the Gita or attained Self-knowledge! Om Tat Sat. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti. (Peace).

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The Twofold Vedic Religion

## **The Twofold Vedic Religion**

By Sri Shankaracharya  
Translated by Sri Alladi Mahadev Sastry

The Lord created the universe, and wishing to secure order therein, He first created the Prajapatis (Lords of creatures) such as Marichi and caused them to adopt the Pravritti Dharma, the Religion of Works. He then created others such as Sanaka and Sanandana, and caused them to adopt Nivritti Dharma, the Religion of Renunciation, characterised by knowledge and indifference to worldly objects. It is the twofold Vedic Religion of Works and Renunciation that maintains order in the universe. This Religion which directly leads to liberation and worldly prosperity has long been practised by all castes and religious orders (varna ashramas) - from the Brahmins downwards- who sought welfare.

## **The Purpose of the Divine Incarnation**

When, owing to the ascendancy of lust in its votaries, religion was overpowered by irreligion caused by the vanishing faculty of discrimination, and irreligion was advancing,- it was then that the original Creator (Adi-karta), Vishnu, known as Narayana, wishing to maintain order in the universe, incarnated Himself as Krishna, begotten in Devaki, by Vasudeva, for the preservation of the 'earthly Brahman' (the Vedas, the Brahmins and Yagnas or sacrifices), of spiritual life

(Brahmanatva) on earth. For it was by the preservation of spiritual life that the Vedic Religion could be preserved, since thereon depend all distinctions of caste and religious order.

[Note: Kshatriyas and others require the help of the Brahmins, the spiritual class, in the performance of sacred rites and in the study of scriptures.]

The Lord, always possessed as He is of (infinite) knowledge, supremacy, power, strength, might and vigour, controls Maya- belonging to Him as Vishnu- the Mula prakriti, the First Cause, composed of three Gunas or energies (qualities known as Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), and He appears to the world as

though He is born and embodied and helping the world at large; whereas really He is unborn and indestructible, is the Lord of creatures, and is by nature Eternal, Pure, Intelligent and Free.

Without any interest of His own, but with the sole intention of helping His creatures, He taught to Arjuna, who was deeply plunged in the ocean of grief and delusion, the twofold Vedic Religion, evidently thinking that the Religion would widely spread when accepted and practised by men of high character.

### **The Gita and the Commentary**

It is this religion, which was taught by the Lord, that the omniscient and adorable Veda-Vyasa (the arranger of the Vedas) embodied in the seven hundred verses called Gita.

This famous Gita-Sastra is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Vedic teaching; and it's meaning is very difficult to understand. Though, to afford a clear view of its teaching, it has been explained word by word and sentence by sentence, and its import critically examined by several commentators, still I have found that to the laity it appears to teach diverse and quite contradictory doctrines. I propose, therefore, to write a brief commentary with a view to determine its precise meaning.

### **Jnana-Yoga (Yoga of knowledge) is the means to the Supreme Bliss**

The aim of this famous Gita-Sastra is, briefly, the Supreme Bliss. A complete cessation of samsara or transmigratory life and of its cause. This accrues from that Religion (Dharma) which consists in a steady devotion to the knowledge of the Self, preceded by the renunciation of all works. So with reference to this Religion, the doctrine of the Gita, the Lord says in the Anu-Gita as follows. [Note: Anu-Gita forms part of the Asvamedha Parva, Mahabharata, setting forth a sort of recapitulation of the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.]

"That religion, indeed, is quite sufficient for the realisation of the state of Brahman, the Absolute."

"He is without merit and without sin, without weal and woe,- he who is absorbed in the One Seat, silent and thinking nothing."



And He also says:

"Knowledge is characterised by renunciation."

-Asvamedha Parva, XLIII, 26

"Abandoning all Dharmas, come to Me alone for shelter."

-Asvamedha Parva, XVIII, 66

### **How Karma-Yoga is a means to the Supreme Bliss**

Though the Religion of Works, which, as a means of attaining worldly prosperity, is enjoined on the several castes and religious orders, leads the devotee to the religion of the Devas and the like, when practised in a spirit of complete devotion to the Lord and without regard to the (immediate) results, it conduces to the purity of the mind (sattva-suddhi). The man whose mind is pure is competent to tread the path of knowledge, and to him comes knowledge; and thus (indirectly) the religion of Works forms also a means to the Supreme Bliss. Accordingly, with this very idea in mind, the Lord says:

"He who does actions, placing them in Brahman"  
(the Supreme Reality)

..... "Yogis perform actions, without attachment, for the purification of the self."

-Gita, ch. 5, verses 10 & 11

### **The specific subject and object of the Gita-Sastra**

The Gita-Sastra expounds this twofold Religion, whose aim is the Supreme Bliss. It expounds specially the nature of the Supreme Being and Reality as Vasudeva, the Parabrahman, who forms the subject of the discourse. Thus the Gita-Sastra treats of a specific subject with a specific object and bears a specific relation (to the subject and object). A knowledge of its teaching leads to the realisation of all human aspirations. Hence my attempt to explain it.

[Note: It is considered incumbent on a commentator to state, before commenting on a work, the subject and object, as well as the class of persons for whom it is intended, and the relation in which it stands to the three severally. Here the Subject is Para-Brahman; the object is salvation or moksha. It is intended for those who seek deliverance from the turmoil of samsara. It is related to the subject as an exposition thereof, and to the object as a means of attaining it.]

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### **Readings from the Gita**

**The lower self is your enemy  
The higher self is your friend**

### Gita, Chapter 6, Verses 5 :

Let a man lift himself by his own Self alone; let him  
not lower himself, for this self alone is the friend of oneself and this self alone is the enemy of oneself. Gita, 6 – 5.

**Commentary:** Practise Yoga. Discipline the mind and the senses. Elevate yourself. Attain perfection in Yoga. Shine gloriously as a perfect and dynamic Yogi. Do not sink into the ocean of worldliness and transmigration. Do not become a worldly-minded person. Do not become a slave of lust, greed and anger. Rise above worldliness, become divine and attain Godhead.

You alone are your friend; you alone are your enemy. The so-called worldly friends are not your real friends because they get attached to you, waste your time and put obstacles on your path of Yoga. They are very selfish and keep friendship with you only to extract something. If they are not able to get from you the objects of their selfish interests, they forsake you. Therefore, in reality they are your enemies. If you are attached to your friends on account of delusion or affection, it will become a cause of your bondage to worldliness.

Friends and enemies are not outside. They exist in the mind only. It is the mind that makes a friend an enemy and an enemy a friend. Therefore, the self alone is the friend of oneself, and the self (lower self) alone is the enemy of oneself. The lower or impure mind (filled with Tamas and Rajas) is your real enemy because it binds you to worldliness. The higher mind or the pure mind (filled with Sattwa) is your real friend because it helps you in attaining liberation.

### Gita, Chapter 6, Verse 6:

The self is the friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by the self, but to the unconquered self, this self stands in the position of an enemy like the (external) foe. Gita, 6 – 6.

**Commentary:** Conquer the lower mind with the help of the higher mind. The lower mind is your enemy. The higher mind is your friend. If you make friendship with the higher mind you can subdue the lower mind quite easily. The lower mind is filled with passion and darkness. (Rajas and Tamas). It is very weak. The higher mind is filled with purity (Sattwa). It is strong.

The self is the friend of one who is self-controlled and who has subjugated the lower mind and the senses. But the self is an enemy of one who has no self-restraint and who has not subdued the lower mind and the senses. Just as an external enemy does harm to him, so also his own lower self (mind) does harm to him. The lower mind injures him severely. The highest Self is the primary Self. Mind also is self. This is the secondary self.

**Note:** The understanding of the above two verses from the Gita and the following verses also from the Gita, will be greatly

enhanced by The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi in the following pages:

[Self-enquiry](#)

[Direct Path](#)

[God](#)

[Self- Atma](#)

[Meditation](#)

[Consciousness- the three states](#)

[Freedom and Bondage](#)

### Gita, Chapter 6, Verse 7:

The Supreme Self of him who is self-controlled and peaceful is balanced in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, as also in honour and dishonour. – Gita, 6-7

[Note: Cold and heat refer to the physical level, pleasure and pain refer to emotional level of the mind, honour and dishonour refer to the intellectual level of the mind]

Commentary: The self-controlled Yogi who is rooted in the self keeps poise amidst the pairs of opposites, like pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, success and failure, etc. When the Yogi has subdued his senses, when his mind is balanced and peaceful under all conditions, when he is unaffected by the pairs of opposites mentioned above, when he has renounced all actions, then the highest Self really becomes his own Self. He attains Self-realization. As he now rests in his own Self, he is ever serene and tranquil. He stands adamant in the face of the changing conditions of Nature.

### Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 10

Freed from attachment, fear and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by the fire of knowledge, many have attained to My Being.

Commentary: When one attains knowledge of the Self, then all attachment to sense-objects ceases. When he realises that he is the constant, indestructible, eternal Self, and that change is simply a quality of the body, he becomes fearless. When he becomes desireless, when he is free from selfishness, when he beholds the Self alone everywhere, how can anger arise in him?

He who takes refuge in Brahman or the Absolute becomes firmly devoted to Him. He becomes fully absorbed in Him.

Just as fire burns cotton, so also this fire of knowledge (fire of wisdom) burns all the latent tendencies, cravings, mental impressions, defects, sins and effects of all actions. It purifies the aspirant.

### Fire of knowledge - Wisdom Sacrifice

### Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 19:

He whose undertakings are all devoid of desires and (selfish) purposes, and whose actions have been burnt by the fire of knowledge- him the wise call a sage.

Commentary: A sage performs actions only with a view to set an example to the masses. Though he works, he does nothing,

as he has no selfish interests, his actions are burnt by the fire of wisdom, which consists in the realization of inaction in action through the attainment of knowledge of the Self.

Self-knowledge is a mighty spiritual fire which consumes the results of all kinds of actions, whether good or bad, making the enlightened sage quite free from the bonds of action. The sage who leads a life of perfect renunciation does only such actions as are required for the bare existence of the body.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 23:

To one who is devoid of attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, who works for the sake of sacrifice (for the sake of God), the whole action is dissolved.

Commentary: One who is free from attachment, who is liberated from the bonds of Karma (actions), whose mind is centred and rooted in wisdom, who performs actions for the sake of sacrifice in order to please the Lord; all the actions of such a one, together with their results, melt away. His actions are reduced to nothing. They are in fact, no actions at all.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 24:

Brahman is the oblation; Brahman is the ghee (melted butter used as oblation during Havan ceremony); by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman; Brahman verily shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action.

(Sanskrit : Brahmaarpanam Brahmahavirbrahmaagnau Brahmanaa Hutam; Brahmaiva Tena Gantavyam Brahmakarmasamaadhinaa.)

Commentary: This is Jnana-Yajna or wisdom sacrifice, wherein the idea of Brahman or the Self is substituted for the ideas of the instrument and other accessories of action, and the idea of action itself and its results. By entertaining such an idea the whole action melts away, as stated in the previous verse (4 –23).

When one attains knowledge of the Self, one's whole life then becomes a wisdom-sacrifice, in which the oblation, the melted butter or the offering, the performer of the sacrifice, the action and the goal, are all the Self. He who thus meditates wholly upon the Self shall verily attain to Him.

The Self-realised sage knows that the oblation, the fire, the instrument by which the melted butter is poured into the fire, and himself, have no existence apart from the Self. He who has realised through direct cognition that all is the Self, does no actions even if he performs actions.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 25:

Some Yogis perform sacrifice to the gods alone, while others (who have realised the Self) offer the Self as sacrifice by the Self in the fire of Brahman alone.

Commentary: Some Yogis who are devoted to Karma Yoga (Yoga of action) perform sacrificial rites to the shining ones or devas (gods). The second Yajna is Jnana-Yajna or the wisdom sacrifice performed by those who are devoted to Jnana Yoga. The oblation in this sacrifice is the Self. Yajna here means the

Self. The limiting adjuncts, such as the physical body, the mind, the intellect, etc., which are superimposed on the Self through ignorance, are sublated, and the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul is realised. To sacrifice the self in the Self is to know through direct cognition that the individual soul is identical with the Self. This is the highest sacrifice. Those who are established in the Self, who have realised their oneness with the Self, perform this kind of sacrifice. It is superior to all other sacrifices.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 33:

Superior is wisdom-sacrifice to the sacrifice with objects, O Arjuna. All actions in their entirety, O Arjuna, culminate in knowledge.

Commentary: Sacrifices with material objects cause material effects and bring the sacrificer to this world for the enjoyment of their fruits, while wisdom -sacrifice leads to liberation. Therefore, wisdom sacrifice is superior to the former.

Just as rivers join the ocean, so do all pure and selfless actions join knowledge, that is, they culminate in knowledge. All such actions purify the heart and lead to the dawn of knowledge of the Self. All actions that are offered unto the Lord, together with their fruits, are contained in the knowledge of the Self.

### **GURU - Wisdom Sacrifice**

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 34:

Know that by long prostration, by question and by service, the wise who have realized the Truth will instruct thee in (that) knowledge.

Commentary: Go to the teachers, those who are well versed in scriptures dealing with the Self, or who are established in the Self. Prostrate before them with profound humility and perfect devotion. Ask them questions: "O venerable Guru, what is the cause of bondage? How can I get liberation? What is the nature of ignorance? What is the nature of knowledge? What is the Antaranga Sadhana (the inward spiritual practice) for attaining Self-realization?"

Serve the Guru whole-heartedly. A teacher who is versed in the scriptures but who has no direct Self-realization will not be able to help you in the attainment of knowledge of the Self. He who has knowledge of the scriptures, and who is also established in the Self, will be able to instruct you in that knowledge and help you in the attainment of Self-realization. Mere prostration alone will not do. It may be tinged with hypocrisy. You should have perfect faith and confidence in your Guru and in his teachings. You must serve him whole-heartedly and with great devotion. Then hypocrisy will not be possible.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 35:

Knowing that, thou shalt not, O Arjuna, again get deluded like this; and by that see all beings in thy Self and also in Me.

Commentary: THAT: the knowledge of the Self mentioned in the previous

Commentary: THAT: the knowledge of the Self mentioned in the previous verse 34, which is to be learnt from the Brahma-Nishta Guru through prostration, questioning and service.

When you acquire this knowledge you will not again be subject to confusion or error. You will behold the underlying basic unity. You will directly cognize through internal experience or intuition that all beings from the creator down to a blade of grass exist in your own Self and also in Me.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 36:

Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners, yet  
thou shalt verily cross all sins by the raft of  
knowledge.

Commentary: You can cross the ocean of sin with the boat of knowledge of the Self.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 37:

As the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna,  
so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes.

Commentary: Just as seeds that are roasted cannot germinate, so also the actions that are burnt by the fire of knowledge cannot bear fruits, that is, they cannot bring man to this world again for the enjoyment of the fruits of his actions. This is reducing actions to ashes. The actions lose their potency as they are burnt by the fire of knowledge. When knowledge of the Self dawns, all actions together with their results are burnt by the fire of that knowledge, just as fuel is burnt by fire. When there is no idea of agency - the idea of "I do this" - when there is no desire for the fruits, then action is no action at all. It loses its potency.

The fire of knowledge can burn the results of all actions, except the Prarabdha Karma or the results of past actions, which have brought this present body into existence, and which have thus already begun to bear fruits or produce effects.

According to some philosophers even the Prarabdha Karma is destroyed by fire of knowledge. Sri Sankara states in his Aparokshanubhuti: "In the line : 'his actions are destroyed when the Supreme is realized', the Vedas expressly speak of actions (Karmas) in the plural, signifying the destruction of the Prarabdha Karma as well."

There are three kinds of Karmas or reactions or fructifications of past actions.

1. Prarabdha: so much of the past actions as have given rise to the present birth;
2. Sanchita: the balance of past actions that will give rise to future births (the storehouse of accumulated actions); and
3. Agami or Kriyamana: actions being done in the

present life.

If, through the knowledge of the Self, only the Sanchita and Agami were destroyed and not Prarabdha, the dual number would have been used and not the plural.

Sanskrit grammar has singular, dual and plural numbers.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 38:

Verily there is no purifier equal to knowledge of the Self. He who has attained perfection by the constant practice of Karma Yoga and meditation, will find knowledge of the Self in himself after some time.

There exists no purifier equal to knowledge of the Self. He who has attained perfection by the constant practice of Karma Yoga and meditation, will find knowledge of the Self in himself after some time.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 39:

The man who is full of faith, who is devoted to it, and who has subdued all the senses, obtains (this) knowledge; and, having obtained the knowledge, he goes at once to the supreme peace.

Commentary: He who is full of faith, who constantly serves his Guru and listens to his teachings, who has subdued his senses, gets knowledge and quickly attains supreme peace or salvation. All the above three qualifications are indispensable for an aspirant if he wants to hasten the attainment of the supreme peace of the Eternal. Having only one of these qualifications will not suffice.

Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 40:

The ignorant, the faithless, the doubting self proceeds to destruction; there is neither this world nor the other nor happiness for the doubting.

Commentary: The IGNORANT: one without Self-knowledge. The FAITHLESS: one who has no faith in his own self, in the scriptures and in the teachings of his Guru.

A man of doubting mind is the most sinful of all. His condition is very deplorable. He is full of doubts as regards the next world. He does not rejoice in this world also, as he is very suspicious. He has no happiness.

Gita, Chapter 4, verse 41:

He who has renounced actions by Yoga, whose doubts are rent asunder by knowledge, and who is self-possessed; actions do not bind him, O Arjuna.

Commentary: Sri Madhusudana Saraswati explains the word 'Aatmavantam' as "always watchful."

He who has attained Self-realization renounces all actions by means of Yoga or knowledge of the Self. As he is established in the knowledge of the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul, all his doubts are rent asunder. Actions do not bind him as they are burnt in the fire of wisdom, and as he is



always watchful over himself.

### Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 42:

Therefore, with the sword of knowledge (of the Self) cut asunder the doubt of the self born of ignorance, residing in thy heart, and take refuge in Yoga; arise, O Arjuna!

Commentary: Doubt causes a great deal of mental torment. It is a great obstacle on the spiritual path. It is most sinful. It is born of ignorance. Kill it ruthlessly through knowledge of the self. Now stand up and fight, O Arjuna!

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### Gita, Chapter 9, Verse 30:

Even if the most sinful worship Me, with devotion to none else, he, too, should indeed be regarded as righteous, for he has rightly resolved.

Commentary: Even if the most sinful worships the Lord with an undivided heart, he also must indeed be deemed righteous, for he has made a holy resolution (firm resolution) to give up the evil ways of life. Rogue Ratnakara became sage Valmiki through holy resolution. Jagai and Madhai, who were murderers, also became righteous devotees. Mary Magdalene, a sister of ill fame, became a pious woman. Sin vanishes when thoughts of God arise in the mind.

The Chandrayana and Kricchra Vratas (two important expiatory fasts) remove only certain sins, but remembrance of the Lord, thoughts of the Supreme Being, Japa of His Name, meditation, and contemplation on Him with a non-dual attitude, with the knowledge that He is all-in-all, destroy the sins committed by a person even in a hundred crores of ages (millions of years).

By abandoning evil ways in his external life, and by the force of his internal right resolution, a person becomes righteous and attains eternal peace.

### Gita, Chapter 9, Verse 31:

Soon he becomes righteous and attains to Eternal peace; O Arjuna, know thou for certain that My devotee is never destroyed.

Commentary: Listen, this is the truth. O Arjuna! Proclaim to the world that My devotee, who has sincere devotion to Me, who has offered his inner soul to Me, never perishes.

### Gita, Chapter 9, Verse 29:

The same am I to all beings; to Me there is none hateful or dear; but those who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I am also in them.

Commentary: The Lord has an even outlook towards all. He regards all living beings alike. None He condemns; none He favours. He is the enemy of none; He is the partial lover of none.



He does not favour some and frown upon others. It is only the egoistic man who has created a wide gulf between himself and the Supreme Being through his wrong attitude. The Lord is closer to him than his own breath, nearer than his hands and feet.

I am like the fire. Just as fire removes the cold of those who draw near it, but not of those who keep away from it, even so do I bestow My Grace on My devotees, but not, as ignorant people may believe, owing to any kind of attachment on My part. Just as the light of the sun, though pervading everywhere, is reflected only in a clean mirror and not in a pot, so also I, the Supreme Lord of the universe, being present everywhere, manifest Myself only in those from whose minds all kinds of impurities, accumulated on account of ignorance, have been removed through their sincere love and devotion.

The sun has neither attachment to the mirror nor hatred for the pot. The Supreme Bestower has neither hatred nor love for people. He bestows the desired objects only on those who go near Him.

Gita, chapter 9, Verse 26:

Whoever offers Me with devotion and pure mind  
(heart), a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a little water –  
I accept (this offering).

Commentary: A gift, however small, is accepted by the Lord when it is offered with profound faith. The Lord is quite satisfied even with a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a little water, when it is offered with single-minded devotion and a pure heart. Was he not satisfied with the little parched rice from the bundle of Sudama, and the small berries offered by Sabari? You need not build a golden temple for Him. Build a golden temple in your heart. Enthrone Him there. He wants only your devoted heart. But how difficult it is to please Indra! (Indra is the ruler of heaven; also the lord of the senses). You have to offer valuable material objects to get anything out of him (Indra).

A leaf, a flower or a fruit are mere symbols. The true means of attaining the Lord is pure, unflinching devotion.

All the objects of a state belong to its king. Yet if the servants of the state offer him some of those objects with devotion, he is highly satisfied. Even so, all the objects of the whole world belong to God. Yet He is highly pleased if you offer even a little thing with devotion.

Gita, Chapter 9, Verse 27.

(In modern day English)

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you  
offer in sacrifice, whatever you give, whatever you practise as austerity, O Arjuna, do it as an offering  
unto Me.

Commentary: Consecrate all actions to the Lord. Then you are freed from the bondage of Karma. You have freedom in action. He who tries to live in the spirit of this verse will be able to practise self-surrender unto the Lord. Gradually the devotee

ascends the spiritual path, step by step. His greedy nature is now slowly dissolved. He always gives. He is not eager to take. His whole life with all its actions, thoughts and feelings, is eventually dedicated to the service of the Lord. He lives for the Lord only. He works for the Lord only. There is not a bit of egoism present now. His whole nature is transformed into divinity. When actions are dedicated to the Lord, there is no rebirth for you. This is the simplest method of Yoga. Do not waste your time any longer. Take to this path of self-surrender from today. All actions, all results and all rewards go to the Lord. There is no separate life for the individual. Just as the river joins the sea and abandons its name and form, so also the individual soul joins the Supreme Soul, giving up his own name and form, his own egoistic desires and egoism. The will of the individual becomes one with the Cosmic Will.

Whatever you do of your own free will, whatever you offer in sacrifice as enjoined in the scriptures, whatever you give (like gold, rice, ghee and clothes to Brahmins and to others), whatever austerity and control of the senses you practise, do all these as offerings unto Me.

Now listen to what you will gain by doing thus.

Gita, Chapter 9, Verse 28:

Thus shalt thou be freed from the bonds of actions yielding good and evil fruits; with the mind steadfast in the Yoga of renunciation, and liberated, thou shalt come unto Me.

Commentary: Sannyas is the renunciation of the fruits of all works. The act of offering everything unto the Lord constitutes the Yoga of renunciation or Sannyas. It is also Yoga, as it is an action. With the mind endowed with renunciation and Yoga, thou shalt be freed from good and evil results while yet living, and thou shalt come unto Me when this body falls.

An objector may say: "Then the Lord has love and hatred, as He confers His Grace only on His devotees and not on others?"

The answer is: "Not so. The Lord is impartial and is beyond love and hatred. His Grace flows towards all, but the devotee receives it freely, as he has opened his heart to the reception of His Grace." (Just as a radio receiver is finely tuned to receive freely powerful signals from the broadcasting station).

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### From The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi

The following text is reproduced from our Page 'Self-enquiry'

**Question:** In turning the mind inwards, are we not still employing the mind?

**Sri Ramana Maharshi:** Of course we are employing the mind. It is well known and admitted that only with the help of the mind

can the mind be killed. But instead of setting about saying there is a mind, and I want to kill it, begin to seek the source of the mind, and you find the mind does not exist at all. The mind, turned outwards, results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards, it becomes itself the Self.

**Question:** Even so, I do not understand. 'I', you say, is the wrong 'I' now. How to eliminate the wrong 'I'?

**Sri Ramana Maharshi:** You need not eliminate the wrong 'I'. How can 'I' eliminate itself? All that you need to do is to find out its origin and abide there. Your efforts can extend only thus far. Then the beyond will take care of itself. You are helpless there. No effort can reach it.

**Sri Ramana Maharshi:** The yogi tries to drive his mind to the goal, as a cowherd drives a bull with a stick, but on this path the seeker coaxes the bull by holding out a handful of grass.

**Question:** How is that done?

**Sri Ramana Maharshi:** You have to ask yourself the question 'Who am I?' This investigation will lead in the end to the discovery of something within you, which is behind the mind. Solve that great problem and you will solve all other problems.

Again people often ask how the mind is controlled. I say to them, 'Show me the mind and then you will know what to do.' The fact is that the mind is only a bundle of thoughts. How can you extinguish it by the thought of doing so or by a desire? Your thoughts and desires are part and parcel of the mind. The mind is simply fattened by new thoughts rising up. Therefore it is foolish to attempt to kill the mind by means of the mind. The only way of doing it is to find its source and hold on to it. The mind will then fade away of its own accord. Yoga teaches Chitta Vritti Nirodha (control of the activities of the mind). But I say Atma Vichara (self-investigation). This is the practical way. Chitta Vritti Nirodha is brought about in sleep, swoon, or by starvation. As soon as the cause is withdrawn there is a recrudescence of thoughts. Of what use is it then? In the state of stupor there is peace and no misery. But misery recurs when the stupor is removed. So nirodha (control) is useless and cannot be of lasting benefit.

How then can the benefit be made lasting? It is by finding the cause of misery. Misery is due to the perception of objects. If they are not there, there will be no contingent thoughts and so misery is wiped off. 'How will objects cease to be?' is the next question. The srutis (scriptures) and the sages say that the objects are only mental creations. They have no substantive being. Investigate the matter and ascertain the truth of the statement. The result will be the conclusion that the objective world is in the subjective consciousness. The Self is thus the only reality, which permeates and also envelops the world. Since there is no duality, no thoughts will arise to disturb your peace. This is realisation of the Self. The Self is eternal and so also is realisation.

Abhyasa (spiritual practice) consists in withdrawal within the Self every time you are disturbed by thought. It is not concentration or destruction of the mind but withdrawal into the Self.

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Further explanations on chapter 5

## Gita Ch 5

In this world there is a two fold path; the path of knowledge of the Sankhyas and the path of action of the Yogis."  
--The Bhagavad Gita, Ch 3, Verse 3

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"The Vedic dharma (religion) is verily twofold, characterised by **Pravritti** (social action) and **Nivritti** (inward contemplation), designed to promote order in the world; this twofold dharma has in view the true social welfare and spiritual emancipation of all beings."

-Sri Shankaracharya (A.D. 788-820)

### **Pravritti (Social action - Acts)**

From The Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 18, Verses 5, 6, 7 & 11

Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be abandoned, but should be performed ; sacrifice, gift and also austerity are the purifiers of the wise.  
[Note: There are three types of Sacrifice, gift and austerity; Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic.]

But even these actions should be performed leaving aside attachment and the desire for rewards.

From the Mahabharata, Santi Parva  
Section CCXLI

Vyasa said: I shall expound to thee the two paths, viz., the destructible and the indestructible, depending respectively upon acts and knowledge. Listen with concentrated attention, O child, to me, as I tell thee the place that is reached by one with the aid of knowledge, and that other place which is reached with the aid of acts. The difference between these two places, is as great as the limitless sky. These are the two paths upon which the Vedas are established; the duties indicated by **Pravritti**, and those based on **Nivritti**.

### **Pravritti**

By acts, a living creature is destroyed. By knowledge, however, he becomes emancipated. For this reason, Yogis who behold the other side of the ocean of life never betake themselves to acts. Through acts one is forced to take rebirth, after death, with a body composed of the six and ten ingredients.

### **Nivritti**

Through knowledge, however, one becomes transformed into that which is Eternal, Unmanifest, and Immutable.

One class of persons that are however of little intelligence, applaud acts. In consequence of this they have to assume bodies (one after another) ceaselessly. Those men whose perceptions are keen in respect of duties and who have attained to that high understanding (which leads to knowledge), never applaud acts even as persons that depend for their drinking water upon the supply of streams never applaud wells and water tanks.

The fruit that one obtains of acts consists of pleasure and pain, of existence and non-existence. By knowledge, one attains to that where there is no occasion for grief; where one becomes freed from both birth and death; where one is not subject to decrepitude; where one transcends the state of conscious existence. By knowledge, one attains to Brahman, which is Supreme, Unmanifest, immutable, ever-existent, imperceptible, above the reach of pain, immortal, and transcending destruction; where all become freed from the influence of all pairs of opposites (like pleasure and pain, heat and cold, insults and compliments, happiness and unhappiness etc., where all become freed also of wish or purpose.

eaching that stage, they cast equal eyes on everything, become universal friends and devoted to the good of all creatures. There is a wide gulf, O son, between one devoted to knowledge and one devoted to acts. Know that the man of knowledge, without undergoing destruction, remains existent forever like the moon on the last day of the dark fortnight existing in a subtle (but undestroyed) form.

From Svetasvatara Upanishad 3.8  
By knowing Him alone one transcends death;  
there is no other path to go by.

### **OF KNOWLEDGE, THERE IS NO END** From The Mahabharata, Aswamedha Parva Section XLIV

Brahma (Prajapati) said: All actions end in destruction, and all that is born is certain to meet with death. Every mobile and immobile thing in this world is transient. Days end with the sun's setting and Nights with the sun's rising. The end of pleasure is always sorrow, and the end of sorrow is always pleasure. All accumulations have exhaustion for their end, and all ascent have falls for their end. All associations have dissociations for their end, and life has death for its end. Sacrifice, gift, penances, study, vows, observances, - all these have destruction for their end. Of Knowledge, there is no end. Hence, one that is possessed of a tranquil soul, that has subjugated his senses, that is freed from the sense of meum, that is devoid of egoism, is released from all sins by pure knowledge.

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From Vivekachudamani of Shankaracharya  
Verses 11

Work leads to purification of the mind,  
not to perception of the Reality.  
The realisation of Truth is brought about by  
discrimination and not in the least by ten  
millions of acts.

### **Brihadaranyaka Upanishad**

There exists an apparently unbridgeable gap between the ritualistic section (karmakanda) of the Vedas, dealing with the various enjoyments (abhyudaya) in the phenomenal universe (samsara), and the philosophical section of the Upanishads (Jnana kanda), describing the knowledge of Brahman, which alone enables the aspirant to attain liberation (moksha) or the highest good (nihsreyasa).

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, I.iv.15,  
the verse states that:

The whole universe, either in its unmanifested or in its manifested aspect, is of the very essence of names, forms and action, and is therefore non-Self.

Anything that is the result of action belongs  
to the realm of samsara. It is impermanent.

The section of the Upanishads dealing with the Upasana, however, supplies the bridge. It shows the way to direct the mind from the performance of rituals to the philosophical contemplation of Brahman.

Isa Upanishad states

1. 9

Into a blinding darkness they enter who are devoted to ignorance (rituals), but into a greater darkness they enter who engage in knowledge (contemplation of a deity) alone.

1.10

One thing is obtained from knowledge, another they say, from ignorance. Thus we have heard from the wise who have taught us this.

Harmonization of both is extolled.

1.11

He who is aware that both knowledge and ignorance should be pursued together, overcomes death through ignorance and obtains immortality through knowledge.

### **The Religion ordained for the householder**

From the Mahabharata, Anusasana parva, Section CXLI  
Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan ganguli

Maheshwara said: The religion ordained for the householder is said to have **Pravritti** for its chief indication. Auspicious and beneficial to all creatures, I shall expound it to thee. The householder should always make gifts according to the measure of his power. He should also perform sacrifices frequently after the same manner. Indeed, he who wishes to achieve his own good should always achieve meritorious acts. The householder should acquire wealth by righteous means. The wealth thus acquired



should be carefully divided into three portions, keeping the requirements of righteousness in view. With one of those portions he should accomplish all acts of righteousness. With another he should seek to gratify his cravings for pleasure. The third portion he should lay out for increasing. Of all the modes of life, that of the householder is the first. Of this there is no doubt.

Abstention from injury, truthfulness of speech, compassion towards all beings, tranquillity of soul, and the making of gifts to the best of one's power, are the foremost duties of the householder. Abstention from sexual congress with the spouses of other men, protection of the wealth and the woman committed to one's charge, unwillingness to appropriate what is not given to one, and avoidance of honey and meat, - these are the five chief duties. Indeed, Religion or Duty has many branches all of which are fraught with happiness. Even these are the duties which these embodied creatures who regard duty as superior should observe and practice. Even these are the sources of merit.

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### Gita Ch. 5 (further explanations)

Astronaut Kalpana Chawla

The following example may help us to understand the different paths of Sankhya and Yoga.

Let us think of a young girl, Kalpana Chawla by name, in a remote village in India. Her family shares the poor circumstances of the village folks, but Kalpana Chawla displays unusual character in being ambitious, strong willed and resolute in purpose. She wants to become an Astronaut (travel to outer space).

By single-minded application, Kalpana manages to reach the stage whereby NASA, the USA Space Administrators, accepts her and she is invited by NASA to join the team of astronauts. Kalpana will have to take the following three steps:

1. Kalpana has to travel by motor transport from her village in India to the airport (New Delhi).
2. Kalpana has to fly in a jetliner to reach USA.
3. After undergoing rigorous training, Kalpana has to travel in a rocket ship to go to outer space.

The motor transport and the jet liner are necessary to reach Kennedy Space Centre, but these means of transport are not capable of taking Kalpana to outer space (moksha or liberation). The motor transport and the jet plane can be likened to the path of Yoga. The path of Yoga is necessary and indispensable for most of us. This path of action helps to purify the mind.

Once the Space Centre is reached, then the need of the motor transport and the jet plane falls away.

The rocket ship is the path of the Sankhya, the path of

The rocket ship is the path of the Sankhya, the path of renunciation and knowledge. It is the path, the only way, with the capabilities of taking one to outer space (through the path of Sankhya to Moksha or liberation).

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## The Yoga doctrine.

The Mahabharata, Santi Parva

Section CCXL

Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli

Vyasa said: O excellent son, asked by thee, I have told thee truly what the answer to thy question should be according to the doctrine of knowledge as expounded in the Sankhya system. Listen now to me as I expound to thee all that should be done (for the same end) according to the Yoga doctrine.

The uniting together of Intellect and Mind, and all the Senses, and the all pervading Soul is said to be knowledge of the foremost kind. That knowledge should be acquired (through the preceptor's aid) by one that is of a tranquil disposition, that has mastered his senses, that is capable (by meditation) of turning his gaze on the Soul, that takes a pleasure in such meditation, that is endued with intelligence and pure in acts. One should seek to acquire this Knowledge by abandoning those five impediments of Yoga which are known to the wise, viz., **desire, wrath, cupidity, fear and sleep.**

Wrath is conquered with tranquillity of disposition. Desire is conquered by giving up all purposes. By reflecting with the aid of the understanding upon topics worthy of reflection, one endued with patience succeeds in abandoning sleep. By steady endurance one should restrain one's organs of generation and the stomach (from unworthy or sinful indulgence). One should protect one's hands and feet by using one's eyes. One should protect one's eyes and ears by the aid of one's mind, one's mind and speech by one's acts. One should avoid fear by heedfulness, and pride by waiting upon the wise. Subduing procrastination, one should, by these means, subdue these impediments of Yoga.

One should pay one's adorations to fire and the brahmanas (priests), and one should bow one's head to the deities. One should avoid all kinds of inauspicious discourse, and speech that is fraught with malice, and words that are painful to other minds. ...

Meditation, study, gift, truth, modesty, simplicity, forgiveness, purity of body, purity of conduct, subjugation of the senses, these enhance one's energy, which when enhanced destroys one's sins. By behaving equally towards all creatures and by living in contentment upon what is acquired easily and without effort, one attains to the fruition of all one's objects and succeeds in obtaining knowledge.

Cleansed of all sins, endued with energy, abstemious in diet, with senses under complete control, one should, after having subdued both desire and wrath, seek to attain to Brahman. Firmly uniting the senses and the mind (having drawn them away from all external objects) with gaze fixed inwards, one should, in the still hours of evening, or in those before dawn, place one's mind upon the knowledge. If even one of the five senses of a human being be kept unrestrained, all his wisdom may be seen to escape through it like water through an unstopped hole at the bottom of a leather bag. The



mind in the first instance should be sought to be restrained by the Yogi after the manner of a fisherman seeking at the outset to render that one among the fish powerless from which there is the greatest danger to his nets.

Having first subdued the mind, the Yogi should then proceed to subdue his ears, then his eyes, then his tongue, and then his nose. Having restrained them, he should fix them on the mind. Then withdrawing the mind from all purposes, he should fix it on the knowledge. Indeed, having restrained the five senses, the Yogi should fix them on the mind. When these with the mind for the sixth become concentrated in the knowledge, and thus concentrated remain steady and untroubled, then Brahman becomes perceptible like a smokeless fire of blazing flames or the Sun of effulgent radiance. Indeed, one then beholds in oneself one's soul like lightning fire in the skies. Everything then appears in it and it appears in everything in consequence of its infinitude. Those high-souled Brahmanas that are possessed of wisdom, that are endued with fortitude, that are possessed of high knowledge, and that are engaged in the good of all creatures, succeed in beholding it.

Engaged in the observance of austere vows, the Yogi who conducts himself thus for six months, seated by himself on an isolated spot, succeeds in attaining to an equality with the Indestructible. Annihilation, extension, power to present varied aspects in the same person or body, celestial scents, and sounds, and sights, the most agreeable sensations of taste and touch, pleasurable sensations of coolness and warmth, equality with the wind [Foot-note by the commentator and translator: Equality with the wind means speed of motion, power to disappear at will, and capacity to move through the skies. (Super natural powers known as 'Siddhis')]. Capability of understanding (by inward light) the meaning of scriptures and every work of genius, companionship of celestial damsels; acquiring all these by Yoga the Yogi should disregard them and merge them all in the knowledge.

[Note: By the practice of Yoga all these are capable of being acquired or attained. But then the Yogi who suffers himself to be led away by those valuable possessions is said to fall in hell, for the enjoyment of this kind is nothing but hell compared to the high object for which Yogis should strive].

Restraining speech and the senses one should practise Yoga during the hours after dusk, the hours before dawn, and at dawn of day, seated on a mountain summit, or at the foot of a goodly tree, or with a tree before him.

[Note: Chaitya trees or Peepul trees are sacred and large trees which stand firm on their roots and about which all round of each tree a platform of earth is raised. " In front of a tree" probably implying 'under the shade of its spreading branches'].

Restraining all the senses within the heart, one should with faculties concentrated think of the Eternal and Indestructible like a man of the world thinking of wealth and other valuable possessions. One should never, while practising Yoga, withdraw one's mind from it. One should with devotion betake oneself to those means by which one may succeed in restraining the mind that is very restless. One should never permit oneself to fall away from it. With the senses and the mind withdrawn from everything else, the Yogi (for practice) should betake himself to empty caves of mountains, to temples consecrated to the deities, and to empty houses or apartments, for living there. One should not associate with another in either speech, act or

thought. Disregarding all things, and eating very abstemiously, the Yogi should look with an equal eye upon objects acquired or lost. One should behave after the same manner towards one that praises and one that censures him. He should not seek the good or the evil of one or the other. He should not rejoice at an acquisition or suffer anxiety when he meets with failure or loss. Of uniform behaviour towards all beings, he should imitate the wind

[Note: "Imitate the wind" by becoming unattached to all things].

Unto one whose mind is thus turned to itself, who leads a life of purity, and who casts an equal eye upon all things,- indeed, unto one who is ever engaged in Yoga thus for even six months,- Brahman as represented by sound appears very vividly.

[Note: Refer to pages "Gayatri" and "Krishna's flute" See the column on the left].

[Also refer to The Bhagavad Gita, Ch.6, Verse 8:

The Yogi who is satisfied with the knowledge and wisdom (of the Self), who has conquered the senses, and to whom a clod of earth, a piece of stone and gold are the same, is said to be harmonised (i.e., is said to have attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi).]

Beholding all men afflicted with anxiety (on account of earning wealth and comfort), the Yogi should view a clod of earth, a piece of stone, and a lump of gold with an equal eye. Indeed, he should withdraw himself from this path (of earning wealth), cherishing an aversion for it, and never suffer himself to be stupefied. Even if a person happens to belong to the inferior order, even if one happens to be a woman, both of them, by following in the track indicated above, will surely attain to the highest end.

[Note by the scholar and translator: The inferior order here referred to is, of course, the Sudra order. The Commentator points out that whereas only the three superior orders (Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya) are regarded to be eligible for the study of Sankhya and for inculcation of such Srutis as Tattwamasi (That Thou Art), here sage Vyasa lays down that as regards the Yoga path, all are eligible to betake themselves to it]. [ Refer also to Bhagavad Gita, Ch.9, Verse 32: "For taking refuge in Me, they also, O Arjuna, who may be of a sinful birth, women, vaisyas as well as sudras-attain the Supreme goal"]].

He that has subdued his mind beholds in his own self, by the aid of his own knowledge the Uncreate, the Eternal Brahman,- That, viz., which cannot be attained except by fixed senses,- That which is subtler than the most subtle, and grosser than the most gross, and which is Emancipation's self.

[Note: ' Fixed senses ' i.e., when the senses are fixed on the mind and the mind on the understanding. Ajaram (a word in the original Sanskrit text) is immutable or unchanging or that in which there is no change for the worse or for the better. By subtility is indicated the incapacity of being apprehended, and by 'Mahattaram'(Sanskrit) is meant infinity].

By ascertaining from the mouths of preceptors and by themselves reflecting with their minds

Upon these words of the great and high-souled Rishis spoken so properly, persons possessed of wisdom attain to that equality (about which the

scriptures say) with Brahman himself, till, indeed, the time when the universal dissolution comes that swallows up all existent beings.

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## Gita

### Synopsis of the Bhagavad Gita

Based upon the book 'The Bhagavad Gita or the Song Divine'

Published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India.

References: Swami Shivananda, The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh

and Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli (translator of the Mahabharata).

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#### The Yoga of Dejection (despondency) of Arjuna

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12-19

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20-27

Arjuna beholds (observes) the warriors drawn up for battle.

28-47

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9-16

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37-47

The fate of one who falls from Yoga.  
Dhyana Yoga (Yoga of meditation) described.

## **Chapter 7. The Yoga of Jnana and Vijnana (Yoga of Wisdom and realization)**

(The following explanation is by Swami Shivananda  
The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh.)

**Jnana is paroksha-jnana or theoretical knowledge from the study of the scriptures and Vijnana is visesha jnana or aparoksha jnana, i.e., direct knowledge of the Self through Self-realization (spiritual experience or anubhava.**

### **Verses**

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15-31

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32-34

The Lord describes His Divine glories.  
The Lord exhorts Arjuna to fight; be the  
Lord's instrument.

35-46

Upon seeing the Universal Form, overwhelmed with fear and trembling,  
Arjuna praises the Lord, craves the Lord's  
orgiveness and says, 'I desire to see Thee as before, crowned,  
with four arms, bearing a mace and with the discus in hand.

47-50

The Lord describes the glory of the vision of His Universal  
Form, and reveals to Arjuna His four-armed, gentle human  
form.

51-55

Seeing again the Lord's gentle human form, Arjuna feels  
composed and restored to his own nature.

(For an ordinary man the Cosmic Form (vision) is  
overwhelming and terrifying, but for a Yogi it is encouraging, strengthening  
and soul-elevating. It is an inducement to all  
spiritual aspirants to strive to attain this sublime vision. What  
they should do is explained by the Lord in verses 53 to 55.)

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13-20

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12-15

The Light of Consciousness.

The immanence of the Lord as the all-sustaining life.

16-20

(The following explanation is by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli)

The Lord describes the two entities in the world, viz., the mutable and the immutable. The mutable is all (these) creatures. The unchangeable one is called the Immutable. But there is another, the Supreme Being, called Parmatma, who is the Eternal, All Pervading Lord, Sustainer of the three worlds (Purushottama, the Highest Being).

## **Chapter 16. The Yoga of Division between the Divine and the demoniacal**

### **Verses**

1-5

Description of the divine qualities and the nature of the demoniacal.

6-20

Characteristics of one possessed of demoniacal properties

21-24

Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the self- lust, anger and greed.

Let the scripture be the authority, in determining what ought to be done and what ought not be done.

## **Chapter 17. The Yoga of Division of Threefold Faith**

### **Verses**

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Faith analysed (Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic).  
A man consists of his faith; as a man's faith is, so is he.

7-22

Threefold food (Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic)  
Threefold sacrifice  
Austerity of speech  
Mental serenity  
Threefold austerity  
Threefold gift

23-28

'Om Tat Sat' explained

## **Chapter 18. The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation (through the path of Knowledge and Self-surrender)**

## Verses

1-12

Renunciation and abandonment

Sanyasa is renunciation of action with desire.

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The four orders of human beings and their duties (distributed according to the qualities born of their own nature.)

49-55

Path of knowledge described.

56-66

The path of Karma Yoga (Yoga of selfless action)

The path of devotion

Take refuge in the Lord

67-78

The glory of the Gita

The Blessed Lord said: "He who with supreme devotion to Me will teach this supreme secret to My devotees, shall doubtless come to Me. Nor is there any among men who does dearer service to Me, nor shall there be another on earth dearer to Me than he. And he who will study this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I shall have been worshipped by the sacrifice of wisdom."

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## The Bhagavad Gita Preamble

### What is the right thing to do?

Robbers are attacking a village at night, raping women, killing villagers,

torching their houses. To uphold righteousness, to protect the helpless villagers, a man (trained as a soldier) skilled with weapons, volunteers to defend the villagers and in the process, kill the robbers, if necessary.

The robbers came several times, and this soldier successfully repelled them, killing many of them and feeling justly proud about carrying out his duty as a soldier to defend the weak. His duty as a soldier is to lay down his life, if necessary, to carry out the duties of a true soldier.

After many months had passed, one night, when some robbers came again to attack the villagers, the volunteer soldier was shocked on seeing many of the robbers as his cousins, uncles and friends, intent upon robbing and killing the villagers and raping the women. They would not listen to reason.

What is the right thing to do for this volunteer soldier?

### **What is your verdict?**

From the teachings of Sant (Saint) Vinoba Bhave

A judge had sent hundreds of criminals to the gallows, but one day his own son was produced before him, accused of murder. His guilt was proved beyond doubt; the time had now come for the judge to pass sentence of death on his own son. But then he began to hesitate. He called all his ingenuity to his aid and began to argue thus: 'The death penalty is most inhuman; inflicting such punishment is no credit to man. All hope of reform is destroyed. The man who committed murder did so in the heat of excitement when he was beside himself. When the madness has passed from him, to take him coolly and calmly to the gallows and kill him is a disgrace to human society; it is a great crime.'

He thought up many such arguments. If his own son had not been brought before him, the Hon'ble Judge would have gone on relentlessly condemning people to death for the rest of his life. But now, because of partiality for his own son, he argued thus. This was not the voice of his inmost self; it was born of his attachment. 'This is my son', he thought; and from this sense of attachment sprang all those high-sounding words.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna's behaviour was like that of the judge in the story. The arguments advanced by him were not in themselves wrong. The whole world has seen precisely these consequences follow the last Great War. But what we should think about is this: that Arjuna had no real vision; it was only clever and superficial talk. All this Krishna knew. So, without paying any attention to Arjuna's words, Krishna straightaway began to set about dispelling his illusion.

If Arjuna had actually been converted to non-violence, he would never have been satisfied until his real point had been met, however much he was told about wisdom and knowledge. But the Gita has nowhere answered this point of his, and yet Arjuna was satisfied. The implication of all this is that Arjuna's attitude was not that of non-violence; he did believe in fighting. As he saw it, fighting was his natural, clear and inescapable duty (being a kshatriya, the warrior class). But he wanted to evade this duty because his vision was clouded by illusion. And it is on this illusion that the Gita's mace falls most heavily.

### **The purpose of the Gita: To destroy illusion**

Arjuna used not merely the language of non-violence, but even that of

Arjuna used not merely the language of non-violence, but even that of Sannyasa (of monks), of complete renunciation. "Even a life of renunciation is better than this bloodstained Kshatriya dharma, duty of the warrior class", he says. But was this the way of life for him, his svadharma? Was this the true expression of his nature? Arjuna could have cheerfully donned the garb of a Sannyasi (monk) but how could he have lived the life? If, in the name of sannyasa, he went into the forest (renouncing worldly life), he would start killing the deer there. Therefore, the Lord told him plainly, 'Arjuna, your present reluctance to fight is delusion. The nature that has become yours through the years will not permit you to refrain from fighting'.

### **Svadharma**

Arjuna felt at odds with his svadharma. But however unattractive a man's svadharma may be, he has to find fulfilment by persisting in it, because it is only through such persistence that growth is possible. There is no question of dignity involved here. This is the law of growth. Svadharma is not the sort of thing that one takes up because one thinks it is noble or gives up because it seems lowly. In fact, it is neither great nor small. It is equal to our measure. In the words of the Gita 'One's own dharma, even if devoid of merit, is the best for oneself' (Sreyaan svadharma vigunah). The word 'dharma' means not the organised religions, like Hindu-dharma or Muslim-dharma or Christian dharma. Every individual has his own distinct dharma. The 200 people who are in the audience in front of me have 200 different dharmas.

Even my own dharma today is not what it was ten years ago; it will not be the same ten years hence. As the course of one's life changes through thinking and experience one's old dharma drops off and a new dharma comes in its place. One achieves nothing by self-willed obstinacy in this matter. However superior another's dharma may appear to be, it is not good for me to adopt it. Quite often, it only appears easier. If a man in household life is not able to look after his children properly and, getting disgusted, gives up the world, it will turn out to be hypocrisy and will even become burdensome. If a man's mind is truly detached, surely renunciation is not difficult for him. Even if someone else's dharma seems easier, one should not take it up. It is really a question of one's vocation. One's dharma consists in following one's true vocation. The question is not whether it is high or low, easy or difficult. The growth must be real and fulfilment genuine.

'Swadharma' is one's own prescribed duty in life according to the eternal law.

From all this discussion, you would have understood that the purpose of the Gita is to remove the illusion that stands between us and our svadharma. Arjuna was perplexed about his dharma; a delusion had arisen in his mind over his svadharma. As soon as Sri Krishna points this out, Arjuna himself admits it. The Gita's main task is to remove this illusion, this sense of 'mine', this attachment.

Vyasa, the author of the Mahabharata (the verses of the Gita form part of the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata), said right at the beginning, 'In this epic, I am lighting a lamp to dispel the dark illusion that covers the heart of humanity'.

-Sant Vinoba Bhave

From other sources

The following simplified illustration may be helpful in understanding the concept of 'Svadharma'. (This may not define the true definition of 'svadharma').

A lady can be a teacher to her pupils at the school; a mother to her children; a daughter to her father; a lover to her fiancée; a chairperson of the ladies club; a nurse to a patient; the president of her country. The duties of a person can change many times in a day, from moment to moment. Her duties are different in the role of a teacher, a mother, a nurse, a lover, or president of her nation.

## War

To fight to uphold righteousness is one of the themes of the Bhagavad Gita.

‘Having regard to your duty, you should not waver, for there is nothing higher for a kshatriya (soldier) than a righteous war’.

- Gita, chapter 2, verse 31

Examine the entire human history. Can we find a period of one hundred years during which no wars were fought? Good and evil exist side-by-side, like heat and cold, day and night, happiness and misery etc. If that is an aspect of human nature as witnessed through history (to fight or wage wars, small or big, for whatever reasons, justifiable or unjustifiable, as one of the characteristics of humans); are there any guidelines from scriptures, regarding this aspect of human nature (or human activity)?

To get an understanding of the differences in human nature, please read page 'Sattwa, Rajas & Tamas'. (Predominantly Sattwa qualities would lead to saintliness, leading to meditation and not to war. The domain of Rajas is passion, desires, ambitions, possessions; such combinations would easily make up many recipes for wars).

Spiritually advanced souls would advocate peaceful co-existence and no wars, but such souls are very few. It is incumbent upon the ruling class and the soldiers (Kshatriyas) to protect the subjects and the state (kingdom) and in doing so, if necessary, to kill the enemy.

The two great epics of Hinduism, Ramayana and the Mahabharata, describe the events that lead to wars between the just and the unjust.

## Gita - The Background Story in Brief

Excerpts from the writings of Swami Prabhavananda

After the death of King Pandu, his brother Dhritarashtra (who was blind), succeeded to the throne. Dhritarashtra educated the five sons of Pandu (the Pandavas), along with his own one hundred sons (Kauravas). As they grew to be men, the Pandavas distinguished themselves by their piety and heroic

virtues. In consequence, Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra's eldest son, became jealous and planned to murder them. The Pandavas survived various murder plots. But Duryodhana was persistent and was for carrying on the feud, but Dhritarashtra wisely listened to the advice of his uncle Bhishma, which was to offer to the Pandavas half of his kingdom.

So the kingdom was divided. The Pandavas got the worst of the land, a wilderness along the Jamuna River. They cleared it, built a fine city, and crowned Yudhishtira, the eldest brother, as their king.

Now the five brothers lived in triumph and splendour, and Duryodhana hated them more than ever. His jealousy hatched a new plot for their ruin. The pious and noble Yudhishtira had a dangerous weakness for gambling. So Duryodhana challenged him to play dice with a clever sharper named Shakuni, knowing that the king would feel bound in honour to accept. They played. Shakuni cheated. Yudhishtira lost game after game, staking his wealth, his kingdom, and finally his brothers, wife Draupadi and himself. All were now the slaves of Duryodhana's vengeance, subject to insult and cruelty, until Dhritarashtra intervened and insisted that they be set at liberty and their kingdom given back.

But Duryodhana worked upon his father until he obtained permission for another dice match. The loser was to forfeit his kingdom and retire to the forest for twelve years, then he must live for one year in the city without being recognized; if he was discovered, the term of exile would begin again. This game Yudhishtira also lost. So the Pandavas went into exile to the forest.

When the period of exile was over at last, Yudhishtira asked for the return of his kingdom, but Duryodhana refused. Yudhishtira said he would be content with just one village for himself and for each of his brothers. But Duryodhana, in the insanity of his greed, would not agree even to this. Duryodhana refused to give to the Pandavas even an inch of land, covered by a sword's sharp point. The older members of the family tried to arbitrate, and failed. So war became inevitable. Neighbouring kings were drawn into the quarrel, until the whole of India was involved.

Both sides wanted help from Krishna. To both, Krishna offered the same choice. 'Either you can have the help of my kinsmen and soldiers, the Vrishnis, in the battle, or you can have me alone. But I shall take no part in the fighting'. Duryodhana chose Krishna's army. Arjuna preferred to take Krishna himself, as his personal charioteer.

The battle was fought on the plains of Kurukshetra, a sacred place of pilgrimage near Delhi. It was here, just before the armies engaged, (with Arjuna's chariot standing between the two armies) that Krishna and Arjuna had the dialogue that is recorded in the Bhagavad Gita.

The battle lasted eighteen days, and ended with the death of Duryodhana and a complete victory of the Pandavas. Thereafter Yudhishtira became the undisputed ruler of India.

He reigned for thirty-six years.

Bhagavad Gita literally means the Song of God. It is a dialogue between the Supreme Self and the embodied soul represented by Arjuna.

In the Gita dialogue there are four speakers: King Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya, Arjuna and Krishna.

King Dhritarashtra is blind. The sage Vyasa, who is traditionally supposed to be the author of the Mahabharata and the Gita (which forms part of the Mahabharata), offers to restore his sight, in order that he may watch the battle of Kurukshetra. But Dhritarashtra refuses. He cannot bear to see his kinsmen killed. So Vyasa confers psychic powers of clairvoyance and clair-audience upon Sanjaya, who is Dhritarashtra's minister and charioteer. As they sit together in the palace, Sanjaya describes to his master everything he sees and hears on the distant battlefield. Sanjaya acts as the medium and through his mouth, the words of Krishna and Arjuna are reported. Occasionally, Sanjaya pauses

The Gita is not primarily concerned with Krishna as an individual, but with his aspect as Brahman, the ultimate Reality.

King Dhritarashtra speaks but once. In fact the whole narrative of the Gita is sanjay's answer to his single opening question:

Dhritarashtra said:

‘Tell me, Sanjaya, what my sons and sons of Pandu did, when they gathered on the sacred field of Kurukshetra eager for battle?’

[Note: The reading of the Bhagavad Gita, verse by verse, may be commenced from here.]

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## **An Essay - Gita and War**

Excerpts from the writings of Swami Prabhavananda

Before the battle of Kurukshetra begins, Arjuna asks Krishna to drive their chariot into the open space between the two armies, so that he may see the men he must fight with. When Krishna does this, Arjuna recognises many of his kinsmen and old friends among the ranks of the enemy. He is appalled by the realisation that he is about to kill those whom he loves better than life itself. In his despair, he exclaims: ‘I will not fight!’

Krishna's reply to Arjuna occupies the rest of the book. It deals not only with Arjun's immediate personal problem, but with the whole nature of action, the meaning of life, and the aims for which man must struggle here on earth. At the end of their conversation, Arjuna has changed his mind. He is ready to fight. And the battle begins.

To understand the Gita, we must first consider what it is and



what it is not. We must consider its setting. When Jesus spoke the words, which are recorded as the Sermon on the Mount, he was addressing a group of dedicated followers, in a peaceful country atmosphere, far from strife and confusion. And so he taught them the highest and strictest ideal, the ideal of non-violence.

The Gita is very different. Krishna and Arjuna are on a battlefield. Arjuna is not a dedicated monk but a householder and a warrior by birth and profession. His problem is considered in relation to the circumstances of the moment.

In teaching Arjuna, Krishna employs two sets of values, the relative and the absolute. He begins by dealing with Arjuna's feelings of revulsion, on general grounds. Arjuna shrinks from the act of killing. Krishna reminds him that, in the absolute sense, there is no such act. The Atman, the indwelling Godhead (soul) is the only reality. This body is simply an appearance; its existence, its destruction, is likewise, illusory.

Having said this, Krishna goes on to discuss Arjuna's individual problem. For Arjuna, a member of the warrior caste, the fighting of this battle is undoubtedly 'righteous'. His cause is just. To defend it is his duty.

Socially the caste system is graded, but spiritually, there are no such distinctions. Everyone, says Krishna, can attain the highest sainthood by following the prescribed path of his own caste duty. And in Europe, as in Asia, there have been men who grew into spiritual giants while carrying out their duties as merchants, peasants, doctors, popes, scullions, or kings.

In the purely physical sphere of action, Arjuna is, indeed, no longer a free agent. The act of war is upon him; it has evolved out of his previous actions. At any given moment in time, we are what we are; and we have to accept the consequences of being ourselves. Only through this acceptance can we begin to evolve further. We may select the battleground. We cannot avoid the battle.

Arjuna is bound to act, but he is still free to make his choice between two different ways of performing the action. In general, mankind almost always acts with attachment; that is to say, with desire and fear. Desire for a certain result and fear that this result will not be obtained. Actions with attachments bind us to the world of appearances; to the continual doing of more actions.

But there is another way of performing action, and this is without desire and without fear. The doer of the non-attached actions is the most conscientious of men. Freed from desire and fear, he offers everything he does as a sacrament of devotion to his duty (surrenders all his actions to the Lord). All work becomes equally and vitally important. It is only toward the results of work- success or failure, praise or blame- that he remains indifferent. When action is done in this spirit, Krishna teaches, it will lead to the knowledge of what is behind action, behind all life; the ultimate Reality. And, with the growth of this knowledge, the need for further action will gradually fall away from us. We shall realise our true nature, which is God.

It follows, therefore, that every action, under certain

It follows, therefore, that every action, under certain circumstances and for certain people, may be a stepping-stone to spiritual growth – if it is done in the spirit of non-attachment. All good and all evil is relative to the individual point of growth. For each individual, certain acts are absolutely wrong. Indeed, there may well be acts that are absolutely wrong for every individual alive on earth today. But, in the highest sense, there can be neither good nor evil. Because Krishna is speaking as God Himself, he can take this attitude, and advise Arjuna to fight.

The Gita neither sanctions war nor condemns it. Regarding no action as of absolute value, either for good or for evil, it cannot possibly do either.

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### **Gita - The Entire Meaning of the Scripture Aphoristically Stated**

Commentary by Sri Madhusudana Sarasvati  
Translated by Swami Gambhirananda, Advaita Ashrama

The entire meaning of the Scripture (Bhagavad Gita), (which was introduced in the first chapter), has been aphoristically stated in the second chapter. To explain: Steadfastness in selfless works (nishkaam-karma) comes first; from that follows purification of the mind; thereafter the renunciation of all actions, led by sama, dama, etc.: then comes steadfastness in devotion to the Lord, together with Vichara (contemplation) on the Upanishadic sentences. From that comes steadfastness in the Knowledge of Reality; and the result of that is Jivanmukti, which comes through the cessation of nescience consisting of the three gunas and continues up to the end of the experience of the fruits of prarabdha-karma. At the end of that comes videha-mukti (freedom of the disembodied).

And during the state of jivanmukti one acquires supreme detachment (para-vairagya) through adherence to the highest human goal; and the virtuous dispositions, called divine wealth (daivi-sampat), which are helpful to it (para-vairagya) should be acquired. But the non-virtuous dispositions, called demoniacal wealth (asuri-sampat), which are opposed to it should be shunned. The specific cause of divine wealth (daivi-sampat) is faith (shraddha) born of sattva, and the cause of demoniacal wealth (asuri-sampat) is that faith (shraddha) which is born of rajas and tamas. Thus is exhausted the entire purpose of the Scripture in dividing what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.

As to that, steadfastness in nishkama-karma, which was aphoristically stated in, 'By remaining established in Yoga... undertake actions' ch.2- 48 etc., and which is means to purification of the mind, is elaborated in the third and the fourth chapters in general and specific ways. After that, steadfastness in renunciation of all actions in the case of a man of pure mind, which (steadfastness) follows from the perfection of the disciplines of sama, dama etc. and which was aphoristically stated in, '(That man attains Peace) who, after rejecting all the enjoyable things, moves about free from hankering, without the ideas of 'me' and 'mine', and devoid of pride), ch 2-71 is explained briefly and in detail in the fifth and sixth chapters. And by this much (of the Gita text) is ascertained the meaning of the word 'Thou' (in 'Thou art That') also.

After that, in six chapters is set forth, together with vichara on the

Upanishadic sentences, the various kinds of steadfastness in devotion to the Lord aphoristically stated in 'Controlling all of them (organs), and becoming concentrated, one should remain seated by accepting Me as the Supreme. For, the Wisdom of one whose organs are under control becomes steadfast', ch 2- 61. And by that much of the Gita text is determined the meaning of the word 'That' as well. And we shall show in the respective places the secondary connections in each chapter, as also the differences among the secondary purports of each chapter.

After that, steadfastness in the Knowledge of Reality (tattva-jnana), in the form of comprehension of the identity of the imports of the words 'That' and 'Thou', which has been aphoristically stated in, 'he who knows this One, which is indestructible, eternal, birthless and undecaying, how and whom does that person kill, or whom does he cause to be killed!' ch 2- 21, has been elaborated in the thirteenth chapter by making a distinction between prakriti (Nature) and Purusha (soul). And the fruit of steadfastness in Knowledge is the eradication of the effects of the three gunas, which has been aphoristically stated in 'O Arjuna, the Vedas have the effect of the three gunas as their object. You become desireless, free from the pairs of duality, poised in unwavering sattva, devoid of (the desire for) acquisition and preservation, and dependent on the Self', ch 2- 45.

In the fourteenth, in the course of describing the characteristics of one who has transcended the three gunas, that (eradication) itself has been shown as jivanmukti. In the fifteenth, through the 'felling of the Tree of Mundane Existence', (has been elaborated) steadfastness in para-vairagya (supreme detachment), which was aphoristically stated in, 'then you will acquire dispassion for what has to be heard and what has been heard' Ch 2- 52. In the sixteenth (it has been elaborated that) the daivi-sampat – which is helpful to para-vairagya and which was aphoristically stated in, 'The man of steady wisdom, whose mind is unperturbed in sorrow, who is free from longing for delights, and is devoid of attachment, fear and anger, is called a man of steady Wisdom', has to be acquired, and that the asuri-sampat opposed to it and briefly stated in 'the unenlightened people, who accept as the best this talk- which is flowery, which is a producer of births, actions and their results...' ch2- 42, has to be eschewed.

And in the seventeenth, the faith (sraddhaa) born of sattva, which is the specific cause of the daivi-sampat (divine wealth) and which was aphoristically stated in, '(you become) free from the pairs of duality, poised in unwavering sattva, devoid of the desire for acquisition and preservation, and dependent on the self', ch 2- 42, (has been elaborated) by rejecting those that are opposed to it. So steadfastness in Knowledge, together with its result, has been expounded in five chapters. And in the eighteenth has been concluded all that has been before. This is the interconnection among the topics in the Gita as a whole.

There, in the preceding chapter, steadfastness in Knowledge, on the basis of the knowledge about the Self, has been stated by the Lord in, 'this knowledge about the Self has been imparted to you' ch 2- 39. Similarly, steadfastness in Action, on the basis of the wisdom that has to be adopted in the Yoga of Action (Karma Yoga), has been stated (by the Lord in the next) beginning with, 'However, listen to this (wisdom) that is to be adopted in the Yoga (of Karma)' 2-39, and ending with, 'For you let there be the idea, "this is my duty", only with regard to action... Let there be no attachment in you to inaction' 2-47.

But the distinction between the persons competent for these two steadfastness has not been clearly taught by the Lord. Nor can it be said that, since the intended purpose is a combination (of the two), therefore the same person is verily competent for both. For it has been stated in, 'O Dhananjaya, since action is far inferior to the yoga of wisdom' (2-49), that steadfastness in Action is of lesser value than steadfastness in Knowledge. Besides, in, 'As the extent of need (fulfilled) in a well is fulfilled to that extent in a reservoir of water filled from all sides, (similarly) the extent of need fulfilled by all the Vedas (gets fulfilled) to that extent in the case of a seeker of Brahman when he has realization' (2-46), it has been shown that the results of all actions become included in the result of Knowledge; and after having spoken about the characteristic of the man of steady Wisdom, the result of Knowledge has been eulogistically summarized in, 'This steadfastness relates to Brahman (Supreme Reality). O Parhta, one does not become deluded after attaining this. Continuing in this state even in the closing years of life, one attains final beatitude in Brahman.' 2-72. Moreover, in 'that (Wisdom) which is (appears as) night to all beings' (2.69) etc., it has been stated that for an enlightened person there is no possibility of resorting to action, since there is no apprehension of duality. (Further), according to common sense, Knowledge alone is accepted as the means to the result, (viz) Liberation, in the form of cessation of ignorance.

Besides, there is Sruti,

<sup>1</sup>By knowing Him alone one transcends death;  
there is no other path to go by'  
-Svetasvatara Upanishad 3.8.

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## The Bhagavad Gita - verse by verse

Translation and commentaries by Swami Shivananda  
The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh

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### Gita Chapter 1

#### The Yoga of the Despondency of Arjuna

Dhritarashtra said:

1.01 (chapter one- verse one)

What did the sons of Pandu and also my people do when they

had assembled together eager for battle on the holy plains of Kurukshetra, O Sanjaya?

Sanjaya said:

1.02 (chapter one - verse two)

Having seen the army of the Pandavas drawn up in battle array, King Duryodhana then approached his teacher (Drona) and spoke these words.

1.03

Behold, O Teacher! This mighty army of the sons of Pandu, arrayed by the son of Drupada, thy wise disciple.

1.04

Here are heroes, mighty archers, equal in battle to Bhima and Arjuna, Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada of the great car (mighty warriors).

1.05

Dhrshtaketu, Chekitana and the valiant king of Kashi, Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Saibya, the best of men.

1.06

The strong Yudhamanyu and the brave Uttamaujas, the son of Subhadra (Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra and Arjuna), and the sons of Draupadi, all of great chariots (great heroes).

1.07

Know also. O best among the twice-born, the names of those who are the most distinguished amongst ourselves, the leaders of my army; these I name to thee for thy information.

1.08

Thyself and Bhishma, and Karna and also Kripa, the victorious in war, Ashvatthama, Vikarna, and also Jayadratha, the son of Somadatta.

1.09

And also many other heroes who have given up their lives or my sake, armed with various weapons and missiles, all well skilled in battle.

1.10

This army of ours marshalled by Bhishma is insufficient, whereas that army of theirs marshalled by Bhima is sufficient.

1.11

Therefore, do ye all, stationed in your respective positions, in the several divisions of the army, protect Bhishma alone.

1.12

His glorious grandsire (Bhishma), the oldest of the Kauravas, in order to cheer Duryodhana, now roared like a lion, and blew his conch.

1.13

Then (following Bhishma), conches and kettledrums, tabors, drums and cow-horns blared forth quite suddenly (from the

Kaurava side) and the sound was tremendous.

1.14

Then, also Madhava (Krishna) and the son of Pandu, seated in their magnificent chariot, yoked with white horses, blew their divine conches.

1.15

Hrishikesha blew the Panchajanya and Arjuna blew the Devadatta and Bhima, the doer of terrible deeds, blew the great conch Paundra.

1.16

The king Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew the Anantavijaya; Nakula and Sahadeva blew the Sughosha and the Manipushpaka.

1.17

The king of Kashi, an excellent archer, Shikhandi, the mighty car-warrior, Drishtadyumna and Virata and Satyaki, the unconquered.

1.18

Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, O lord of the earth, and the son of Subhadra, the mighty armed, blew their respective conches.

1.19

That tumultuous sound rent the hearts of (the members of) Dhritarashtra's party, making both the heaven and the earth resound.

1.20

Then, seeing the people of Dhritarashtra's party standing arrayed and the discharge of weapons about to begin, Arjuna, the son of Pandu, whose ensign was of a monkey, took up his bow and said the following to Krishna, O lord of the earth.

Arjuna said:

1.21 & 1.22

In the middle of the two armies, place my chariot, O Krishna, so that I may behold those who stand here, desirous to fight, and know with whom I must fight, when the battle is about to commence.

1.23

For I desire to observe those who are assembled here to fight, wishing to please in battle the evil minded Duryodhana (the son of Dhritarashtra).

Sanjaya said:

1.24

Thus addressed by Arjuna, Krishna, having stationed that best of chariots, O Dhritarashtra, in the midst of the two armies.

1.25

In front of Bhishma and Drona, and all the rulers of the earth, said: 'O Arjuna (son of Pritha), behold these Kurus gathered together.

1.26

Then Arjuna saw there (in the armies) stationed, fathers and grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and friends too.

1.27

(He saw) fathers-in law and friends also in both the armies. The son of Kunti, Arjuna, seeing all these kinsmen thus standing arrayed, spoke thus sorrowfully, filled with deep pity.

Arjuna said:

1.28

Seeing these, my kinsmen. O Krishna, arrayed, eager to fight.

1.29

My limbs fail and my mouth is parched up, my body quivers and my hairs stand on end.

1.30

The (bow) Gandiva slips from my hand, and my skin burns all over; I am unable even to stand and my mind is reeling, as it were.

1.31

And I see averse omens, O Keshava. I do not see any good in killing my kinsmen in battle.

1.32

For I desire not victory, O Krishna, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. Of what avail is dominion to us, O Krishna, or pleasures or even life?

1.33

Those for whose sake we desire kingdom, enjoyments and pleasures, stand here in battle, having renounced life and wealth.

1.34

Teachers, fathers, sons and also grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives.

1.35

These I do not wish to kill, though they kill me, O Krishna, even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds; leave alone killing them for the sake of the earth.

1.36

By killing these sons of Dhritarashtra, what pleasure can be ours, O Janardana (Krishna)? Only sin will accrue by killing these felons.

1.37

Therefore, we should not kill the sons of Dhritarashtra, our relatives; for how can we be happy by killing our own people,



O Madhava (Krishna)?

1.39

Why should not we who clearly see evil in the destruction of a family, learn to turn away from this sin, O Janardana (Krishna)?

1.40

In the destruction of a family, the immemorial religious rites of that family perish; on the destruction of spirituality, impiety overcomes the whole family.

1.41

By the prevalence of impiety, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupt; and women being corrupted, O Varsneya (descendant of Vrishni), there arises intermingling of castes.

1.42

Confusion of castes leads to hell and slayers of the family, for their forefathers fall, deprived of the offerings of rice-ball and water (libations).

1.43

By these evil deeds of the destroyers of the family, which cause confusion of castes, the eternal religious rites of the caste and the family are destroyed.

1.44

We have heard, O Janardana, that inevitable is the dwelling for an unknown period in hell for those men in whose families the religious practices have been destroyed.

1.45

Alas! We are involved in a great sin, in that we are prepared to kill our kinsmen, through greed for the pleasure of a kingdom.

1.46

If the sons of Dhritarashtra with weapons in hand should slay me in battle, unresisting and unarmed, that would be better for me.

Sanjaya said:

1.47

Having thus spoken in the midst of the battlefield, Arjuna, casting away his bow and arrow, sat down on the seat of the chariot with his mind overwhelmed with sorrow.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the first discourse entitled: The Yoga of the despondency of Arjuna

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## Gita Chapter 2 Sankhya and Yoga

### ( The Master Key to understanding the Bhagavad Gita)

The path that is destructible = **Acts**; Yoga (**Pravritti**; **Dharma, Artha, Kama**)  
The path that is indestructible = **knowledge**; **Sankhya (Nivritti; Moksha)**

[Note: The teachings of the Gita begin from verse 11 of the second chapter. Slokas 11 to 38 explain knowledge about the Self (Sankhya).

(As explained by Sri Madhusudana Sarasvati, translated into English by Swami Gambhirananda, Advaita Ashrama)

In sloka 39 the Blessed Lord said:

O Partha, this knowledge about the Self has been imparted to you (slokas 11 to 38). However, listen to this (wisdom) that is to be adopted in the Yoga (of Karma), (and) through which wisdom you, involved as you are (in action), will totally get rid of the bondage caused by actions (sloks 40 to 53).

(Person of steady wisdom (sthitapragnya) is the subject of slokas 54 to 72.)

To summarize:

**Sankhya (knowledge about the Self)** slokas 11 to 38

**Yoga (acts; path of actions)** slokas slokas 40 to 53.

**Person of steady wisdom (sthitapragnya) who is Self-absorbed (Sankhya)** slokas 54 to 72.

Sri Madhusudana Sarasvati describes the second chapter of the Gita as 'Aphoristic Presentation of the Gita'

**The Master Key to understanding the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita is presented here** and again pointed out in Gita Chapter 3 sloka 3 where the Blessed Lord said: 'In this world there is a two fold path; the path of knowledge of the Sankhyas and the path of action of the Yogis'.

The path that is destructible = **Acts (Pravritti; Dharma, Artha, Kama)**  
The path that is indestructible = **knowledge (Nivritti; Moksha)**

From the Mahabharata, Santi Parva, section CCXLI

(Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli)

Vyasa said: "I shall expound to thee the two paths, viz., the destructible and the indestructible, depending respectively upon acts and knowledge. Listen with concentrated attention, O child, to me, as I tell thee the place that is reached by one with the aid of knowledge, and that other place that is reached by one with the aid of acts. The difference between these two places is as great as the limitless sky. These are the two paths upon which the Vedas are established; the duties indicated by **Pravritti**, and those based on **Nivritti**.

**Pravritti** (Vyasa said)

By acts, a living creature is destroyed. By knowledge, however, he becomes emancipated. For this reason, Yogis, who behold the other side of the ocean of life never betake themselves to acts. Through acts one is forced to take rebirth, after death, with a body composed of the six and ten ingredients.

**Nivritti** (Vyasa said)

Through knowledge, however, one becomes transformed into that which is Eternal, Unmanifest, and Immutable".

Sri Adi Shankaracharya (A.D. 788-820) in his introduction to the Bhagavad Gita, wrote as follows:

The Vedic dharma (religion) is verily twofold, characterised by **Pravritti** (social action) and **Nivritti** (inward contemplation), designed to promote order in the world; this twofold dharma has in view the true social welfare and spiritual emancipation of all beings.

Sri Adi Shankaracharya wrote in his "Vivekachudamani, verse 11:

Work leads to purification of the mind, not to perception of the Reality. The realization of Truth (Brahman) is brought about by discrimination and not in the least by ten millions of acts.

(Translated by swami Madhavananda, Advaita Ashram)

From the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, I.iv, 15

The whole universe, either in its unmanifested or in its manifested aspect, is of the very essence of names, forms and action, and is therefore non-self (impermanent; subject to destruction).

[Note: Swami Nikhilananda of Sri Ramakrishna Math explained: Anything that is the result of action belongs to the realm of samsara or the process of worldly life that is subject to repeated births and deaths. It is impermanent. There exists an apparently unbridgeable gap between the ritualistic section (karma kanda) of the Vedas, dealing with the various enjoyments (abhyudaya) in the phenomenal universe (samsara), and the philosophical section of the Upanishads (Jnana kanda), describing the knowledge of Brahman (the Supreme Reality), which alone enables the aspirant to attain liberation (moksha) or the highest good (nirhreyasa).

The section of the Upanishads dealing with Upasana (devotional worship), however, supplies the bridge. It shows the way to direct the mind from the performance of rituals to the philosophical contemplation of Brahman (Supreme reality).

Isa Upanishad states: 1.9

Into a blinding darkness they enter who are devoted to ignorance (rituals), but into a greater darkness they enter who engage in knowledge (contemplation of the deity) alone.

Isa Upanishad 1.10

One thing is obtained from knowledge, another they say, from ignorance. Thus we have heard from the wise who have taught us this.

[Harmonization of both is extolled]

Isa Upanishad 1.11

He who is aware that both knowledge and ignorance should be pursued together, overcome death through ignorance and obtains immortality through knowledge.]

By Sri Madhusudana Sarasvati (Bhagavad Gita)

Translated by Swami Gambhirananda, Advaita Ashrama

It has been said that the purpose of the scripture Gita is absolute Liberation, which consists in the complete cessation of transmigration together with its causes.

That is the supreme State of Vishnu which is identical with absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, for the attainment of which the Vedas, consisting of three parts, have commenced.

The three parts successively stand for rites, meditation and enlightenment. In conformity with them, the Gita consisting of eighteen chapters, has three sections.

Here (in the Gita) each section of six chapters should be understood as referring to one part (of the Vedas). Steadfastness in Action (rites and duties) and steadfastness in Knowledge are taught in the first and the last sections.

Since the two cannot be combined because of their extreme opposition, therefore steadfastness in devotion to the Lord has been declared in the middle.

As that devotion is inherent in both of them, therefore it removes all the obstacles. That devotion is of three kinds- mixed with rites, pure, and mixed with Knowledge.

There again, in the first section the pure Self meant by the word 'Thou' (in 'Thou art That', Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.6) is ascertained rationally through the Path of Action and its renunciation.

In the second (section), by way of describing steadfastness in devotion to God, is ascertained the meaning of the word 'That' as the Lord who is supreme Bliss.

And in the third is presented clearly the meaning of the sentence (Thou art That') as the identity of the two. Thus, here (in the Gita) also there is an interconnection among the (three) sections.

The steps in the disciplines for Liberation are presented as the purpose of the Scripture (Gita).

The first step is the performance of selfless work (Nishkama Karma) by rejecting rites and duties meant for personal gain (Kaamya Karma) and the prohibited actions (Nishiddha Karma). There again the highest merit lies in repeating the name (japa) of and praising (the Lord) Hari.

Performance of selfless work (nishkam Karma) is declared to be the root cause of Liberation, and the hindrances to it are the demoniacal sins, such as sorrow etc., from which follow deviation from one's natural duty, recourse to what is prohibited, or action performed with selfish motive or egotism.

Being thus ever under the influence of the demoniacal sins, a person becomes unfit for gaining the human Goal and suffers a series of afflictions.

When after the dissipation of sins from the mind it becomes fit for discrimination, then there arises a firm discrimination between the permanent and the transient.

[Gradually follows detachment from things here and hereafter- renunciation becomes fully established leading to firm hankering for Liberation- further leading to profound meditation (nididhyasana). The whole of the Yoga scripture, indeed, gets its purpose fulfilled at this stage.]

The devotion cultivated in the preceding stage leads to the next stage. Otherwise, attainment of success is very difficult owing to the abundance of obstacles. Devotion to God should still be cultivated for attaining the later stages. They cannot be attained without that devotion.

As a result, when the mind becomes freed from all the defects there arises the Knowledge of Reality from (hearing) the Upanishadic sentence (Thou art That). From the word of the Upanishad itself springs the Unitive Vision (i.e. immediate Knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the Self).

He who has become such a knower of Brahman (supreme Reality) is the foremost among the expounders of Vedanta. He is spoken of as having gone beyond the gunas (Sattva, Rajas & Tamas), a man of steady Wisdom (sthita-prajna), and a devotee of Vishnu.

He is also called a transcender of the castes and stages of life, one who is liberated while still alive (jivanmukta), and a delighter (only) in the Self. The scriptures keep away from such a person because of his being self-fulfilled.

On the authority of the Upanishadic text (Svetasvatara Upanishad 6.23):

'He who has supreme devotion to the Deity, and as much of it to the guru as to the Deity, to him, indeed, to the great-souled one, these subject matters that have been spoken of become revealed'. It follows that devotion to God with body, mind and speech,

under all conditions, becomes useful in this context.

According to the sentence 'Of them the man of Knowledge (jnani) excels since he is endowed with constant steadfastness and one-pointed devotion....' (Gita 7.17), this one who is full of loving devotion is declared to be the highest.

[Note: (By Swami Atmaramananda, Advaita Ashrama.)

Sri Madhusudana Sarasvati's commentary on the Bhagavad Gita stands next only to Sri Shankaracharya's commentary as regards clarity, depth, and originality. This work by Sri Madhusudana Sarasvati (published by Advaita Ashrama), and translated into English by Swami Gambhirananda, includes Madhusudana's Gudhartha Dipika (an Annotation revealing the true import of the Gita) and is probably the greatest of his many literary works. In his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, Madhusudana has set forth a philosophy of life which also recognized other ways of spiritual development - such as Yoga, devotion to God, and the analytical penetration of Sankhya. Here, Madhusudana gave the highest place to the cultivation of devotion. According to him, devotion is the most effective means of God-realization and Sri Krishna is the highest manifestation of the Divine. Krishna is the source of all blessedness, his heart's sole resting place, and his life's joy. Once Madhusudana wrote that those who can worship the inscrutable Unmanifested may well do so; but for him there is nothing greater than the thought of surrender to Sri Krishna and nothing sweeter than love of Sri Krishna.]

Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa taught about difficulties of Jnana Yoga (Yoga of Knowledge):

Sri Ramakrishna: Jnana Yoga is exceedingly difficult in this age of Kali. In the first place, our life in this age depends entirely upon food (Annagataprana). Secondly, the term of human life now is much too short for this purpose. Thirdly, it is almost impossible in this age to get rid of the illusion that the Self is one with the body (Dehatma-buddhi), which clings to us. Now the conclusion which the Jnani must come to is: "I am not the body, I am one with the Universal Soul, the Absolute, the Unconditioned Being." As I am not the body, I am not subject to the conditions of the body, such as hunger, thirst, birth, death, disease and the rest. One subject to these physical conditions and yet calling oneself a Jnani, is like a person who is suffering from intense pain caused by a thorn that has run into his hand and who nevertheless says, "Why, my hand is not at all scratched or torn (pierced). It is all right." This kind of talk will not do. First of all the 'thorn' of body-consciousness has to be burnt into ashes by the fire of Jnana (Knowledge).

Sri Ramakrishna: Very few persons are fit for the attainment of Jnana (Knowledge). The Gita declares: "One among thousands desires to know Him, and even among thousands of those who are desirous to know, one perhaps can actually know Him." The less one's attachment to the world, i.e., for "lust and gold", the more will be one's Jnana (Knowledge of God).

Sri Ramakrishna: The Jnana Yogi says: "I am He." But as long as one has the idea of the Self as body, this egotism is injurious. It does not help one's progress, and it brings about one's ruin. Such a person deceives himself and others.

A certain Brahmachari (religious aspirant) named Ramachandra one day visited Sri Ramakrishna at the temple of Dakshineswar. The aspirant had allowed his hair to grow into long matted tresses after the way of ascetics. Having taken his seat, he began to exclaim from time to time, "Sivoham! Sivoham!" (I am the Lord Siva!), but was dumb otherwise. Sri Ramakrishna observed him silently for some time and then remarked:

Sri Ramakrishna said: "What is the good of merely repeating the word 'Sivoham'? It is only when one, by perfect meditation on the Lord in the temple of one's heart, has lost all idea of self and realised the Lord Siva within, that one is entitled to utter this sacred word. What good can the mere repetition of the formula do without the realisation? So long as the stage of realisation is not reached, it is better to regard the Lord as the Master and oneself as His humble servant"

The aspirant realised his mistake and became wiser by this advice and other similar teachings. Before he left the place, he wrote down on the wall of Sri Ramakrishna's room: "Taught by the Swami, from this day forward Ramachandra Brahmachari regards the Lord as his Master and himself as His humble servant."

We come across a seemingly puzzling contradiction in the following verses of the Gita:

The Blessed Lord said:

The childish, not the learned ones, speak of Sankhya and (Karma) Yoga as different. Any one who has properly resorted to even one (of them) gets the results of both. (Gita 5.4)

The state that is reached by the Sankhyas, that is reached even by the Yogis. He sees who sees Sankhya and Yoga as one. (Gita 5.5)

The following commentary is by Sri Madhusudana Sarasvati:

In the third chapter, having been asked by Arjuna, '...if it is Your opinion that Wisdom is superior to action,' etc., (3.1), the Lord concluded in '...among these people two kinds of steadfastnesses were spoken of earlier by Me,' etc. (3.3), that since there cannot be an option between or a combination of Knowledge and action (in the same person), therefore they have to be assigned according to the differences in the persons competent for them.

To explain: Action, which is within the competence of an ignorant man, cannot be combined with Knowledge, because like light and darkness they cannot coexist, and because Knowledge is opposed to it (action) since it (the former) removes the idea of differences, the source of competence for actions. Nor can it be treated as an alternative (to Knowledge), since it does not have the same goal in view. For, actions cannot cause the destruction of ignorance, which (destruction) is an effect of Knowledge, as stated in Sruti (scriptures):

'By knowing Him alone one goes beyond death; there is no other path to go by' -Svetasvatara Upanishad, 6.15

(Gita 3.3) The Blessed Lord said: O unblemished one, among these people two kinds of steadfastness were spoken of previously by Me - in the Yoga of Knowledge for the men of realization, in the Yoga of Action for the yogis.

The word *nishtha*, *steadfastness*, is used in the singular number for expressing the idea that steadfastness, though verily one, is of two kinds according to the difference of the states of being the goal and the means, but not that there are verily two independent steadfastnesses. So the Lord will say in Gita 5.5: 'He sees who sees Sankhya and Yoga as one'.

The Lord shows that very steadfastness as of two kinds: Sankhyaa means right Knowledge of the Self. For those who have attained that, Saankhyanaam, for the men of Self-realization, who have resorted to monasticism from the stage of celibacy itself, who have a firm understanding about the Reality as a result of the realization arising from the Upanishads, who have ascended to the plane of realization, who have a pure mind; jnana-yogena, in the Yoga of Knowledge.

But, yoginaam, for the yogis, who are not of pure minds, who have not ascended to the plane of Knowledge, for the yogis who are eligible for action; karma-yogena, in the Yoga of Action. Karma, action, itself is a yoga, in the derivative sense of 'that by which one becomes united with purification of the mind'. Steadfastness in that for ascending to the plane of knowledge through purification of the mind has been stated in Gita 2.31: '...since for a Kshatriya there is no other means conducive to bliss than a righteous battle'.

Hence there is neither combination of Knowledge and Action nor an option between them. But to those whose minds have become purified by Nishkama Karma, Knowledge comes only after renunciation of all works. Thus in accordance with the difference in the states consisting of purification and non-purification of the mind, two kinds of steadfastness have been taught to the very same person, viz., you, in, 'this knowledge about the Self has been imparted to you. However, listen to this (wisdom) which is to be adopted in the Yoga (of Karma)' Gita 2.39. So the idea is that, since both are useful to the very same person in accordance with the difference in his states, therefore there is no futility in imparting the instruction (to the very same person) in spite of the difference in eligibility....In the verses beginning with 'therefore, remaining unattached...' (Gita, 3.19), the Lord shows that, with the skill in the form of absence of hankering for results, action, even though a source of bondage, becomes a source of Liberation through purification of the mind and rise of Knowledge.

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[Upanishads](#) (Isa Upanishad)

[Devotion](#) (Bhakti- Surrender)

## Gita verse by verse Chapter 2

Sanjaya said:

2.01

To him who was thus overcome with pity and who was despondent, with eyes full of tears and agitated, Madhusudana (the destroyer of Madhu) or Krishna spoke these words.

The Blessed Lord said:

2.02

Whence is this perilous strait come upon thee, this dejection which is unworthy of you, disgraceful, and which will close the gates of heaven upon you, O Arjuna?

2.03

Yield not to impotence, O Arjuna, son of Pritha. It does not befit thee. Cast off this mean weakness of the heart! Stand up, O scorcher of the foes!

Arjuna said:

2.04

How, O Madhusudana, shall I fight in battle with arrows against Bhishma and Drona, who are fit to be worshipped, O destroyer of enemies?

2.05

Better it is, indeed, in this world to accept alms than to slay the most noble teachers. But if I kill them, even in this world all my enjoyments of wealth and desires will be stained with (their) blood.

2.06

I can hardly tell which will be better, that we should conquer them or that they should conquer us. Even the sons of Dhritarashtra, after slaying whom we do not wish to live, stand facing us.

2.07

My heart is overpowered by the taint of pity; my mind is confused as to duty. I ask Thee. Tell me decisively what is good for me. I am Thy disciple. Instruct me who has taken refuge in Thee.

2.08

I do not see that it would remove this sorrow that burns up my senses, even if I should attain prosperous and unrivalled dominion on earth or lordship over the gods.

Sanjaya said:

2.09

Having spoken thus to Hrshikesha (the Lord of the senses), Arjuna (the conqueror of sleep), the destroyer of foes, said to Krishna, "I will not fight" and became silent.

2.10

To him who was despondent in the midst of the two armies, Krishna, as if smiling, O Bharata, spoke these words.

The Blessed Lord said:

2.11

Thou hast grieved for those that should not be grieved for, yet thou speakest words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.

2.12

Nor at any time indeed was I not, nor these rulers of men, nor verily shall we ever cease to be hereafter.

2.13

Just as in this body the embodied (soul) passes into childhood, youth and old age, so also does he pass into another body; the firm man does not grieve at.

2.14

The contacts of the senses with the objects, O son of Kunti, which cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain, have a beginning and an end; they are impermanent; endure then bravely, O Arjuna.

2.15

That firm man whom, surely, these afflict not, O chief among men, to whom pleasure and pain are the same, is fit for attaining immortality.

2.16

The unreal hath no being; there is no non-being of the real; the truth about both has been seen by the knowers of the Truth (or the seers of the Essence).

2.17

Know That to be indestructible, by Whom all this is pervaded.  
None can cause the destruction of That, the Imperishable.

2.18

These bodies of the embodied Self, Who is eternal,  
indestructible and immeasurable, are said to have an end.  
Therefore fight, O Arjuna.

2.19

He who takes the Self to be the slayer and he who thinks He is slain,  
neither of them knows. He slays not, nor is He slain.

2.20

He is not born, nor does He ever die; after having been, He  
again ceases not to be; unborn, eternal, changeless and  
ancient, He is not killed when the body is killed.

2.21

Whosoever knows Him to be indestructible, eternal, unborn  
and inexhaustible, how can that man slay, O Arjuna, or cause  
to be slain?

2.22

Just as a man casts off worn out clothes and puts on new ones, so also the  
embodied Self casts off worn out bodies and enters others which are new.

2.23

Weapons cannot cut It, fire cannot burn It, water cannot make  
It wet, and air (or wind) cannot dry It.

[Note: The five elements cannot destroy the soul. Four of the elements are  
mentioned here. Weapons are from earth  
element; the other three are fire, water and air. The fifth  
element is space.]

2.24

This Self cannot be cut, burnt, wetted, nor dried up. It is eternal, all  
pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.

2.25

This (Self) is said to be unmanifested, unthinkable and unchangeable.  
Therefore, knowing This to be such, thou  
shouldst not grieve.

2.26

But even if thou thinkest of It as being constantly born and constantly dying,  
even then, O mighty armed, thou shouldst not grieve.

2.27

For certain is death for the born, and certain is birth for the  
dead; therefore, over the inevitable thou shouldst not grieve.

2.28

Beings are unmanifested in their beginning, manifested in their middle  
state, O Arjuna, and unmanifested again in their end. What is there to  
grieve about?

2.29



2.29

One sees This (the Self) as a wonder; another speaks of It as a wonder; another hears of It as a wonder; yet having heard, none understands It at all.

2.30

This, the Indweller in the body of everyone is ever indestructible, O Arjuna; therefore, thou shouldst not grieve for any creature.

2.31

Further, having regard to thy duty, thou shouldst not waver, for there is nothing higher for a Kshatriya than a righteous war.

2.32

Happy are the Kshatriyas, O Arjuna! Who are called upon to fight in such a battle that comes of itself as an open door to heaven.

2.33

But if thou wilt not fight this righteous war, then having abandoned thine own duty and fame, thou shalt incur sin.

2.34

People, too, will recount thy everlasting dishonour; and to one who has been honoured, dishonour is worse than death.

2.35

The great car-warriors will think that thou hast withdrawn from the battle through fear; and thou wilt be lightly held by them who have thought much of thee.

2.36

Thy enemies also, cavilling at thy power, will speak many abusive words. What is more painful than this?

2.37

Slain, thou wilt obtain heaven; victorious, thou wilt enjoy the earth; therefore, stand up, O son of Kunti, resolved to fight.

2.38

Having made pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat the same, engage thou in battle for the sake of battle; thus thou shalt not incur sin.

2.39

This, that has been taught to thee, is wisdom concerning Sankhya. Now listen to wisdom concerning Yoga, endowed with which, O Arjuna, thou shalt cast off the bonds of action.

2.40

In this there is no loss of effort, nor is there any harm (production of contrary results or transgression). Even a little of this knowledge (even a little practice of this Yoga) protects one from great fear.

2.41

Here, O joy of the Kurus, there is but a single one-pointed determination; many branched and endless are the thoughts

of the irresolute.

2.42

Flowery speech is uttered by the unwise, taking pleasure in the eulogising of the Vedas, O Arjuna, saying, "There is nothing else."

2.43

Full of desires, having heaven as their goal, they utter speech which promises birth as the reward of actions and prescribe various specific actions for the attainment of pleasure and power.

2.44

For those who are attached to pleasure and power whose minds are drawn away by such teaching, that determinate reason is not formed which is steadily bent on meditation and samadhi (super-conscious state).

2.45

The Vedas deal with the three attributes (of Nature); be thou above these three attributes. O Arjuna, free yourself from the pairs of opposites, and ever remain in the quality of Sattva (goodness), freed from (the thought of) acquisition and preservation, and be established in the Self.

2.46

To the Brahmana who has known the Self, all the Vedas are of as much use as is a reservoir of water in a place where there is a flood.

[Note: All the transient pleasures derivable from the proper performance of all actions enjoined in the Vedas are comprehended in the infinite bliss of Self-knowledge.]

2.47

Thy right is to work only, but never with its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be to inaction.

2.48

Perform action, O Arjuna, being steadfast in Yoga, abandoning attachment and balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is called Yoga.

2.49

Far lower than the Yoga of wisdom is action, O Arjuna. Seek thou refuge in wisdom; wretched are they whose motive is the fruit.

2.50

Endowed with wisdom (evenness of mind), one casts off in this life both good and evil deeds; therefore, devote thyself to Yoga; Yoga is skill in action.

2.51

The wise, possessed of knowledge, having abandoned the fruits of their actions, and being freed from the fetters of birth,

go to the place, which is beyond all evil.

2.52

When thy intellect crosses beyond the mire of delusion, then thou shalt attain to indifference as to what has been heard and what has yet to be heard.

2.53

When thy intellect, perplexed by what thou hast heard, shall stand immovable and steady in the Self, then thou shalt attain Self-realization.

Arjuna said:

2.54

What, O Krishna, is the description of him who has steady wisdom, and is merged in the super-conscious state? How does one of steady wisdom speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?

The Blessed Lord said:

2.55

When a man completely casts off, O Arjuna, all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the Self, then is he said to be one of steady wisdom.

2.56

He whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after pleasures, and is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage of steady wisdom.

2.57

He who is everywhere without attachment, on meeting with anything good or bad, who neither rejoices nor hates, his wisdom is fixed.

2.58

When like the tortoise which withdraws on all sides its limbs, he withdraws his senses from the sense-objects, and then his wisdom becomes steady.

2.59

The objects of the senses turn away from the abstinent man leaving the longing (behind); but his longing also turns away on seeing the Supreme.

2.60

The turbulent senses, O Arjuna, do violently carry away the mind of a wise man though he is striving (to control them).

2.61

Having restrained them all he should sit steadfast, intent on me; his wisdom is steady whose senses are under control.

2.62

When a man thinks of the objects, attachment for them arises;

from attachment desire is born; from desire anger arises.

2.63

From anger comes delusion; from delusion loss of memory;  
from loss of memory the destruction of discrimination; from destruction of  
discrimination he perishes.

2.64

But the self-controlled man, moving among the objects with the senses  
under restraint and free from attraction and repulsion, attains to peace.

2.65

In that peace all pains are destroyed; for the intellect of the tranquil-minded  
soon becomes steady.

2.66

There is no knowledge of the Self to the unsteady and to the unsteady no  
meditation is possible, and to the un-meditative  
there can be no peace, and to the man who has no peace,  
how can there be happiness?

2.67

For the mind, which follows in the wake of the wandering  
senses, carries away his discrimination, as the wind (carries  
away) a boat on the waters.

2.68

Therefore, O mighty armed Arjuna; his knowledge is steady  
whose senses are completely restrained from sense-objects.

2.69

That which is night to all beings, then the self-controlled man is awake;  
when all beings are awake that is night for the muni  
(sage) who sees.

2.70

He attains peace into whom all desires enter as waters enter the ocean  
which, filled from all sides, remains unmoved; but not the man who is full of  
desires.

2.71

The man attains peace who, abandoning all desires, moves  
about without longing, without the sense of mine and without  
egoism.

2.72

This is the Brahmic seat (eternal state), O son of Pritha.  
Attaining to this, none is deluded. Being established therein,  
even at the end of life, one attains to oneness with Brahman.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the  
science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue  
between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the second discourse  
entitled:

The Sankhya Yoga

### **Gita Chapter 3** **The Yoga of Action**

#### 3.01

Arjuna said: If it be thought by Thee that knowledge is superior to action, O Krishna, why then, O Keshava, do Thou ask me to engage in this terrible action?

#### 3.02

With these apparently perplexing words, Thou confusest, as it were, my understanding; therefore tell me that one-way for certain by which I may attain bliss.

The Blessed Lord said:

#### 3.03

In this world there is a twofold path, as I said before, O sinless one; the path of knowledge of the Sankhyas and the path of action of the Yogis.

#### 3.04

Not by non-performance of actions does man reach actionlessness; nor by mere renunciation does he attain to perfection.

#### 3.05

Verily none can ever remain for even a moment without performing action; for everyone is made to act helplessly indeed by the qualities born of nature.

#### 3.06

He who, restraining the organs of action, sits thinking of the sense-objects in mind, he of deluded understanding is called a hypocrite.

#### 3.07

But whosoever, controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, engages himself in Karma Yoga with the organs of action, without attachment, he excels.

#### 3.08

Do thou perform (thy) bounden duty, for action is superior to inaction and even the maintenance of the body would not be possible for thee by inaction.

#### 3.09

The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice; do thou, therefore, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), perform action for that sake (for sacrifice alone), free from attachment.

3.10

The Creator, having in the beginning (of creation) created mankind together with sacrifice, said, "By this shall you propagate; let this be the milch cow of your desires (the cow which yields all the desired objects)".

3.11

With this do you nourish the gods and may those gods nourish you; thus nourishing one another, you shall attain to the highest good.

3.12

The gods, nourished by the sacrifice, will give you the desired objects. So, he who enjoys the objects given by the gods without offering (in return) to them is verily a thief.

3.13

The righteous who eat the remnants of the sacrifice are freed from all sins; but those sinful ones who cook food (only) for their own sake verily eat sin.

3.14

From food come forth beings; from rain food is produced; from sacrifice arises rain and sacrifice is born of action.

3.15

Know thou that action comes from Brahma and Brahma comes from the Imperishable. Therefore, the all pervading (Brahma) ever rests in sacrifice.

3.16

He who does not follow here the wheel thus set revolving, who is of sinful life, rejoicing in the senses, he lives in vain, O Arjuna.

3.17

But for that man who rejoices only in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self and who is content in the Self alone, verily there is nothing to do.

3.18

For him there is no interest whatever in what is done or what is not done; nor does he depend on any being for any object.

3.19

Therefore, without attachment, do thou always perform action which should be done; for by performing action without attachment man reaches the Supreme.

3.20

Janaka and others attained perfection verily by action only; even with a view to the protection of the masses you should perform action.

3.21

There is nothing in the three worlds, O Arjuna, that should be done by Me, nor is there anything unattained that should be

attained; yet I engage Myself in action.

3.22

There is nothing in the three worlds, O Arjuna, that should be done by Me, nor is there anything unattained that should be attained; yet I engage Myself in action.

3.23

For, should I not ever engage in action, unwearied men would in every way follow My path, O Arjuna.

3.24

These worlds would perish if I did not perform action; I should be the author of confusion of castes and destruction of these beings.

3.25

As the ignorant men act from attachment to action, O Bharata (Arjuna), so should the wise act without attachment, wishing the welfare of the world.

3.26

Let no wise man unsettle the mind of ignorant people who are attached to action; he should engage them in all actions, himself fulfilling them with devotion.

3.27

All actions are wrought in all cases by the qualities of Nature only. He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks, "I am the doer".

3.28

But he who knows the truth, O mighty armed (Arjuna), about the divisions of the qualities and (their) functions, knowing that the gunas (qualities born of Nature) as senses move amidst the gunas as the sense-objects, is not attached.

3.29

Those deluded by the qualities of Nature are attached to the functions of the qualities. The man of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the foolish one who is of imperfect knowledge.

3.30

Renouncing all actions in Me, with the mind centred in the Self, free from hope and egoism, and from (mental) fever, do thou fight.

3.31

Those men who constantly practise this teaching of Mine with faith and without cavilling, they too are freed from actions.

3.32

But those who carp at My teaching and do not practise it, deluded in all knowledge, and devoid of discrimination, know them to be doomed to destruction.

3.33



Even a wise man acts in accordance with his own nature;  
beings will follow Nature; what can restraint do?

3.34

Attachment and aversion for the objects of the senses abide  
in the senses; let none come under their sway; for, they are his  
foes.

3.35

Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit than the duty  
of another well discharged. Better is death in one's own duty;  
the duty of another is fraught with fear (is productive of danger).

Arjuna said:

3.36

But impelled by what does man commit sin, though against his wishes, O  
Varsneya (Krishna), constrained as it were, by force?

The Blessed Lord said:

3.37

It is desire, it is anger born of the quality of Rajas, all devouring,  
all sinful; know this as the foe here (in this world).

3.38

As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, and as an embryo by  
the amnion, so is this enveloped by that.

3.39

O Arjuna, wisdom is enveloped by this constant enemy of the  
wise in the form of desire, which is unappeasable as fire.

3.40

The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its seat; through these  
it deludes the embodied by veiling his wisdom.

3.41

Therefore, O best of the Bharatas (Arjuna), controlling the  
senses first, do thou kill this sinful thing, the destroyer of  
knowledge and realisation.

3.42

They say that the senses are superior (to the body); superior  
to the senses is the mind; superior to the mind is the intellect;  
one who is superior even to the intellect is He (the Self).

3.43

Thus knowing Him Who is superior to the intellect and  
restraining the self by the Self, slay thou, O mighty armed  
Arjuna, the enemy in the form of desire, hard to conquer.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the  
science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue  
between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the third discourse

entitled:

## The Yoga of Action

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### **Gita Chapter 4** **The Yoga of Wisdom**

The Blessed Lord said:

4.1

I taught this imperishable Yoga to Vivasvan; he told it to Manu; Manu proclaimed it to Ikshvaku.

4.2

This handed down thus in regular succession, the royal sages knew. This Yoga by long lapse of time has been lost here, O Parantapa (burner of the foes).

4.3

That same ancient Yoga has been today taught to thee by Me, for thou art My devotee and My friend; it is the supreme secret.

Arjuna said:

4.4

Later on was Thy birth, and prior to it was the birth of Vivasvan (the sun); how am I to understand that Thou taught this Yoga in the beginning?

The Blessed Lord said:

4.5

Many births of Mine have passed as well as of thine, O Arjuna; I know them all but thou knowest not, O Parantapa (scorcher of foes).

4.6

Though I am unborn, of imperishable nature, and though I am the Lord of all beings, yet, ruling over My own Nature, I am born by My own Maya.

4.7

Whenever there is decline of righteousness, O Arjuna, and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself.

4.8

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age.

4.9

4.9

He who thus knows in true light, My divine birth and action, having abandoned the body, is not born again; he comes to Me. O Arjuna.

4.10

Freed from attachment, fear and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by the fire of knowledge, many have attained to My being.

For further explanations click below

[Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 10](#)

4.11

In whatever way men approach Me even so do I reward them; My path do men tread in all ways, O Arjuna.

4.12

Those who long for success in action in this world sacrifice to the gods; because success is quickly attained by men through action.

4.13

The fourfold caste has been created by Me according to the differentiation of guna and karma; though I am the author thereof know Me as non-doer and immutable.

4.14

Actions do not taint Me, nor have I desire for the fruit of actions. He who knows Me thus is not bound by actions.

4.15

Having known this, the ancient seekers after freedom also performed action; therefore do thou also perform action, as did the ancients in days of yore.

4.16

What is action? What is inaction? As to this even the wise are confused. Therefore I shall teach thee such action (the nature of action and inaction) by knowing which thou shalt be liberated from the evil (of samsara, the wheel of birth and death).

4.17

For verily (the true nature) of action (enjoined by the scriptures) should be known, also (that) of forbidden (or unlawful) action, and of inaction; hard to understand is the nature (path) of action.

4.18

He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, he is wise among men; he is a Yogi and performer of all actions.

4.19

He whose understandings are all devoid of desires and (selfish) purposes and whose actions have been burnt by the fire of knowledge, - him the wise call a sage.

For further explanations click below

4.20

Having abandoned attachment to the fruits of the action, ever content, depending on nothing, he does not do anything though engaged in activity.

4.21

Without hope and with the mind and the self controlled, having abandoned all greed, doing mere bodily action, he incurs no sin.

4.22

Content with what comes to him without effort, free from the pairs of opposites and envy, even-minded in success and failure, though acting, he is not bound.

4.23

To one who is devoid of attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, who works for the sake of sacrifice (for the sake of God), the whole action is dissolved.

4.24

Brahman is the oblation; Brahman is ghee (melted butter); by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman; Brahman verily shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action.

4.25

Some Yogis perform sacrifice to the gods alone; while others (who have realised the Self) offer the Self as sacrifice by the Self in the fire of Brahman alone.

4.26

Some again offer hearing and other senses as sacrifice in the fire of restraint; others offer sound and other objects of the senses as sacrifice in the fire of the senses.

4.27

Others again sacrifice all the functions of the senses and those of the breath (vital energy or prana) in the fire of the Yoga of self-restraint kindled by knowledge.

4.28

Others again offer wealth, austerity and Yoga as sacrifice, while the ascetics of self-restraint and rigid vows offer study of scriptures and knowledge as sacrifice.

4.29

Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming, and the incoming in the outgoing, restraining the courses of the outgoing and the incoming breaths, solely absorbed in the restraint of the breath.

4.30

Others who regulate their diet offer life-breaths in life-breaths. All these are knowers of sacrifice, whose sins are destroyed by sacrifice.

4.31

Those who eat the remnants of the sacrifice which are like nectar go to the eternal Brahman. This world is not for the man who does not perform sacrifice; how then can he have the other, O Arjuna?

4.32

Thus, manifold sacrifices are spread out before Brahman (literally at the mouth or face of Brahman). Know them all as born of action and thus knowing, thou shalt be liberated.

4.33

Superior is wisdom sacrifice to the sacrifice with objects, O Parantapa (harasser of the foes). All actions in their entirety, O Arjuna, culminate in knowledge.

4.34

Know that long prostration, by question and by service, the wise who have realised the Truth will instruct thee in (that) knowledge.

4.35

Knowing that thou shalt not, O Arjuna, again get deluded like this; and by that thou shalt see all beings in thy Self and also in Me.

4.36

Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners, yet thou shalt verily cross all sins by the raft of knowledge.

4.37

As the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes.

4.38

Verily, there is no purifier in this world like knowledge. He who is perfected in Yoga finds it in the Self in time.

4.39

The man who is full of faith, who is devoted to it, and who has subdued the senses obtains (this) knowledge; and having obtained the knowledge he goes at once to the supreme peace.

4.40

The ignorant, the faithless, the doubting self goes to destruction; there is neither this world nor the other nor happiness for the doubting.

4.41

He who has renounced actions by Yoga, whose doubts are rent asunder by knowledge, and who is self-possessed – actions do not bind him, O Arjuna.

4.42

Therefore with the sword of the knowledge (of the Self) cut

asunder the doubt of the self born of ignorance, residing in thy heart, and take refuge in Yoga. Arise, O Arjuna.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the fourth discourse entitled:

The Yoga of Wisdom

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## **Gita chapter 5**

### **Karma Sannyasa Yoga**

### **The Yoga of Renunciation of Action**

Arjuna said:

5.1

Renunciation of actions, O Krishna, Thou praisest, and again, Yoga. Tell me conclusively that which is the better of the two.

The Blessed Lord said:

5.2

Renunciation and the Yoga of action both lead to the highest bliss; but of the two, the yoga of action is superior to the renunciation of action.

5.3

He should be known as the perpetual sanyasi who neither hates nor desires; for, free from the pairs of opposites, O mighty armed Arjuna, he is easily set free from bondage.

5.4

Children, not the wise, speak of knowledge and the Yoga of action or the performance of action as though they are distinct and different; he who is truly established in one obtains the fruits of both.

5.5

That place which is reached by the Sankhyas or the Jnanis is reached by the Yogis (Karma Yogis). He sees who sees knowledge and the performance of action (Karma Yoga) are one.

5.6

But renunciation, O mighty armed Arjuna, is hard to attain without Yoga; the Yoga-harmonised sage quickly goes to Brahman.

5.7

He who is devoted to the path of action, whose mind is quite pure, who has conquered the self, who has subdued his senses and who realises his Self in all beings, though acting, he is not tainted.

5.8

"I do nothing at all," thus would the harmonised knower of Truth think – seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing.

5.9

Speaking, letting go, seizing, opening and closing the eyes – convinced that the senses move among the sense objects.

5.10

He, who does actions, offering them to Brahman, and abandoning attachment, is not tainted by sin as a lotus leaf by water.

5.11

Yogis, having abandoned attachment, perform actions only by the body, mind, intellect and even by the senses, for the purification of the self.

5.12

The united one (the well poised or the harmonised) having abandoned the fruit of action attains to the eternal peace; the non-united only (the unsteady or the unbalanced) impelled by desire, attached to the fruit, is bound.

5.13

Mentally renouncing all actions and self-controlled, the embodied one rests happily in the nine-gated city, neither acting nor causing others (body and senses) to act.

5.14

Neither agency nor actions does the Lord create for the world, nor union with the fruits of actions. But it is nature that acts.

5.15

The Lord takes neither the demerit nor even the merit of any; knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, thereby beings are deluded.

5.16

But to those whose ignorance is destroyed by the knowledge of the Self, like the sun, knowledge reveals the Supreme (Brahman).

5.17

Their intellect absorbed in That, their self being That, established in That, for their supreme goal, they go whence there is no return, their sins dispelled by knowledge.

5.18



Sages look with an equal eye on a Brahmin endowed with learning and humility, on a cow, on an elephant, and even on a dog and an outcaste

5.19

Even here (in this world) birth (and death or everything) is overcome by those whose minds rest in equality; Brahman is spotless indeed and equal; therefore they are established in Brahman.

5.20

Resting in Brahman, with steady intellect and undeluded, the knower of Brahman neither rejoices on obtaining what is pleasant nor grieves on obtaining what is unpleasant.

5.21

With the self unattached to external contacts he finds happiness in the Self; with the self engaged in the meditation of Brahman he attains to the endless happiness.

5.22

The enjoyments that are born of contacts are only generators of pain, for they have a beginning and an end, O Arjuna: the wise do not rejoice in them.

5.23

He who is able, while still here (in this world) to withstand, before the liberation from the body, the impulse born out of desire and anger – he is a Yogi, he is a happy man.

5.24

He who is happy within, who rejoices within, and who is illumined within, that Yogi attains absolute freedom or moksha, himself becoming Brahman.

5.25

The sages (rishis) obtain absolute freedom or moksha – they whose sins have been destroyed, whose dualities or experience of the pairs of opposites) are torn asunder, who are self-controlled, and intent on the welfare of all beings.

5.26

Absolute freedom (or Brahmic bliss) exists on all sides for those self-controlled ascetics who are free from desire and anger, who have controlled their thoughts and who have realised the Self.

5.27

Shutting out (all) external contacts and fixing the gaze between the eyebrows, equalising the outgoing and incoming breaths moving within the nostrils.

5.28

With the senses, the mind and the intellect (ever) controlled, having liberation as his supreme goal, free from desire, fear and anger – the sage is verily liberated forever.

5.29

He who knows Me as the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, the great Lord of all the worlds and the friend of all beings, attains to peace.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the fifth discourse entitled:

### The Yoga of Renunciation of Action

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### Gita chapter 5

Explanations from various sources

In this world there is a two fold path; the path of knowledge of the Sankhyas and the path of action of the Yogis."

--The Bhagavad Gita, Ch 3, Verse 3

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"The Vedic dharma (religion) is verily twofold, characterised by Pravritti (social action) and Nivritti (inward contemplation), designed to promote order in the world; this twofold dharma has in view the true social welfare and spiritual emancipation of all beings."

-Sri Shankaracharya (A.D. 788-820)

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From The Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 18, Verses 5, 6, 7 & 11

Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be abandoned, but should be performed; sacrifice, gift and also austerity are the purifiers of the wise.

[Note: There are three types of Sacrifice, gift and austerity; Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic.]

But even these actions should be performed leaving aside attachment and the desire for rewards.

From the Mahabharata, Santi Parva

Section CCXLI

Vyasa said: I shall expound to thee the two paths, viz., the destructible and the indestructible, depending respectively upon acts and knowledge. Listen with concentrated attention, O child, to me, as I tell thee the place that is reached by one with the aid of knowledge, and that other place which is reached with the aid of acts. The difference between these two places is as great as the limitless sky. These are the two paths upon which the Vedas are established; the duties indicated by Pravritti, and those based on Nivritti.

Pravritti

By acts, a living creature is destroyed. By knowledge, however, he becomes emancipated. For this reason, Yogis who behold the other side of the ocean of life never betake themselves to acts.

Through acts one is forced to take rebirth, after death, with a body composed of the six and ten ingredients.

Nivritti

Through knowledge, however, one becomes transformed into that which is Eternal, Unmanifest, and Immutable.

One class of persons that are however of little intelligence, applaud acts. In consequence of this they have to assume bodies (one after another) ceaselessly. Those men whose perceptions are keen in respect of duties and who have attained to that high understanding (which leads to knowledge), never applaud acts even as persons that depend for their drinking water upon the supply of streams never applaud wells and water tanks.

The fruit that one obtains of acts consists of pleasure and pain, of existence and non-existence. By knowledge, one attains to that where there is no occasion for grief; where one becomes freed from both birth and death; where one is not subject to decrepitude; where one transcends the state of conscious existence. By knowledge, one attains to Brahman, which is Supreme, Unmanifest, immutable, ever-existent, imperceptible, above the reach of pain, immortal, and transcending destruction; where all become freed from the influence of all pairs of opposites (like pleasure and pain, heat and cold, insults and compliments, happiness and unhappiness etc., where all become freed also of wish or purpose.

Reaching that stage, they cast equal eyes on everything, become universal friends and devoted to the good of all creatures. There is a wide gulf, O son, between one devoted to knowledge and one devoted to acts. Know that the man of knowledge, without undergoing destruction, remains existent forever like the moon on the last day of the dark fortnight existing in a subtle (but undestroyed) form.

#### OF KNOWLEDGE, THERE IS NO END

From The Mahabharata, Aswamedha Parva  
Section XLIV

Brahma (Prajapati) said: All actions end in destruction, and all that is born is certain to meet with death. Every mobile and immobile thing in this world is transient. Days end with the sun's setting and Nights with the sun's rising. The end of pleasure is always sorrow, and the end of sorrow is always pleasure. All accumulations have exhaustion for their end, and all ascent have falls for their end. All associations have dissociations for their end, and life has death for its end. Sacrifice, gift, penances, study, vows, observances, - all these have destruction for their end. Of Knowledge, there is no end. Hence, one that is possessed of a tranquil soul that has subjugated his senses, that is freed from the sense of meum that is devoid of egoism is released from all sins by pure knowledge.

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From Vivekachudamani of Shankaracharya  
Verses 11 & 10

Work leads to purification of the mind,  
not to perception of the Reality.  
The realisation of Truth is brought about by  
discrimination and not in the least by ten  
millions of acts. 11.

Explanations drawn from the writings of  
Swami Nikhilananda,  
Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center,, New York

### **Brihadaranyaka Upanishad**

There exists an apparently unbridgeable gap between the ritualistic section (karmakanda) of the Vedas, dealing with the various enjoyments (abhyudaya) in the phenomenal universe (samsara), and the philosophical section of the Upanishads (Jnana kanda), describing the knowledge of Brahman, which alone enables the aspirant to attain liberation (moksha) or the highest good (nihsreyasa).

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, I.iv.15, the verse states that:

The whole universe, either in its unmanifested or in its manifested aspect, is of the very essence of names, forms and action, and is therefore non-Self.

Anything that is the result of action belongs to the realm of samsara. It is impermanent.

The section of the Upanishads dealing with the Upasana, however, supplies the bridge. It shows the way to direct the mind from the performance of rituals to the philosophical contemplation of Brahman.

Isa Upanishad states

1. 9

Into a blinding darkness they enter who are devoted to ignorance (rituals), but into a greater darkness they enter who engage in knowledge (contemplation of a deity) alone.

1.10

One thing is obtained from knowledge, another they say, from ignorance. Thus we have heard from the wise who have taught us this.

Harmonization of both is extolled.

1.11

He who is aware that both knowledge and ignorance should be pursued together, overcomes death through ignorance and obtains immortality through knowledge.

Explanations from the Mahabharata:

The Religion ordained for the householder

From the Mahabharata, Anusasana Parva, Section CXLI

Maheshwara said: The religion ordained for the householder is said to have Pravritti for its chief indication. Auspicious and beneficial to all creatures, I shall expound it to thee. The householder should always make gifts according to the measure of his power. He should also perform sacrifices frequently after the same manner. Indeed, he who wishes to achieve his own good should always achieve meritorious acts. The householder should acquire wealth by righteous means. The wealth thus acquired should be carefully divided into three portions, keeping the requirements of righteousness in view. With one of those portions he should accomplish all acts of

righteousness. With another he should seek to gratify his cravings for pleasure. The third portion he should lay out for increasing. Of all the modes of life, that of the householder is the first. Of this there is no doubt.

Abstention from injury, truthfulness of speech, compassion towards all beings, tranquillity of soul, and the making of gifts to the best of one's power, are the foremost duties of the householder. Abstention from sexual congress with the spouses of other men, protection of the wealth and the woman committed to one's charge, unwillingness to appropriate what is not given to one, and avoidance of honey and meat, - these are the five chief duties. Indeed, Religion or Duty has many branches all of which are fraught with happiness. Even these are the duties, which these embodied creatures who regard duty as superior should observe and practise. Even these are the sources of merit.

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Gita Ch. 5

Astronaut Kalpana Chawla

The following example may help us to understand the different paths of Sankhya and Yoga.

Let us think of a young girl, Kalpana Chawla by name, in a remote village in India. Her family shares the poor circumstances of the village folks, but Kalpana Chawla displays unusual character in being ambitious, strong willed and resolute in purpose. She wants to become an Astronaut (travel to outer space).

By single-minded application, Kalpana manages to reach the stage whereby NASA, the USA Space Agency accepts her and she is invited by NASA to join the team of astronauts. Kalpana will have to take the following three steps:

1. Kalpana has to travel by motor car transport from her village in India to the airport (New Delhi).
2. Kalpana has to fly in a jetliner to reach USA.
3. After undergoing rigorous training, Kalpana has to travel in a rocket ship to go to outer space.

The motor transport (karma yoga) and the jet liner (bhakti Yoga or the Yoga of devotion) are necessary to reach Kennedy Space Centre, but these means of transport are not capable of taking Kalpana to her goal of reaching outer space (moksha or liberation). The motor transport and the jet plane can be likened to the path of Yoga. The path of Yoga is necessary and indispensable for most of us. This path of action helps to purify the mind (by raising our level of spirituality, enabling us eventually to tread the path of the Sankhyas).

Once the Space Centre is reached, then the need of the motor transport and the jet plane falls away.

The rocket ship is the path of the Sankhya, the path of

The rocket ship is the path of the Sankhya, the path of renunciation and knowledge. It is the path, the only way, with the capabilities of taking one to outer space, transcending gravitational pulls (attachments, through the path of Sankhya to Moksha or liberation).

For further explanations on chapter 5 click on underlined words below

[Pravritti - Nivritti](#) < click

[The Twofold Vedic Religion](#) < click

[Sankhya versus Yoga](#) < click (From The Mahabharata)

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## **Gita - Chapter 6**

### **Atma Samyam Yoga**

### **The Yoga of Meditation**

The Blessed Lord said:

6.1

He who performs his bounden duty without depending on the fruits of his actions – he is a sanyasi and a Yogi; not he who is without fire and without action.

6.2

Do thou, O Arjuna, know Yoga to be that which they call renunciation; no one verily becomes a Yogi who has not renounced thoughts.

6.3

For a sage who wishes to attain to Yoga, action is said to be the means; for the same sage who has attained to Yoga, inaction (quiescence) is said to be the means.

6.4

When a man is not attached to the sense-objects or to actions, having renounced all thoughts, then he is said to have attained to Yoga.

6.5

Let a man lift himself by his own Self alone, let him not lower himself; for this self alone is the friend of oneself and this self alone is the enemy of oneself.

For further explanations click below

6.6

The self is the friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by the Self, but to the unconquered self, this self stands in the position of the enemy like the (external) foe.

6.7

The Supreme Self of him who is self-controlled and peaceful is balanced in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and also in honour and dishonour.

6.8

The Yogi who is satisfied with the knowledge and the wisdom (of the Self), who has conquered the senses, and to whom a clod of earth, a piece of stone and gold are the same, is said to be harmonised (i.e., is said to have attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi).

6.9

He who is of the same mind to the good-hearted, friends, enemies, the indifferent, the neutral, the hateful, the relatives, the righteous and the unrighteous, excels.

6.10

Let the Yogi try constantly to keep the mind steady, remaining in solitude, alone with the mind and the body controlled, and free from hope and greed.

6.11

In a clean spot, having established a firm seat of his own, neither too high nor too low, made of a cloth, a skin and kusha-grass, one over the other.

6.12

There, having made the mind one-pointed, with the actions of the mind and the senses controlled, let him, seated on the seat, practise Yoga for the purification of the Self.

6.13

Let him firmly hold his body, head and neck erect and still, gazing at the tip of his nose, without looking around.

6.14

Serene-minded, fearless, firm in the vow of a brahmachari, having controlled the mind, thinking of Me and balanced in mind, let him sit, having Me as his supreme goal.

6.15

Thus always keeping the mind balanced, the Yogi, with the mind controlled, attains to the peace abiding in Me, which culminates in liberation.

6.16

Verily Yoga is not possible for him who eats too much, nor for him who does not eat at all, nor for him who sleeps too much nor for him who is (always) awake, O Arjuna.



6.17

Yoga becomes the destroyer of pain for him who is moderate in eating and recreation (such as walking, etc.), who is moderate in exertion in actions, who is moderate in sleep and wakefulness.

6.18

When the perfectly controlled mind rests in the Self only, free from longing for all the objects of desires, then it is said, 'He is united'.

6.19

As a lamp placed in a windless spot does not flicker – to such is compared the Yogi of controlled mind, practising Yoga in the Self (or absorbed in the Yoga of the Self).

6.20

When the mind, restrained by the practice of Yoga attains to quietude and when seeing the Self by the Self, he is satisfied in his own Self

6.21

When he (the Yogi) feels that Infinite Bliss which can be grasped by the (pure) intellect and which transcends the senses, and established wherein he never moves from the Reality.

6.22

Which, having obtained, he thinks there is no other gain superior to it; wherein established, he is not moved even by heavy sorrow.

6.23

Let that be known by the name of Yoga, the severance from union with pain. This Yoga should be practised with determination and with an understanding mind.

6.24

Abandoning without reserve all desires born of sankalpa (thought and imagination) and completely restraining the whole group of the senses by the mind from all sides.

6.25

Little by little (gradually) let him attain to quietude by the intellect held firmly; having made the mind establish itself in the Self, let him not think of anything.

6.26

From whatever cause the restless and unsteady mind wanders away, from that let him restrain it and bring it under the control of the Self alone.

6.27

Supreme Bliss verily comes to this Yogi whose mind is quite peaceful, whose passion is quieted, who has become Brahman and who is free from sin.

6.28

6.28

The Yogi always engaging the mind thus (in the practice of Yoga), freed from sins, easily enjoys the Infinite Bliss of contact with Brahman (the Eternal).

6.29

With the mind harmonised by Yoga he sees the Self abiding in all beings and all beings in the Self; he sees the same everywhere.

[Note: This sloka (6.29) is derived from Isavasyopanishad sloka 6]

6.30

He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, he never becomes separated from me, nor do I become separated from him.

[Note: This sloka (6.30) is derived from [Isavasyopanishad](#) sloka 7. Click on underlined words above ]

6.31

He who, being established in unity, worships Me Who dwells in all beings, that Yogi abides in Me, whatever may be his mode of living.

6.32

He who through the likeness of the Self, O Arjuna, sees equality everywhere, be it pleasure or pain, he is regarded as the highest Yogi.

Arjuna said:

6.33

This Yoga of equanimity taught by Thee, O Krishna (Madhusudana), I do not see its steady continuance, because of the restlessness (of the mind).

6.34

The mind verily is restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding, O Krishna: I deem it as difficult to control it as to control the wind.

The Blessed Lord said:

6.35

Undoubtedly, O mighty armed Arjuna, the mind is difficult to control and restless; but by practice and by dispassion it may be restrained

6.36

I think Yoga is hard to be attained by one of uncontrolled self, but the self-controlled and striving one can attain to it by the (proper) means.

Arjuna said:

6.37

He who is unable to control himself though he has the faith,

and whose mind wanders away from Yoga, what end does he, having failed to attain perfection in Yoga, meet, O Krishna?

6.38

Fallen from both, does he not perish like a rent cloud, supportless, O mighty armed (Krishna), deluded on the path of Brahman?

6.39

This doubt of mine, O Krishna, do Thou dispel completely; because it is not possible for any but Thee to dispel this doubt.

The Blessed Lord said:

6.40

O Arjuna, neither in this world, nor in the next world is there destruction for him; none, verily, who does good, O My son, ever comes to grief.

6.41

Having attained to the worlds of the righteous and having dwelt there for everlasting years, he who fell from Yoga is reborn in a house of the pure and wealthy.

6.42

Or he is born in a family of even the wise Yogis; verily a birth like this is very difficult to obtain in this world.

6.43

There he comes in touch with the knowledge acquired in his former body and strives more than before for perfection, O Arjuna.

6.44

By that very former practice he is borne on in spite of himself. Even he who merely wishes to know Yoga goes beyond the Brahmic word.

6.45

But the Yogi who strives with assiduity, purified of sins and perfected gradually through many births, reaches the highest goal.

6.46

The Yogi is thought to be superior to the ascetics and even superior to men of knowledge (obtained through the study of scriptures); he is also superior to men of action; therefore be thou a Yogi, O Arjuna.

6.47

And among all the Yogis he who, full of faith and with his inner self merged in Me, worships Me is deemed by Me to be the most devout.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the

science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the sixth discourse entitled:

## The Yoga of Meditation

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## **Gita - Chapter 7** **Jnana Vijnana Yoga** **The Yoga of Wisdom and Realization**

The Blessed Lord said:

7.01

O Arjuna, hear how you shall without doubt know Me fully, with the mind intent on Me, practising Yoga and taking refuge in Me.

7.02

I shall declare to thee in full this knowledge combined with direct realization, after knowing which nothing more here remains to be known.

7.03

Among thousands of men, one perchance strives for perfection: even among those successful strivers, only perchance knows Me in essence.

7.04

Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and egoism – thus is My Nature divided eightfold.

7.05

This is the inferior Prakriti, O mighty armed (Arjuna); know thou as different from it My higher Prakriti (Nature), the very life-element, by which this world is upheld.

7.06

Know that these two (Natures) are the wombs of all beings. So I am the source and dissolution of the whole universe.

7.07

There is nothing whatsoever higher than Me, O Arjuna. All this is strung on Me, as clusters of gems on a string.

7.08

I am the sapidity in water, O Arjuna; I am the light in the moon and the sun; I am the syllable Om in the Vedas, sound in space and virility in men.

7.09

I am the sweet fragrance in earth and the brilliance in the fire, the life in all beings, and I am the austerity in ascetics.

7.10

Know Me, O Arjuna, as the eternal seed of all beings; I am the intelligence of the intelligent; the splendour of the splendid objects am I.

7.11

Of the strong, I am the strength devoid of desire and attachment, and in all beings, I am the desire unopposed to dharma (in accordance with the teachings of the scriptures), o Arjuna.

7.12

Whatever being (and objects) that are pure, active and inert, know that they proceed from Me. They are in Me, yet I am not in them.

7.13

Deluded by these Natures (states or things) composed of the three qualities of Nature all this world does not know Me as distinct from them and immutable.

7.14

Verily this divine illusion of Mine, made up of the (three) qualities (of Nature) is difficult to cross over; those who take refuge in Me alone, cross over this illusion.

7.15

The evil-doers and the deluded who are the lowest of men do not seek Me; they whose knowledge is destroyed by illusion follow the ways of demons.

7.16

Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna, and they are the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth, and the wise, O lord of the Bharatas.

7.17

Of them the wise, ever steadfast and devoted to the One, excels (is the best); for I am exceedingly dear to the wise and he is dear to Me.

7.18

Noble indeed are all these; but I deem the wise man as My very Self; for, steadfast in mind he is established in Me alone as the supreme goal.

7.19

At the end of many births the wise man comes to Me, realising that all this is Vasudeva (the innermost Self); such a great soul (mahatma) is very hard to find.

7.20

7.20

Those whose wisdom has been rent away by this or that desire go to other gods, following this or that rite, led by their own nature.

7.21

Whatsoever form any devotee desires to worship with faith – that (same) faith of his I make firm and unflinching.

7.22

Endowed with that faith, he engages in the worship of that (form) and from it he obtains his desire, these being verily ordained by Me (alone).

7.23

Verily the reward (fruit) that accrues to those men of small intelligence is finite. The worshippers of the gods go to them, but My devotees come to Me.

7.24

The foolish think of Me, the Unmanifest, as having manifestation, knowing not My higher, immutable and most excellent nature.

7.25

I am not manifest to all (as I am) veiled by the Yoga Maya. This deluded world does not know Me, the unborn and imperishable.

7.26

I know, O Arjuna, the beings of the past, the present and the future, but no one knows Me.

7.27

By the delusion of the pairs of the opposite arising from desire and aversion, O Bharata, all beings are subject to delusion at birth, O Parantapa.

7.28

But those men of virtuous deeds whose sins have come to an end, and who are freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, worship Me, steadfast in their vows.

7.29

Those who strive for liberation from old age and death, taking refuge in Me, realise in full that Brahman, the whole knowledge of the Self and all action.

7.30

Those who know Me with the adhibhuta (pertaining to the elements), adhidaiva (pertaining to the gods), and the adhiyajna (pertaining to the sacrifice) know Me even at the time of death, steadfast in mind.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue

between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the seventh discourse entitled:

## The Yoga of Wisdom and Renunciation

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### **Gita - Chapter 8** **Akshara-Brahma Yoga** **The Yoga of The Imperishable Brahman**

Arjuna said:

8.01

What is that Brahman? What is adhyatma? What is action, O best among men? What is declared to be adhibhuta? And, what is adhidaiva said to be?

8.02

Who and how is adhiyajna here in this body, O destroyer of Madhu (Krishna)? And how at the time of death, art thou to be known by the self-controlled?

The Blessed Lord said:

8.03

Brahman is the Imperishable, the Supreme. His essential nature is called Self-knowledge; the offering (to the gods) which causes existence and manifestation of beings and which also sustains them is called action.

8.04

Adhibhutam (knowledge of the elements) pertains to My perishable Nature and the Purusha or the soul is the adhidaivam; I alone am the adhiyajna here in this body, O best among the embodied (men).

8.05

And whosoever, leaving the body, goes forth remembering Me alone, at the time of death, he attains My Being; there is no doubt about this.

8.06

Whosoever at the end leaves the body, thinking of any being, to that being only does he go, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), because of his constant thought of that being.

8.07

Therefore at all times remember Me only and fight. With mind and intellect fixed (or absorbed) in Me, thou shalt doubtless come to Me alone.

8.08



With the mind not moving towards any other thing, and steadfast by the method of habitual meditation, and constantly meditating, one goes to the Supreme Person, the Resplendent, O Arjuna.

8.09

Whosoever meditates on the Omniscient, the Ancient, the Ruler (of the whole world), minuter than the atom, the supporter of all, of inconceivable form, effulgent like the sun and beyond the darkness of ignorance.

8.10

At the time of death with unshaken mind, endowed with devotion, by the power of Yoga, fixing the whole life-breath in the middle of the two eyebrows, he reaches that resplendent Supreme Person.

8.11

That which is declared Imperishable by those who know the Vedas, that which the self-controlled (ascetics or sanyasis) and passion-free enter, that desiring which celibacy is practised – that goal I will declare to thee in brief.

8.12

Having closed all the gates, confined the mind in the heart and fixed the life-breath in the head, engaged in the practice of concentration.

8.13

Uttering the one syllable OM – the Brahman – and remembering Me, he who departs, leaving the body, attains to the Supreme Goal.

8.14

I am easily attainable by that ever-steadfast Yogi who constantly and daily remembers Me (for a long time), not thinking of anything else (with a single mind or one pointed mind), O Partha (Arjuna).

8.15

Having attained Me these great souls do not again take birth (here), which is the place of pain and is non-eternal: they have reached the highest perfection (liberation).

8.16

(All) the worlds including the world of Brahma are subject to return again, O Arjuna; but he who reaches Me, O son of Kunti, has no rebirth.

8.17

Those people who know the day of Brahma, which is of a duration of a thousand yugas (ages) and the night, which is also of a thousand yugas' duration, they know day and night.

8.18

From the Unmanifested all the manifested (worlds) proceed at the coming of the 'day'; at the coming of the 'night' they dissolve verily into *that* alone which is called the Unmanifested.

[Note: 'Coming of the day' is commencement of creation.  
'Coming of the night' is commencement of dissolution.]

8.19

This same multitude of beings, being born again and again, is dissolved, helplessly, O Arjuna (into the Unmanifested) at the coming of the night and comes forth at the coming of the day.

8.20

But verily there exists, higher than the Unmanifested (Primordial Nature or Avyaktam) another Unmanifested Eternal ((Para Brahman) Who is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed.

[Note: Para Brahman is their cause. He is not destroyed when all the beings from Brahma down to the ants or the blade of grass are destroyed.]

8.21

What is called the Unmanifested and the Imperishable, That they say is the highest goal (path). They who reach It do not return (to this samsara or the process of worldly life). That is My highest abode (place or state).

[Note: Para Brahman is called the Unmanifested because He cannot be perceived by the senses. He is called the Imperishable also. He is all-pervading, all permeating and interpenetrating. Para Brahman is the highest path. There is nothing higher than Him. This is the true non-dual state free from all sorts of limiting adjuncts. The attainment of Brahmaloaka (the region of the Creator) etc. is inferior to this. Only by realising the Self is one liberated from samsara.]

8.22

The highest Purusha, O Arjuna, is attainable by unswerving devotion to Him alone within Whom all beings dwell and by Whom all this is pervaded.

[Note: All the beings (effects) dwell within the Purusha (the Supreme Person, the cause) because every effect rests within its cause. Just as the effect, pot, rests within its cause, the clay, so also all beings and the worlds rest within their cause, the Purusha. Therefore the whole world is pervaded by the Purusha. Purusha is so called because everything is filled by Him (derived from the Sanskrit root *pr* which means 'to fill') or because He rests in the body of all (derived from the Sanskrit *pur*). None is higher than He and so He is the Supreme Person.]

8.23

Now I will tell thee, O chief of Bharata the times departing at which the Yogis will return (born again) or not return.

8.24

Fire, light, day-time, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern path of the sun (the northern solstice) – departing

then (by these) men who know Brahman go to Brahman.

[Note: This is the 'uttara-marga or devayana' also known as the northern path or the path of light by which the Yogis go to Brahman. This path leads to salvation. The six months of the northern solstice is from the middle of January to the middle of July. It is regarded as the better period for death.]

8.25

Attaining to the lunar light by smoke, night time, the dark fortnight also, the six months of the southern path of the sun (the southern solstice), the Yogis return.

[Note: This is the pitriyana or the path of darkness or the path of the ancestors that leads to rebirth. Those who do sacrifices to the gods and other charitable works with expectation of reward go to the Chandraloka through this path and come back to this world when the fruits of the karmas are exhausted. There is no illumination when one passes along this path. It is reached by ignorance. Hence it is called the path of darkness or smoke.]

8.26

The bright and the dark paths of the world are verily thought to be eternal; by the one (the bright path) a man goes not to return and by the other (the dark path) he returns.

8.27

Knowing these paths, O Arjuna, no Yogi is deluded; therefore at all times be steadfast in Yoga.

8.28

Whatever fruit of merit is declared (in the scriptures) to accrue from (the study of) the Vedas, (the performance of) sacrifices, (the practice of) austerities, and gifts – beyond all this goes the Yogi, having known this; and he attains to the Supreme Primeval (first or ancient) Abode.

[Note: The glory of Yoga is described in this verse. Whatever meritorious effect is declared in the scriptures to accrue from the proper study of the Vedas, from the performance of sacrifices properly, from the practice of austerities – above all these rises the Yogi who rightly understands and follows the teachings imparted by the Lord in His answers to the seven questions put by Arjuna, and who meditates on Brahman.]

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the eighth discourse entitled:

The Yoga of the Imperishable Brahman

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## **Gita - Chapter 9**

### **Rajvidya-Rajguhya Yoga**

### **The Yoga of Kingly Science and kingly Secret**

The Blessed Lord said:

9.01

I shall now declare to thee who does not cavil, the greatest secret, the knowledge combined with experience (Self-realization). Having known this thou shalt be free from evil.

[Note: 'Jnana' is theoretical knowledge of Brahman through the study of the Upanishads, also known as paroksha Brahma jnana. 'Vijnana' is direct intuitive perception of Brahman or Atma-sakshatkara, also known as aparoksha Brahma jnana. This alone forms the direct means of attaining to liberation from evil or the bondage of samsara, freedom from birth and death. The knowledge of the Self is the most profound secret.]

9.02

This is the kingly science, the kingly secret, the supreme purifier, realisable by direct intuitional knowledge, according to righteousness, very easy to perform and imperishable.

[Note: The Truth, the sovereign secret (the Self or the Absolute) can be directly realized by intuition or immediate perception. The science of the Absolute is the most splendid of all sciences. It is the science of sciences. Of sciences the highest, of secrets the most profound, of purifiers the supreme is this. The knowledge of Brahman is the best purifier. It reduces the roots of all karmas and all the karmas themselves that have been stored up in the course of many thousands of births, into ashes in the twinkling of an eye. It destroys avidya (ignorance) along with its effects. An expiatory act (prayaschitta) cannot destroy all sins. It removes the effect of a single sin, only to some extent. Even if it is removed the effect of that sin remains in a subtle state in the mind and forces him to do sinful acts in his next birth. But the knowledge of the Self destroys quickly all the sins in their gross and subtle states that are accumulated in the course of several thousands of births along with avidya, their cause. That is the reason why it is a supreme purifier.]

9.03

Those who have no faith in this dharma (knowledge of the Self), O Parantapa (Arjuna), return to the path of this world of death without attaining Me.

9.04

All this world is pervaded by Me in my unmanifest aspect; all beings exist in Me, but I do not dwell in them.

[Note: Just as space contains all beings and yet is not touched

by them, so also Para Brahman contains everything and yet is not touched by them. Even Mulaprakriti, the source or the womb of this world, is supported by Brahman. Brahman has no support or root. He rests in His own pristine glory.]

9.05

Nor do beings exist in Me (in reality): behold My divine Yoga, supporting all beings, but not dwelling in them, is My Self, the efficient cause of beings.

[Note: 'Devoid of all attachment, He is never attached' – Brahadaranyaka Upanishad 3-9-26. Though unattached, He supports all beings. He is the efficient or instrumental cause;

He brings forth all beings but He does not dwell in them, because He is unconnected with any object. This is a great mystery. Just as the dreamer has no connection with the dream object, just as space has no connection with the vessel, so also Brahman has no connection with the objects or the body. The connection between the Self and the physical body is illusory.

The adhithana or support (Brahman) for the illusory object (kalpitam) superimposed on Brahman has no connection whatsoever with the qualities or the defects of the objects that are superimposed on the Absolute. The snake is superimposed on a rope. The rope is the support (adhithana) for the illusory snake (kalpitam). This is an example of superimposition or adhyasa.]

9.06

As the mighty wind, moving everywhere, rests always in space, even so, know thou that all beings rest in Me.

9.07

All beings, O Arjuna, go into My Nature at the end of a kalpa; I send them forth again at the beginning of (the next) kalpa.

[Note: Prakriti: The inferior one or the lower Nature composed of the three qualities, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Just as the grass grows from the earth and dries up in the earth, just as the ripples and waves rise from the ocean and disappear in the ocean itself, just as the dreams proceed from the mind and melt away in the mind itself when the dreamer comes back to the waking state, so also the beings which arise from Nature merge into it during dissolution or pralaya.]

9.08

Animating My Nature, I again and again send forth all this multitude of beings, helpless by the force of the Nature.

9.09

These acts do not bind Me, O Arjuna, sitting like one indifferent, unattached to those acts.

[Note: Just as the neutral referee in a sports match is not affected by the victory or defeat of the parties, so also the Lord is not affected by the creation and destruction of this world as He is the silent and changeless witness.]

9.10

Under Me as supervisor, Nature produces the moving and

the unmoving; because of this, O Arjuna, the world revolves.

[Note: The Lord presides only as a witness. Nature does everything. By reason of His proximity or presence, Nature sends forth the moving and the unmoving. The prime cause of this creation is Nature. For the movable and the immovable, and for the whole universe the root cause is Nature itself.

Although all actions are done with the help of the light of the sun, yet the sun cannot become the doer of actions. Even so the Lord cannot become the doer of actions even though Nature does all actions with the help of the light of the Lord.

As Brahman illumines avidya (ignorance), the material cause of this world, He is regarded as the cause of this world. The magnet is quite indifferent although it makes the iron pieces move on account of its proximity. Even so the Lord remains indifferent although He makes Nature create the world. As the Lord and the Witness, He presides over this world, which consists of moving and unmoving objects.]

9.11

Fools disregard Me, clad in human form, not knowing My higher Being as the great Lord of (all) beings.

[Note: The Lord has taken human form to bless the devotees. Fools who do not have discrimination and right understanding, take Me for an ordinary mortal. The wise know both My transcendental nature and the glory of My manifestations.]

9.12

Of vain hopes, of vain actions, of vain knowledge and senseless, they verily are possessed of the deceitful nature of demons and undivine beings.

9.13

But the great souls, O Arjuna, partaking of My divine nature, worship Me with a single mind (with the mind devoted to nothing else), knowing Me as the imperishable source of beings.

9.14

Always glorifying Me, striving, firm in vows, prostrating before Me, they worship Me with devotion, always steadfast.

9.15

Others also sacrificing with the wisdom-sacrifice worship Me, the All-faced, as one, as distinct, and as manifold.

9-16

I am the kratu; I am the yajna; I am the offering (food) to the manes; I am the medicinal herb and all the plants; I am the mantra; I am also the ghee (melted butter); I am the fire; I am the oblation.

[Note: Kratu is a kind of Vedic sacrifice.]

9.17

I am the father of this world, the mother, the dispenser of the fruits of actions and the grandfather; the (one) thing to be known, the purifier, the sacred monosyllable (Om), and also the Rg, the Sama and the Yajur Vedas.

[Note: Isvara or the saguna Brahman (with attributes) is the father. Mula-Prakriti or the primordial Nature is the mother. The pure Sacchidananda Para Brahman (Existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute) is the grandfather.]

The one thing to be known is the Supreme Being.

9.18

I am the goal, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the shelter, the friend, the origin, the dissolution, the foundation, the treasure house, and the seed, which is imperishable.

[Note: 'I am the imperishable seed' i.e., the cause of the origin of all beings.]

9.19

(As the sun) I give heat; I withhold and send forth rain; I am immortality and also death, existence and non-existence, O Arjuna.

[Note: Sat: Existence, the manifested world (the effect). Asat: Non-existence, the unmanifested (the cause). Non-existence does not mean nothingness. The subtle, unmanifested cause is spoken of as non-existence. The Self or Brahman or the Eternal can never be altogether non-existent. It always exists. It is Existence Absolute. If you say that the subtle unmanifested cause is nothing, it is impossible to conceive existence coming out of nothing. The Chandogya Upanishad asks, 'How can existence come out of non-existence?' It is simply absurd to conceive that existence has arisen out of non-existence (nothing).]

For a Vedantin (student of Vedanta) Brahman (the Absolute) is Sat (existence) because It always exists and because It is unchanging. The manifested world is asat or unreal. For the worldly minded people who have neither understanding nor knowledge of Brahman, who are endowed with gross and impure mind, who do not have a sharp and subtle intellect, and who can perceive the gross forms only, this manifested world is the Sat and the subtle unmanifested Mula-Prakriti (the primordial Nature), the cause of this manifested world, is asat. For them Brahman also is asat. The unmanifested refers to Mula-Prakriti and Para Brahman also because both are hidden.

Each object has three states, viz., the gross (sthula), the subtle (sukshma) and the causal (kaaran). Maha-kaaran (the great causeless cause) is Para Brahman. The gross and the subtle states are the effects of Kaarana. What we see outside is the physical body. This physical body is moved by the astral



(the subtle) body made up of the mind, life force and the senses. The causal body is the seed body. From this seed-body have sprung the subtle and the gross bodies. Take the case of an orange. The outer skin is its physical body; the inner pulp or essence is the subtle body; the innermost causal body which gives rise to the pulp and the outer skin is the seed. This is only a gross illustration. The orange has got another kind of subtle and causal bodies. The worldly-minded man beholds the physical body only and takes this as the Truth. For him, the astral and the causal bodies are unreal!

#### 9.20

The knowers of the three Vedas, the drinkers of soma, purified of all sins, worshipping Me by sacrifices, pray for the way to heaven; they reach the holy world of the Lord of the gods and enjoy in heaven the divine pleasure of the gods.

[Note: The pleasures of heaven are subtle, exceedingly intense and extremely intoxicating. Many aspirants lose their power of discrimination and right understanding and thereby lose themselves in heavenly enjoyments. They get false satisfaction and contentment. They think that they have reached the highest goal of Yoga. They yield to the temptations and their energies get dissipated in various directions. As soon as their merits are exhausted they come down to this earth plane. They will have to start their upward climb on the spiritual ladder once more.

But that dispassionate Yogi endowed with strong discrimination rejects ruthlessly these temptations, marches boldly on his spiritual path and stops not till he attains the highest rung on the ladder of Yoga or the highest summit on the hill of knowledge or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He is fully conscious that enjoyments in heaven are as much worthless as those of this illusory world. That man who is endowed with strong discrimination, sustained dispassion, good self-analytic power, and burning yearning for liberation, can resist temptations and he alone can be really happy. He alone can attain the highest goal of life, the final beatitude or the sublime vision of the Infinite.]

#### 9.21

They, having enjoyed the vast heaven, enter the world of mortals when their merit is exhausted; thus abiding by the injunctions of the three (Vedas) and desiring (objects of) desires, they attain to the state of going and returning.

[Note: When the accumulated merit (the cause of heavenly pleasures) is exhausted, they descend to this world. They come and go.]

#### 9.22

To those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, of those ever united, I secure which is not already possessed and preserve what they already possess.

#### 9.23

Even those devotees, who endowed with faith, worship other

gods, worship Me alone, O Arjuna, by the wrong method.

[Note: Water should be given to the root and not to the branches. If the root is satisfied, the whole tree must be and is satisfied. Even so, if I (the root of this world and all the gods) am satisfied, all the gods must be and are satisfied. Though the messages from the five organs of knowledge reach the one consciousness, will it be right and useful to place a sweetmeat in the ear and a flower in the eyes? The function of eating must be done by the mouth alone and the function of smelling by the nose alone. Therefore I should be worshipped in My own name. They should know Me as the Self in all beings. They should recognise Me in other worship. I am the root. I am the source of all the gods and of this whole world.]

9.24

For I alone am the enjoyer and also the Lord of all sacrifices; but they do not know Me in essence (in reality), and hence they fall (return to this mortal world).

9.25

The worshippers of the gods go to them; to the manes go the ancestor-worshippers; to the deities who preside over the elements go their worshippers; but My devotees come to Me.

9.26

Whoever offers Me with devotion and a pure mind (heart), a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a little water – I accept (this offering).

[Note: A leaf, a flower or a fruit are merely symbols. The true means of attaining the Lord is pure unflinching devotion. All the objects of the state belong to the king. If the servants of the state offer with devotion some objects to the king, he is highly satisfied. Even so all the objects of the whole world belong to Him. Yet, He is highly pleased if you offer even a little thing with devotion. A gift, however small, is accepted by the Lord, when it is offered with profound faith.]

9.27

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give, whatever you practise as austerity, O Arjuna, do it as an offering unto Me.

[Note: Consecrate all acts to the Lord. Then you will be freed from the bondage of karma. You will have freedom in action. He who tries to live in the spirit of this verse will be able to do self-surrender unto the Lord. Gradually he ascends the spiritual path step by step. His greedy nature is slowly dissolved now. He always gives. He is not eager to take. His whole life with all its actions, thoughts and feelings, is dedicated to the service of the Lord eventually. He lives for the Lord only. He works for the Lord only. There is not a bit of egoism now. His whole nature is transformed into divinity.

This is the simplest method of Yoga. All actions, all results and all rewards will go to the Lord. There is no separate living for the individual. Just as the river joins the sea abandoning its

name and form so also the individual soul joins the Supreme Soul giving up his own name and form, his own egoistic desires and egoism. The individual will has become one with the cosmic will.]

9.28

Thus shalt thou be freed from the bonds of actions yielding good and evil fruits; with the mind steadfast in the Yoga of renunciation, and liberated, thou shalt come unto Me.

[Note: The act of offering everything unto the Lord constitutes the Yoga of renunciation. It is also Yoga as it is an action. Renunciation of the fruits of all works is sanyasa. With the mind endowed with renunciation and Yoga thou shalt be freed from good and evil results while yet living and thou shalt come unto Me when this body falls.]

9.29

The same am I to all beings; to Me there is none hateful or dear; but those who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I am also in them.

[Note: I am like fire. Just as fire removes cold from those who draw near it but does not remove the cold from those who keep away from it, even so I bestow My grace on My devotees, but not owing to any sort of attachment on My part. Just as the light of the sun, though pervading everywhere, is reflected only in a clean mirror but not in a pot, so also I, the Supreme Lord, present everywhere, manifest Myself only in those persons from whose minds all kinds of impurities (that has accumulated there on account of ignorance) have been removed by their devotion.

The sun has neither attachment for the mirror nor hatred for the pot. The Kalpavriksha (wish fulfilling tree) has neither hatred nor love for people. It bestows the desired objects only on those who go near it.]

(Fine-tuning the frequency on a radio brings clear, powerful reception. To receive the Lord's grace, fine tune the mind by means of meditation, faith and devotion. This will remove all kinds of impurities from the mind.)

9.30

Even if the most sinful worships Me, with devotion to none else, he too should indeed be regarded as righteous, for he has rightly resolved.

[Note: By abandoning the evil ways in his external life and by the force of his internal right (and firm) resolution, he becomes righteous and attains to eternal peace.]

For further explanations click below  
[Gita, Chapter 9, Verse 30:](#)

9.31

Soon he become righteous and attains to eternal peace;  
O Arjuna, know thou for certain that My devotee is never

destroyed.

(Note: The Lord has proclaimed a guarantee: 'know thou for certain that My devotee is never destroyed'.)

9.32

For taking refuge in Me, they also, who, O Arjuna, may be of a sinful birth – women, vaisyas as well as sudras – attain the Supreme Goal.

[Note: Women and sudras are debarred by social rules from the study of the Vedas. What is wanted is devotion. The lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile can attain Me if they have faith and devotion, if they sing and repeat My name and if they think of Me always, and think of no worldly object.]

9.33

How much more (easily) then the holy Brahmins and devoted royal saints (attain the goal); having obtained this impermanent and unhappy world, do thou worship Me.

[Note: This body is impermanent. It perishes soon. It brings pain of various sorts. (Efforts for securing happiness and comfort for this body should be redirected towards attaining the goal of Self-realization). If you do not attempt for Self-realization even after attaining a human birth, you live in vain; you are wasting your life and you are a 'slayer of the Self'. You will again and again be caught in the wheel of birth and death.]

9.34

Fix thy mind on Me; be devoted to Me; sacrifice unto Me; bow down to Me; having thus united thy whole self to Me, taking Me as the Supreme Goal, thou shalt come unto Me.

[Note; the whole being of man should be surrendered to the Lord without reservation. Then the whole life will undergo a wonderful transformation. You will have the vision of God everywhere. All sorrows and pain will vanish. Your mind will be one with the divine consciousness.

Just as the space inside a clay pot becomes one with the universal space when the limiting adjunct (clay pot) is broken, just as the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers, leaving their names and forms become one with the ocean, so also the sage gets rid of avidya (ignorance) and all sorts of limiting adjuncts through the direct realization of the Self and becomes identical with Para Brahman. This chapter is known by the name Adhyatma Yoga also.]

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the ninth discourse entitled:

The Yoga of the Kingly Science and the Kingly Secret

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### **Gita - Chapter 10** **Vibhuti Yoga** **The Yoga of Divine Glories**

The Blessed Lord said:

10.01

Again, O mighty armed Arjuna, listen to My supreme word which I shall declare to thee who art beloved, for thy welfare.

10.02

Neither the hosts of the gods nor the great sages know My origin; for in ever way I am the source of all the gods and the great sages.

10.03

He who knows Me as unborn and beginningless, as the great Lord of the worlds, he, among mortals, is undeluded and he is liberated from all sins.

10.04

Intellect, wisdom, non-delusion, forgiveness, truth, self-restraint, calmness, pain, existence or birth, non-existence or death, fear and also fearlessness.

[Note: Intellect is the power which the antahkarana (the fourfold inner instrument – the mind, the subconscious mind, intellect and egoism) has of understanding subtle objects.

Wisdom is knowledge of the Self.

Non-delusion is freedom from illusion. It consists in acting with discrimination when anything has to be done or known at the moment. Patience is the non-agitation of the mind when assaulted or abused. Not thinking of any harm or evil for those who have assaulted or abused is also patience. Patience is enduring without lamentation the three kinds of pains, adhyatmika, adhidaivika and adhibhautika tapas. Fever etc. is adhyatmic pain. Pain or discomfort from severe cold, heat, too much rain, thunder and lightning etc. is adhidaivika pain. Pain from scorpion-bite, snake-bite, and wild animals is adhibhautika pain.

Satyam or truth is veracity. It is speaking of one's own actual or real experience of things as actually heard or seen. There is not the least twisting or exaggeration or the slightest modification of facts.

Dama or self-restraint is control of the external senses. It is withdrawal of

Dama or self-restraint is control of the external senses. It is withdrawal of the senses (ear, skin, eyes, tongue and nose) from their respective objects (viz., sound, touch, form, palatable foods and fragrance).

Sama is calmness or tranquillity of the mind produced by checking the mind from thinking of external objects of the senses and by disconnecting it from the senses.

Sukham is happiness. That which has dharma or virtue as its chief cause and that which is favourable to all beings, is happiness.

Duhkham is the opposite of sukham. That which has adharma as its cause and that which is unfavourable to all beings, is pain.]

10.05

Non-injury, equanimity, contentment, austerity, beneficence, fame, ill-fame, - (these) different kinds of qualities of beings arise from Me alone.

[Note: Ahimsa is non-injury to living beings in thought, word and deed. Samata is that state wherein there is neither like (raga) nor dislike (dvesha), when one gets pleasant or unpleasant objects. There is neither exhilaration when one gets pleasant or favourable objects nor depression when he gets unpleasant or unfavourable objects.

Tushtih is satisfaction or contentment. The man of contentment is satisfied with whatever object he gets through parabdhā. He is satisfied with his present acquisitions. He is free from greed and so he has peace of mind. Contentment makes a man very rich. It annihilates greed. Greed makes even a rich man a beggar of beggars. A greedy man is ever restless.

Tapas is restraint of the senses through the practice of fasting and slow reduction of food. The strength of the body and the senses is reduced through fasting.

Danam is beneficence. It is sharing of one's own things with others according to one's own means, or distribution of food, money, garments, etc., to a worthy person, in a fit place and time, especially to one who cannot return favours.

Yashas is fame due to dharma or virtuous actions.

Ayashah is ill-fame or disgrace due to adharma or sinful actions.

All these different kinds of qualities of living beings arise from Me alone, the great Lord of the worlds, according to their respective karma.]

10.06

The seven great sages, the ancient four and also the Manus, possessed of powers like Me (on account of their minds being

fixed on Me), were born of (My) mind; from them are these creatures born in this world.

[Note: The seven great sages represent the seven planes also. In the macrocosm, mahat or cosmic buddhi (intellect), ahamkara or the cosmic egoism and the five tanmatras or the five root-elements of which the five great elements, viz., earth, water, fire, air and space are the gross forms, represent the seven great sages. This gross universe with the moving and the unmoving beings and the subtle inner world have come out of the above seven principles. In mythology or the Puranic terminology these seven principles have been symbolised and given human names. Bhrgu, Marici, Atri, Pulastya, Pulah, Kratu, and Vasishtha are the seven great sages.

In the microcosm, manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), chitta (subconsciousness) and ahamkara (egoism) have been symbolised as the four Manus and given human names. The first group forms the base of the macrocosm. The second group forms the base of the microcosm (individuals). These two groups constitute this vast universe of sentient life.

In the beginning I was alone and from Me came the mind and from the mind were produced the seven sages (such as Bhrgu, Vasishtha and others), the ancient four Kumaras (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata), as well as the four Manus of the past ages known as savarnis, all of whom directed their thoughts to Me exclusively and were therefore endowed with divine powers and supreme wisdom.

The four kumaras (chaste, ascetic youths) declined to marry and create offspring. They preferred to remain as perpetual celibates and to practise Brahma-vichara or profound meditation on Brahman or the absolute.

They were all created by Me, by mind alone. They were all mind born sons of Brahma. They were not born from the womb like ordinary mortals. Men, Manavah, the present inhabitants of this world, are the sons of Manu. The Manus are the mind-born sons of God. These creatures which consist of the moving and the unmoving beings are born of the seven great sages and the four Manus. The great sages were original teachers of Brahma-vidya or the ancient wisdom of the Upanishads. The Manus were the rulers of men. They framed the code or rules of conduct or the laws of dharma for the guidance and upliftment of humanity.]

10.07

He who in truth knows these manifold manifestations of My being and (this) Yoga-power of Mine becomes established in the unshakable Yoga; there is no doubt about it.

[Note: Knowledge of the glory of the Lord is really conducive to yoga. He who knows in essence the immanent pervading power of the Lord by which He causes the manifestations and His diverse manifestations (vibhutis), unites with Him in firm unalterable Yoga and attains eternal bliss and perfect harmony. From the ant to the Creator there is nothing except the Lord.



He who knows in reality this extensive manifestation of the Lord and His Yoga (Yoga here stands for what is born of Yoga, viz., infinite Yogic powers as well as omniscience), is endowed with firm unwavering Yoga. He lives in the Eternal and is endowed with the highest knowledge of the self. He who has realised this Truth is free from the superiority and inferiority complexes. There is real awakening of wisdom in him. He will behold the Lord in all beings and all beings in the Lord. He will never hate any creature on this earth. This is a rare living cosmic experience. The Yogi realises that the Lord and His manifestations are one. He attains the supreme goal and is absorbed in Him through his wholehearted devotion. He is perfectly aware of his oneness with the Supreme by My divine Yoga.]

10.08

I am the source of all; from Me everything evolves; understanding thus, the wise, endowed with meditation, worship Me.

[Note: Waves originate in water, depend on water and dissolve in water. The only support for the waves is water. Even so the only support for the whole world is the Lord. Realising thus, feeling the omnipresence of the Lord, the wise worship Him with devotion and affection in all places. The Supreme is the same in all countries and at all times. He is the material and the efficient cause.

As Mulaprakriti or Avyaktam the Lord is the source of all forms. The Lord is the *primum mobile*. He gazes at His Shakti (creative power) and the whole world evolves and the forms move. The worldly man who has not yet developed sharp or subtle intellect beholds the changing forms only through the fleshy eyes. He has no idea of the Indwelling Presence, the substratum, the all-pervading intelligence or the blissful consciousness. He is allured by the passing forms. He fixes his hopes and joy on these transitory forms. He lives and exerts for them. He rejoices when he gets a wife and children. If these forms pass away he is drowned in sorrow. But the wise (budhah) constantly dwell in the Supreme, the source and the life of all, and enjoy the eternal bliss of the immortal, inner Self, their own non-dual Atman, albeit all these forms around them change and pass away. They are steadfast in Yoga. They are endowed with unshakable Yoga. They are enthroned in Yoga. They worship the Supreme in contemplation and enjoy the indescribable bliss of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Para Brahman known as Vasudeva, is the source of the whole world. From Him alone evolves the whole world with all its changes, viz., existence (sthiti), destruction (nasha), action (kriya), fruit (phala), and enjoyment (bhoga). Understanding thus, the wise adore the Supreme Being and engage themselves in profound meditation on the Absolute.]

10.09

With their mind and their life wholly absorbed in Me, enlightening each other and ever speaking of Me, they are satisfied and delighted.

[Note: The characteristic of a devotee who has attained the realization of oneness are described in this verse. The devotee constantly thinks of the Lord. His very life is absorbed in Him. He has consecrated his whole life to the Lord. All his senses (which function because of the prana) are absorbed in Him. He takes immense delight in talking about Him, about His supreme wisdom, power, might and other attributes. He has completely dedicated himself to the Lord.

He feels intense satisfaction and is delighted as if he is in the company of his Beloved (God). The Purana says: 'The sum total of the sensual pleasures of this world and also all the great pleasures of the divine regions (heavens) are not worth a sixteenth part of that bliss which proceeds from the eradication of desires and cravings'.]

10.10

To them who are ever steadfast, worshipping Me with love, I give the Yoga of discrimination by which they come to Me.

[Note: The devotees who have dedicated themselves to the Lord, who are ever harmonious and self-abiding, who are ever devout and who adore Him with intense love (not for attaining any selfish purpose), obtain the divine grace. The Lord gives them wisdom or the Yoga of discrimination or understanding by which they attain the knowledge of the Self. The Lord bestows on these devotees who have fixed their thoughts on Him alone, 'devotion of right knowledge' (buddhi Yoga) by which they know Him in essence. They know through the eye of intuition in deep meditation the Supreme Lord, the one in all, the Self of all, as their own Self, destitute of all limitations. Buddhi here is the inner eye of intuition by which the magnificent experience of oneness is had. Buddhi Yoga is Jnana Yoga.]

10.11

Out of mere compassion for them, I, dwelling within their Self, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the luminous lamp of knowledge.

[Note: The generation of the light itself is quite sufficient to remove the darkness. (The darkness of millions of years in a deep cave is removed in an instant by light). As soon as the darkness is removed, objects and other articles become visible. Even so the dawn of knowledge of the Self itself is quite sufficient to remove ignorance. No other karma or practice is necessary. After the ignorance is removed by the knowledge of the Self, Brahman alone shines in His pristine glory.

Luminous lamp of knowledge: The Lord dwells in the heart of the devotees who constantly think of Him and destroys the veil

or the darkness born of ignorance due to the absence of discrimination, by the luminous lamp of knowledge fed by the oil of pure devotion, fanned by the wind of profound meditation on Him, provided with the wick of right intuition, generated by the constant cultivation of celibacy, piety and other divine virtues held in the chambers of the heart free from worldliness, placed in the innermost recesses of the mind free from the wind of sense-attractions (withdrawn from the objects of the senses) and untainted by likes and dislikes, and shining with the light of knowledge of the Self caused by the constant practice of meditation.]

Arjuna said

10.12

Thou art the Supreme Brahman, the supreme abode (or the supreme light), the supreme purifier, eternal, divine Person, the primeval God, unborn and omnipresent.

[Note: Param Brahman: The highest Self. The word *param* indicates the pure and attributeless Absolute, free from the limiting adjuncts. It is Sacchidananda Brahman.

The 'inferior Brahman' is the Brahman with qualities (saguna) or Ishvara, Brahman with the limiting adjuncts or the chosen object of meditation by the devotees.

Param dhama: From the Creator down to the blade of grass, the Supreme Being is the support or substratum. Therefore He is known as the supreme abode.

Adi-deva: The primeval God or the original God, who existed before all other gods.

Pavitram paramam: Supreme purifier. The sacred rivers and holy places of pilgrimage can remove only the sin; but Para Brahman can destroy all sins and ignorance, the root-cause of all sins. Therefore Para Brahman or the Supreme Self is the supreme purifier.]

10.13

All the sages have thus declared Thee, as also the divine sage Narada; so also Asita, Devala and Vyasa; and Thou Thyself sayest so to me.

[Note: Rishi is a holy sage of disciplined mind and senses.

Devarshi is a divine sage more highly evolved than a rishi.]

10.14

I believe all this that Thou sayest to me as true, O Krishna; verily, O blessed Lord! Neither the gods nor the demons know Thy manifestation (origin).

[Note: Bhagavan is He in whom ever exist the six attributes in their fullness, viz., jnana (wisdom), vairagya (dispassion), aishvarya (lordship), dharma (virtue), sri (wealth), and bala (omnipotence).

Also, He who knows the origin, dissolution and the future of all beings and Who is omniscient, is called Bhagavan.

Arjuna addresses the Lord as Keshava because the Lord knows what is going on in the mind as He is omniscient. As the Lord is the source of the gods, the demons and others, they cannot comprehend His manifestation or origin.]

10.15

Verily, Thou Thyself knowest Thyself by Thyself, O Supreme Person, O source and Lord of beings, o god of gods, O ruler of the world!

[Note: Purushottama means the best among all purushas. He assumes the four forms, viz., the source of beings, the Lord of beings, God of gods and ruler of the world. Hence He is called Purushottama.

Devadeva is He who is worshipped even by Indra and other gods.

Jagatpati: The Lord protects the world and guides the people through the instructions given in the Vedas. Hence the name 'ruler of the world'.]

10.16

Thou shouldst indeed tell, without reserve, of thy divine glories by which Thou existeth, pervading all these worlds. (None else can do so).

10.17

How shall I, ever meditating, know Thee, O Yogi? In what aspects or things, O blessed Lord, art Thou to be thought of by me?

[Note: Arjuna says: 'O Lord, how may I know Thee by constant meditation? In what aspects art Thou to be thought of by me?

Even when I think of external objects I can meditate on Thee in Thy particular manifestations in them if I have a detailed knowledge of Thy glories. Therefore deign to tell me, without reserve, of Thy own glories. Then only can I behold oneness everywhere.]

10.18

Tell me again, O Krishna, of Thy Yogic power and glory; for I am not satisfied with what I have heard of Thy life-giving and nectar-like speech.

[Note: the Lord is called Janardana because He sends or causes the demons to go to hell; or because all pray to Him for worldly success, prosperity and also salvation.]

The Blessed Lord said:

10.19

Very well! Now I will declare to thee My divine glories in their prominence, O Arjuna; there is no end to their detailed description.

10.20

10.20

I am the Self, O Gudakesha (Arjuna), seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.

[Note: Pratyagatma: I am the Soul which exists in the hearts of all beings and I am also the source or origin, the middle or stay, and the end of all created beings. I am the birth, the life and the death of all beings. Meditate on Me as the innermost Self.]

10.21

Among the (twelve) Adityas, I am Vishnu; among luminaries, the radiant sun; I am Marichi among the (seven or forty-nine) Maruts; among stars the moon am I.

[Note: Of the twelve Adityas I am the Aditya known as Vishnu. Dhata, Mitra, Aryama, Rudra, Varuna, Bhaga, Surya, Vivasvan, Pusan, Savita, Tvasta and Vishnu are the twelve Adityas. The twelve months of the year are the Adityas.

The Maruts are the gods controlling the winds. Some hold there are seven of them while others say there are forty-nine.

The twelve Adityas, the luminaries like agni (fire), lightning, etc., the Maruts, the stars, etc., are the samanya vibhutis (ordinary manifestations) of the Lord. Vishnu, the sun, Marichi, and the moon are His visesha vibhutis (special manifestations) and hence they have greater splendour in them.

You can superimpose the Lord on the sun and the moon, and meditate on them as forms of the Lord. You can practise the same kind of meditation on all forms mentioned in the following verses of this chapter.]

10.22

Among the Vedas, I am the Sama-Veda; I am Vasava among the gods; among the senses I am the mind; and I am intelligence among living beings.

[Note: Vasava is Indra.

Gods: such as Rudras, Adityas.

Indriyas: The five jnana-indriyas or organs of knowledge, viz., tongue, nose, eyes, ears and skin; and the five karma indriyas or organs of action, viz., speech, hands, feet, genitals and anus. The mind is regarded as the eleventh sense. As the senses cannot function without the help of the mind, the mind is regarded as the chief among the senses.

Chetana: Intelligence is that state of intellect that manifests in the aggregate of the body and the senses. That which illumines all, from the intellect down to the grossest object, is called Chetana.]

10.23

And, among the Rudras I am Shankara; among the yakshas and rakshasas, the lord of wealth (kubera); among the vasus I am Pavaka (fire); and among the (seven) mountains I am the Meru.

[Note: Rudras are eleven in number. The ten vital airs (pranas and the upa-pranas, which are five each) and the mind are the eleven Rudras. They are so called because they produce grief when they depart from the body. They have been symbolised in the pranas as follows: Virabhadra, Shankara, Girisha, Ajaikapati, Bhuvanadhisvara, Aherbhujya, Pinaki, Aparajita, Kapaali, Sthanu, and Bhaga. Among these Rudras, Shankara is regarded as the chief.]

Vasus are earth, water, fire, air space, sun, moon and stars. They are so called because they comprehend the whole universe within them. They have been symbolised in the Puranas as follows: Apah, Dhruva, Soma, dhara, Anila, Anala, Pratyusa and Prabhasa. Of these Anala or Pavaka (fire) is the chief.]

10.24

And, among the household priests (of kings), O Arjuna, know Me to be the chief, Brhaspati; among the army generals I am Skanda; among lakes I am the ocean.

[Note: Brhaspati is the chief priest of the gods. He is the household priest of Indra.]

Skanda is Kartikeya or Lord Subrahmanya. He is the general of the hosts of the gods.]

10.25

Among the great sages I am Bhrgu; among words I am the one syllable (Om); among sacrifices I am the sacrifice of silent repetition; among the immovable things I am the Himalayas.

[Note: Manu has said: 'Whatever else the brahmana (brahmin) may or may not do, he attains salvation by japa (silent repetition of a mantra) alone'.]

Bhrgu is one of the mind-born sons of the Creator.

Japayajna: There is neither injury nor loss in this yajna. Therefore, it is regarded as the best of all yajnas.]

10.26

Among all the trees (I am) the Peepul; among the divine sages, I am Narada; among gandharvas, Chitraratha; among the perfected, the sage Kapila.

[Note: Deva rishis are gods and at the same time rishis or seers of mantras.]

Siddhas are the perfected ones; those who at their very birth attained without any effort dharma (virtue), jnana (knowledge of the Self), vairagya (dispassion), and aishvarya (lordship).

Muni is one who does manana or reflection;  
one who meditates.]

10.27

Know Me as Ucchaishravas born of nectar among horses;  
among lordly elephants (I am) the Airavata; and, among men,  
the king.

[Note: Nectar was obtained by the gods by churning the ocean  
of milk. Ucchaishravas is the name of the royal horse, which  
was born in that ocean of milk when it was churned for the  
nectar.

Airavatam: the offspring of Iravata, the elephant of Indra born  
at the time when the ocean of milk was churned.]

10.28

Among weapons, I am the thunderbolt; among cows I am the wish-fulfilling  
cow called Surabhi; I am the progenitor, the god  
of love; among serpents I am Vasuki.

[Note: Vajram: the thunderbolt Vajra made of the bone of  
Dadhichi; an implement of warfare that can only be handled  
by Indra who has finished a hundred sacrifices.

Kamadhuk: The cow Kamadhenu of the great sage Vasishtha  
which yielded all the desired objects, also born of the ocean  
of milk.

Kandarpa: Cupid (god of love).

Vasuki: The lord of hoodless or ordinary serpents.

Sarpa (serpent) had only one head. Vasuki is yellow coloured. Nagas have  
many heads. Ananta is fire coloured.

Sridhara says that 'sarpa' is poisonous and the 'naga' is non-poisonous. Sri  
Ramanuja says that 'sarpa' has only one  
head and 'naga' has many heads.]

10.29

I am Ananta among the nagas; I am Varuna among water  
deities; Aryaman among the manes I am; I am Yama among  
the governors.

[Note: Ananta is the king of hooded serpents or cobras. It is fire-coloured.

Varuna is the king of the water-gods.

Water-beings: the gods connected with waters.

Aryaman is the king of the manes.

I am Yama, the witness of the acts of all living beings, who  
keeps account of the good and bad actions of the people.]

10.30



10.30

And, I am Prahlad among the demons; among the reckoners I am time; among beasts I am their king, the lion, and Vainateya (Garuda; eagle) among birds.

[Note: Prahlad, though he was the son of a demon (Hiranyakashyapu), was a great devotee of the Lord.]

10.31

Among the purifiers I am the wind; Rama among the warriors am I; among the fishes I am the shark; among the streams I am the Ganga (Ganges river).

[Note: The holy river Ganga was swallowed by Jahnu when she was being brought down from heaven by Bhagiratha. Hence the name Jahnavi for Ganga.]

10.32

Among creations I am the beginning, the middle and also the end, O Arjuna; among the sciences I am the science of the Self; and I am the logic among debators (controversialists).

[Note: I am the metaphysics among all sciences. I am knowledge of the Self among all branches of knowledge. I am the argument of debators. I am the logic of disputants. I am the speech of orators.

As the knowledge of the Self leads to the attainment of the final beatitude of life or salvation, it is the chief among all branches of knowledge.

Pravadatam: By the word controversialist, we should here understand the various kinds of people using various kinds of argumentation in logic such as vada, jalpa and vitanda. Vada is a way of arguing by which one gets at the truth of a certain question. The aspirants who are free from raga-dvesha (attachment-hatred) and jealousy raise amongst themselves questions and answers and enter into discussions in philosophical problems in order to ascertain and understand the nature of the Truth. They do not argue in order to gain victory over one another. This is vada. Jalpa is wrangling in which one asserts his own opinion and refutes that of his opponent. Vitanda is idle carping at the arguments of one's opponents. No attempt is made to establish the other side of the question. In jalpa and vitanda one tries to defeat another. There is desire for victory.]

10.33

Among the letters of the alphabets, the letter 'A' I am and the dual among the compounds. I am verily the inexhaustible or everlasting time; I am the dispenser (of the fruits of actions) having faces in all directions.

[Note: Among the various kinds of compounds used in Sanskrit language I am the dvandva (union of the two), the copulative.

Time here refers to the moment, the ultimate element of time

or to Parameshvara, the Supreme Lord who is the *time of even time*, since He is beyond time.

As the Supreme Being is all-pervading it is said that He has faces in all directions.]

10.34

And I am the all-devouring death, and the prosperity of those who are to be prosperous; among the feminine qualities (I am) fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, firmness and forgiveness.

[Note: The power of the mind that enables one to hold the teachings of the scriptures is called medha. Firmness or dhrti is the power to keep the body and the senses steady even amidst various kinds of sufferings. The power to keep oneself unattached even while doing actions is dhrti. It also means courage. Kshama (forgiveness) also means endurance.

Fame, prosperity, memory, intelligence and firmness are the daughters of Daksha. They had been given in marriage to Dharma and so they are called dharma-patnis.]

10.35

Among the hymns also I am the Brhatsaman; among metres Gayatri am I; among the months I am the Margasirsha; among the seasons (I am) the flowery season.

[Note: Brhatsaman is the chief of the hymns of the Sama-Veda. Brhat means big.

Margasirsha: From the middle of December to the middle of January. This has a temperate climate. In olden days it was usual to start with this month in counting the months of the year. The first place was given to this month.

Kusumakara; the beautiful flowery season, the spring.]

10.36

I am the gambling of the fraudulent; I am the splendour of the splendid; I am victory; I am determination (of those who are determined); I am the goodness of the good.

[Note: Of the methods of defrauding others I am gambling such as dice-play. Gambling is My manifestation. I am the power of the powerful. I am the victory of the victorious. I am the effort of those who make that effort.

I am Satva which assumes the forms of dharma (virtue), jnana (knowledge), vairagya (dispassion), and aishvarya (wealth or lordship) in Satvic persons.]

10.37

Among the Vrishnis I am Vasudeva; among the Pandavas I am Arjuna; among the sages I am Vyasa; among the poets I am Usana, the poet.

[Note: Vrishnis are Yadavas or the descendants of Yadu. I am

the foremost among them.

Usana is Shukracharya, the preceptor of the demons.]

10.38

Among punishers I am the sceptre; among those who seek victory I am statesmanship; and also among secrets I am silence; knowledge among knowers I am.

Niti: Diplomacy, polity.

Maunam: The silence produced by constant meditation on Brahman or the Self.

Jnanam: Knowledge of the Self.]

10.39

And whatever is the seed of all beings, that also am I, O Arjuna; there is no being, whether moving or unmoving that can exist without Me.

[Note: I am the primeval seed from which all creation has come into existence. I am the seed of everything. I am the Self of everything. Nothing can exist without Me. Everything is of My nature. I am the essence of everything. Without Me all things would be mere void. I am the soul of everything.]

10.40

There is no end to My divine glories, O Arjuna, but this is a brief statement by Me of the particulars of My divine glories.

[Note: It is impossible for anyone to describe or know the exact extent of the divine glories of the Lord. There is no limit to His powers or glories. What could be expressed of Him is nothing when compared to His infinite glories.

Parantapa: Scorcher of foes – he who burns the internal enemies, lust, anger, greed, delusion, etc.]

10.41

Whatever being there is glorious, prosperous or powerful, that know thou to be a manifestation of a part of My splendour.

10.42

But, of what avail to thee is the knowledge of all these details, O Arjuna? I exist, supporting this whole world by one fragment (part) of Myself.

[Note: This verse is based on the declaration in the Purusha Sukta (Rg-veda 10.90.3) that 'One quarter of Him is all the cosmos: the three quarters are the divine transcendent Reality'.

Amsa or fragment is mere kalpana (imagination) on account of our own ignorance or limiting adjunct. In reality Brahman is without any such parts and is formless.

Arjuna now has a knowledge of the glories of the Lord. He is

now fit to behold the magnificent cosmic form of the Lord.  
Krishna prepares Arjuna for this grand vision by giving him a description of His glories.

Arjuna says: 'O Lord, I now realise that the whole world is filled by Thee. I now wish to behold the whole universe in Thee with my eye of intuition'.]

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the tenth chapter entitled:

The Yoga of the Divine Glories.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the tenth discourse entitled:

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## **Gita - Chapter 11**

### **Vishvaroop-Darshan Yogah The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form**

Arjuna said:

11.01

By this word (explanation) of the highest secret concerning the Self which Thou hast spoken, out of compassion towards me, my delusion is gone.

11.02

The origin and the destruction of beings verily have been heard by me in detail from thee, O lotus-eyed Lord, and also Thy inexhaustible greatness.

11.03

(Now) O Supreme Lord, as Thou hast thus described Thyself, O Supreme Person, I wish to see Thy divine form.

11.04

If thou, O Lord thinkest it possible for me to see it, do Thou, then, O Lord of the Yogis, show me Thy imperishable Self.

The Blessed Lord said:

11.05

Behold O Arjuna, forms of Mine, by the hundreds and

thousands, of different sorts, divine and of various colours and shapes.

11.06

Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Ashvins and also the Maruts; behold many wonders never seen before, O Arjuna.

11.07

Now behold, O Arjuna, in this, My body, the whole universe centred in one – including the moving and the unmoving – and whatever thou desirest to see.

11.08

But thou art not able to behold Me with these thine own eyes; I give thee the divine eye; behold My lordly Yoga.

Sanjaya said:

11.09

Having thus spoken, O king, the great Lord of Yoga, Hari (Krishna), showed to Arjuna His supreme form as the Lord.

11.10

With numerous mouths and eyes, with numerous wonderful sights, with numerous divine ornaments, with numerous divine weapons uplifted (such a form He showed).

11.11

Wearing divine garlands (necklaces) and apparel, anointed with divine unguents, the all wonderful, resplendent (Being) endless with faces on all sides.

11.12

If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out at once (simultaneously) in the sky that would be the splendour of that mighty Being (great soul).

11.13

There, in the body of the God of gods, Arjuna then saw the whole universe resting in one, with its many groups.

11.14

Then, Arjuna, filled with wonder and with his hair standing on end, bowed down his head to the God and spoke with joined palms.

Arjuna said:

11.15

I see all the gods, O God, in Thy body, and (also) hosts of various classes of beings, Brahma, the Lord, seated on the lotus, all the sages and the celestial serpents.

11.16

I see Thee of boundless form on every side with many arms, stomachs,

mouths and eyes; neither the end nor the middle  
nor also the beginning do I see, O Lord of the universe,  
O Cosmic Form.

11.17

I see with the diadem, the club and the discus, a mass of  
radiance shining everywhere, very hard to look at, blazing  
all round like burning fire and the sun, and immeasurable.

11.18

Thou art the Imperishable, the Supreme Being, worthy to be  
known. Thou art the great treasure house of this universe; Thou  
art the imperishable protector of the eternal dharma; Thou art  
the ancient Person, I deem.

11.19

I see Thee without beginning, middle or end, infinite in power,  
of endless arms, the sun and the moon being Thy eyes, the  
burning fire Thy mouth, heating the whole universe with Thy  
radiance.

11.20

This space between the earth and the heaven and all the  
quarters are filled by Thee alone; having seen this, Thy  
wonderful and terrible form, the three worlds are trembling  
with fear, O great-souled Being.

11.21

Verily, into Thee enter these hosts of gods; some extol Thee  
in fear with joined palms 'may it be well' saying thus, bands of  
great sages and perfected ones praise Thee with complete  
hymns.

11.22

The Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, Sadhyas, Vishvadevas, the two Ashvins,  
Maruts, the manes and the hosts of celestial singers, Yakshas, demons  
and the perfected ones, are all looking at  
Thee, in great astonishment.

11.23

Having seen Thy immeasurable form with many mouths and  
eyes, O mighty armed, with many arms, thighs and feet, with  
many stomachs, and fearful with many teeth – the worlds are  
terrified and so am I.

11.24

On seeing Thee (the Cosmic Form) touching the sky, shining  
in many colours, with mouths wide open, with large fiery eyes,  
I am terrified at heart and find neither courage nor peace,  
O Vishnu.

11.25

Having seen Thy mouths fearful with teeth (blazing) like the  
fires of cosmic dissolution, I know not the four quarters, nor  
do I find peace. Have mercy, O Lord of the gods, O abode  
of the universe.

11.26

11.26

All the sons of Dhritarashtra with the hosts of kings of the earth, Bhishma, Drona and Karna, with the chief among our warriors.

11.27

They hurriedly enter into Thy mouths with terrible teeth and fearful to behold. Some are found sticking in the gaps between the teeth with their heads crushed to powder.

11.28

Verily, just as many torrents of rivers flow towards the ocean, even so these heroes in the world of men enter Thy flaming mouths.

11.29

As moths hurriedly rush into a blazing fire for (their own) destruction, so also these creatures hurriedly rush into Thy mouths for (their own) destruction.

11.30

Thou lickest up devouring all the worlds on every side with Thy flaming mouths. Thy fierce rays, filling the whole world with radiance, are burning, O Vishnu!

11.31

Tell me, what Thou art, so fierce in form. Salutations to Thee, O God Supreme: have mercy. I desire to know Thee, the original Being. I know not indeed Thy doing.

The Blessed Lord said:

11.32

I am the mighty world-destroying Time, now engaged in destroying the worlds. Even without thee, none of the warriors arrayed in the hostile armies shall live.

11.33

Therefore, stand up and obtain fame. Conquer the enemies and enjoy the unrivalled kingdom. Verily by Me have they been already slain; be thou a mere instrument, O Arjuna.

11.34

Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and other brave warriors – these are already slain by Me; do thou kill; do not be distressed with fear; fight and thou shalt conquer thy enemies in battle.

Sanjaya said:

11.35

Having heard that speech of Lord Krishna, the crowned one (Arjuna), with joined palms, trembling, prostrating himself, again addressed Krishna, in a choked voice, bowing down, overwhelmed with fear.

Arjuna said:

11.36



11.36

It is meet, O Krishna, that the world delights and rejoices in Thy praise; demons fly in fear to all quarters and the hosts of the perfected ones bow to Thee.

11.37

And why should they not, O great soul, bow to Thee who art greater (than all else), the primal cause even of the Creator (Brahma), O Infinite Being, O Lord of the gods, O Abode of the universe; Thou art the imperishable, the Being, the non-being and That which is the supreme (that which is beyond the Being and the non-being).

11.38

Thou art the primal God, the ancient Purusha, the supreme refuge of this universe, the knower, the knowable and the supreme Abode. By Thee is the universe pervaded, O Being of infinite forms.

11.39

Thou art Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, the moon, the Creator, and the great-grandfather. Salutations, salutations unto Thee, a thousand times, and again salutations, salutations unto Thee.

11.40

Salutations to Thee, from front and behind! Salutations to Thee on every side! O All! Thou infinite in power and prowess, pervadest all; wherefore Thou art all.

11.41

Whatever I have presumptuously said from carelessness or love, addressing Thee as O Krishna, O Yadava, O Friend, regarding Thee merely as a friend, unknowing of this, Thy greatness.

11.42

In whatever way I may have insulted Thee for the sake of fun while at play, reposing, sitting or at meals, when alone (with Thee), O Achyuta, or in company – that I implore Thee, immeasurable one, to forgive.

11.43

Thou art the Father of this world, moving and unmoving. Thou art to be adored by this world. Thou, the greatest Guru; (for) none there exists who is equal to Thee; how can there be then another superior to Thee in the three worlds, O Being of unequalled power?

11.44

Therefore, bowing down, prostrating my body, I crave Thy forgiveness, O adorable Lord. As a father forgives his son, a friend his (dear) friend, a lover his beloved, even so shouldst Thou forgive me, O God.

11.45

I am delighted, having seen what has never been seen before; and yet my mind is distressed with fear. Show me that

(previous) form only, O God; have mercy, O God of gods,  
O Abode of the universe.

11.46

I desire to see Thee as before, crowned, bearing a mace,  
with the discus in hand, in Thy former form only, having four  
arms, O thousand-armed, Cosmic Form (Being).

The Blessed Lord said:

11.47

O Arjuna, this Cosmic Form has graciously been shown to  
thee by Me by My own Yogic power; full of splendour, primeval,  
and infinite, this Cosmic Form of Mine has never been seen  
before by anyone other than thyself.

11.48

Neither by the study of the Vedas and sacrifices nor by gifts  
nor by rituals nor by severe austerities can I be seen in this  
form in the world of men by any other than thyself, O great hero  
of the Kurus (Arjuna).

11.49

Be not afraid, nor bewildered on seeing such a terrible form  
of Mine as this; with thy fear dispelled and with a gladdened  
heart, now behold again this former form of Mine.

Sanjaya said:

11.50

Having thus spoken to Arjuna, Krishna again showed His own  
form and the great Soul (Krishna), assuming His gentle form, consoled him  
(Arjuna) who was terrified.

Arjuna said:

11.51

Having seen this Thy gentle human form, O Krishna, now I am composed  
and am restored to my own nature.

The Blessed Lord said:

11.52

Very hard indeed it is to see this form of Mine, which thou hast  
seen. Even the gods are ever longing to behold it.

11.53

Neither by the Vedas nor by austerity, nor by gift, nor by  
sacrifice can I be seen in this form as thou hast seen Me  
(so easily).

11.54

But by single-minded devotion can I, of this form, be known  
and seen in reality and also entered into, O Arjuna.

11.55

He who does all actions for Me, who looks upon Me as the supreme, who is devoted to Me, who is free from attachment, who bears enmity towards no creature, he comes to Me, O Arjuna.

[Note: This is the essence of the whole teaching of the Gita. He who practises this teaching will attain Supreme Bliss and Immortality. This verse contains the summary of the entire philosophy of the Gita.

He who performs actions (duties) for the sake of the Lord, consecrates all his actions to Him, who serves the Lord with his heart and soul, who regards the Lord as his supreme goal, who lives for Him alone, who works for Him alone, who sees the Lord in everything, who sees the whole world as the Cosmic Form of the Lord and therefore, cherishes no feeling of hatred or enmity towards any creature even when great injury has been done by others to him, who has no attachment or love to wealth, children, wife, friends and relatives, and who seeks nothing else but the Lord, realises Him and enters into His Being. He become one with Him.]

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the eleventh discourse entitled:

The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form

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## **Gita - Chapter 12**

### **Bhakti Yogah The Yoga of Devotion**

Arjuna said:

12.01

Those devotees who, ever steadfast thus worship Thee and those also who worship the imperishable and the unmanifested – which of them are better versed in Yoga?

[Note: The twelfth discourse goes to prove that Bhakti Yoga or the Yoga of devotion is much easier than Jnana Yoga or Yoga of knowledge. In Bhakti Yoga the devotee establishes a near and dear relationship with the Lord. He cultivates slowly any one of the five bhavas (attitudes) according to his temperament, taste and capacity. The five attitudes are Shanta Bhava (the attitude of peaceful adoration), Dasya Bhava (the attitude of servant towards the master), Sakhya Bhava (the attitude of a friend), Vatsalya Bhava (the attitude of a parent to the child), and Madhurya Bhava (the attitude of the

attitudes towards the Lord. The last (Madhurya Bhava) is the culmination of devotion. It is merging or absorption in the Lord.

The devotee adores the Lord. He constantly remembers Him (smaranam). He sings His name (kirtanam). He speaks of His glories. He repeats His name. He chants His mantra (japa). He prays and prostrates. He hears His Lilas (divine plays). He does total, ungrudging and unconditional self-surrender, obtains His grace, holds communion with, and eventually gets absorbed in Him.

The devotee begins by worshipping the symbols of God (the idols). Then he performs internal worship of the Form. Ultimately he is led to the supreme worship of the all-pervading Brahman (para puja).

‘Thus’: As declared in the last verse of the previous chapter.

‘Avyaktam’: The unmanifested, i.e., incomprehensible to the senses, as destitute of all the limiting adjuncts. The unmanifested Brahman is beyond all limitations. That which is visible to the senses is called vyakta or manifest.

The hearts of the devotees are wholly fixed on Thee. They worship Thee with all their heart and soul.

There are others who worship the unmanifested Brahman, Who is beyond time, space and causation, Who is attributeless, Who is eternal and indefinable, Who is beyond the reach of speech and mind. These are the wise sages.

Of these two, the devotees and the men of knowledge – who are the better knowers of yoga? ]

The Blessed Lord said:

12.02

Those who, fixing their mind on Me, worship Me, ever steadfast and endowed with supreme faith, these are the best in Yoga in My opinion.

[Note: Those devotees who fix their minds on Me in the Cosmic Form, the Supreme Lord and worship Me, ever harmonised and with intense and supreme faith, regarding Me as the Lord of all the masters of Yoga, who are free from attachment and other evil passions – these, in My opinion, are the best versed in Yoga.

They spend their days and nights in worshipping Me. They have no other thoughts except those of Myself. They live for Me only. Therefore it is indeed proper to say that they are the best Yogis.

Are not the others, those who contemplate on the imperishable, formless, attributeless, Supreme Brahman, the best of Yogis? Listen now to what I have to say regarding them.]

## 12.03

Those who worship the imperishable, the indefinable, the unmanifest, the omnipresent, the unthinkable, the immovable and the eternal.

[Note: Anirdeshyam: That which cannot be actually shown or which cannot be defined – the Akshara or Sacchidananda Para Brahman is beyond the reach of the mind and speech. Why can It not be defined? Because It is unmanifested. It does not have the four qualities of manifested beings, viz., jati (caste such as Brahmin, kshatriya), guna (attributes such as blueness, whiteness, tall, short, etc.), kriya (reading, walking, etc.), and sambandha (like the relation between father and son).

The unmanifest: Incomprehensible by any of the organs of knowledge; not manifest to any of the organs of knowledge.

Upasana (worship) means 'sitting near'. It is approaching the chosen ideal or object of worship by meditating on it, in accordance with the teachings of the scriptures and the spiritual preceptor, and dwelling steadily in the current of that one thought like a 'thread' of oil poured from one vessel to another. It means continuous and uninterrupted contemplation of God.

The imperishable Brahman is omnipresent, pervading everything like space. It is unthinkable, because It is unmanifest. Whatever is visible to the senses can be thought of by the mind. That which can be grasped by the organs of knowledge can be thought of by the mind also. But the Supreme Being is invisible to the senses and so cannot be grasped by the organs of knowledge and is, therefore, unthinkable. All thoughts of God ultimately lead the aspirant to quiescent meditation.

It is kutastha (unchangeable). Kutastha means 'remaining like a mass or heap'. Therefore, It is immutable or eternal. Just as the anvil remains unchanged though the iron pieces that are beaten on the anvil change their shape, so also Brahman is unchanging though the forms are changing. Hence Brahman is called kutastha. Kuta also means a thing that appears to be good externally but which is full of evil within. Hence it refers here to that seed of samsara (the process of worldly life), viz., ignorance, which is full of evil within and which is known as the avyakta (undifferentiated) in the Svetasvatara Upanishad.

*Mayam tu prakrtim vidyat*

*Mayinam tu maheshvaram.*

And in the Gita ch 7.14 (*mama maya duratyaya – this illusion of Mine is hard to pierce*).

Another interpretation of kutastha is 'that which is at the root of everything'. He who is seated in Maya as its witness, as its Lord is kutastha.

Achalam: Immovable, that which is free from change.

Achalam: Immovable, that which is free from change.  
Therefore, the imperishable Brahman is Dhruvam, eternal  
(compare Gita 8.21).]

#### 12.04

Having restrained all the senses, even-minded everywhere,  
intent on the welfare of all beings – verily they also come unto  
Me.

[Note: Those who are free from likes and dislikes (attraction and repulsion) can possess equanimity of mind. Those who have destroyed ignorance which is the cause for exhilaration and grief, through the knowledge of the Self, those who are free from all kinds of sensual cravings through the constant practice of finding the defects or the evil in sensual pleasures can have evenness of mind. Those who are neither elated nor troubled when they get desirable or undesirable objects can possess evenness of mind.

The two currents of love and hatred (likes and dislikes) make a man think of harming others. When these two are destroyed through meditation on the Self, the Yogi is intent on the welfare of others. He rejoices in doing service to the people. He plunges himself in service. He works constantly for the solidarity or well being of this world. He gives fearlessness (abhayadana) to all creatures. No creature is afraid of him. He becomes a Paramhansa Sanyasi who gives shelter to all in his heart. He attains Self-realisation. He becomes a knower of Brahman. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman.

By means of control of the senses the Yogi closes the ten doors (the senses) and withdraws the senses from the sensual objects and fixes the mind on the innermost Self. Those who meditate on the imperishable transcendental Brahman, restraining and subduing the senses, regarding everything equally, rejoicing in the welfare of all beings – these also come to Me. It needs no saying that they reach Myself, because I hold the wise as verily Myself. (Compare Gita ch.7.18). Further it is not necessary to say that they are the best Yogis as they are one with Brahman Himself (Compare Gita ch. 11.55; ch.5.25).

But – ]

#### 12.05

Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the unmanifested; for the goal, the unmanifested, is very hard for the embodied to reach.

[Note: Worshipers of saguna (qualified) and the nirguna (unqualified, formless) Brahman reach the same goal. But the latter path is very hard and arduous, because the aspirant has to give up attachment to the body from the very beginning of his spiritual practice.

The 'embodied': Those who identify themselves with their bodies. Identification with the body is 'dehabhimana'. The imperishable Brahman is very hard to reach for those who are attached to their bodies.

Further, it is extremely difficult to fix the restless mind on the formless and attributeless Brahman. Contemplation on the imperishable attributeless Brahman demands a very sharp, one-pointed and subtle intellect. The Upanishad says:

*Drasyate tu agraya sukshmaya sukshmadarshibhih (It is seen by subtle seers through their subtle intellect).*

He who meditates on the unmanifested should possess the four means. The four means are discrimination, dispassion, sixfold virtues, and longing for liberation. The sixfold virtues are: control of the mind, control of the senses, fortitude (endurance), turning away from the objects of the world, faith and tranquillity.

Then he will have to approach a Guru, who is well versed in the scriptures and who is also established in Brahman. He will have to hear the Truth from him, then reflect and meditate on It.

He who realises the nirguna (attributeless) Brahman attains eternal bliss or Self-realisation or kaivalya (moksha) which is preceded by the destruction of ignorance with its effects. He who realises the saguna Brahman (Brahman with attributes) goes to Brahmaloaka and enjoys all the wealth and powers of the Lord. He then gets initiation into the mysteries of the Absolute from Hiranyagarbha and without any effort and without the practice of hearing, reflection and meditation attains, through the grace of the Lord alone, the same state attained by those who have realised the nirguna Brahman. Through the knowledge of the Self, ignorance and its effects are destroyed in the case of the worshippers of the saguna Brahman also.]

12.06

But those who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the supreme goal, meditating on Me with single minded Yoga.

[Note: Ananya Yoga: unswerving Yoga; exclusive, having no other object of worship or support save the Lord; samadhi.

Even in Bhakti Yoga one should not abandon actions. He must perform actions but he will have to dedicate the merits or the fruits to the Lord. (Compare Gita ch. 9.27).]

12.07

To those whose minds are set on Me, O Arjuna, verily I become ere long the saviour out of the ocean of samsara.

[Note: Mrityu samsara (mortal samsara): The round of birth and death. The devotee who does total, unconditional and ungrudging self-surrender to the Lord, who places himself completely at the mercy of the Lord, and who fixes his mind on the Lord exclusively, who burns up the fruits of actions by offering them to the Lord and who thus destroys any power in the actions to bear fruit, and who has abandoned even the idea of liberation, is soon lifted by the Lord from the mortal



plane to the abode of Immortality.

I redeem such persons who have become 'mind-united with Me', from the ocean of the mortal world or worldly life, without delay. (Compare Gita ch. 10.10; ch. 12.6; 12.7).]

12.08

Fix thy mind on Me only, thy intellect in Me, (then) thou shalt no doubt live in Me alone hereafter.

[Note: Fix thy mind means 'thy purposes and thoughts' in Me 'the Lord in the Cosmic Form'. Give up entirely all thoughts of sensual objects. Fix in me thy intellect also- the faculty which resolves and determines.

What will be the result then? Thou shalt undoubtedly live in Me as Myself. O Arjuna, of this there is no doubt whatsoever.]

12.09

If thou art unable to fix thy mind steadily on Me, then by the Yoga of constant practice do thou seek to reach Me, O Arjuna.

[Note: Abhyasa Yoga: Abhyasa is constant practice to steady the mind and fix it on one point. The practice of repeatedly withdrawing the mind from all sorts of sensual objects and fixing it again and again on one particular object or the Self. The constant effort to separate or detach oneself from the illusory five sheaths and identify oneself with the Atma (Self) is also Abhyasa. If you are not able to fix your mind and intellect wholly on the Lord all the time, then do it for some time at least. If your mind wanders much try to fix it on the Lord through the continuous practice of remembrance. Resort to the worship of images of God, feeling His living presence in them. This will also help you.]

12.10

If thou art unable to practice even this Abhyasa Yoga, be thou intent on doing actions for My sake; even by doing actions for My sake, thou shalt attain perfection.

[Note: Even if thou dost mere actions for My sake without practising Yoga, thou shalt attain perfection. Thou shalt first attain purity of mind, then Yoga (concentration and meditation), then knowledge and then ultimately perfection (moksha or liberation). Serving humanity with Narayana Bhava (feeling that one is serving the Lord in all) is also doing actions for the sake of the Lord. Such service should go hand in hand with worship of God and meditation.

If you are not able to practise the Yoga of meditation mentioned in verse 8 or the Yoga of constant practice mentioned in verse 9, hear the glorious stories connected with the Lord by attending religious discourses conducted by the devotees of the Lord, sing kirtan and the praises of the Lord.

Practise the nine kinds of Bhagavata dharma (the nine modes of devotion), viz., 1. Hearing the lila (glorious and divine sports)

of the Lord (sravanam) – 2.Singing His Names (kirtanam) – 3.Constant remembrance of the Lord and constant repetition of His Names or mantras (smaranam) – 4.Service of His feet (padsevanam) –5.Offering flowers in worship (archanam) – 6.Doing prostrations to the Lord (vandanam) – 7.Becoming His servant (dasyam) – 8 Friendship with Him (sakhyam) - 9.Doing total self-surrender to the Lord (atmanivedanam).]

12.11

If thou art unable to do even this then, taking refuge in union with Me, renounce the fruits of all actions with the self controlled.

[Note: This is the easiest path. If thou art unable to perform actions for My sake, if thou canst not even be intent on My service, if thou art unable to practise the Bhagavata dharma, if thou wishest to do actions impelled by personal desires, then do thou perform them (from a sense of duty) renouncing them all in Me and also abandon the fruits of all actions, at the same time practising self-control.

In verse 8 the Yoga of meditation is prescribed for advanced students; in verse 9 the Yoga of constant practice; if one finds that, too, to be difficult, the performance of actions for the sake of the Lord alone has been taught in verse 10; and now those who cannot do even this are asked to abandon the fruits of all actions.

*Madyogam:* My Yoga. Surrendering all actions and their fruits to Me is My Yoga.

*Yatatmavan:* The man of discrimination who has controlled all the senses, who has withdrawn the senses from sound, touch, form, taste and smell.

Now the Lord eulogises the renunciation of the fruits of all actions in order to encourage the aspirants to practise the Yoga of renunciation of fruits of actions.]

12.12

Better indeed is knowledge than practice; than knowledge meditation is better; than meditation the renunciation of the fruits of actions; peace immediately follows renunciation.

[Note: Theoretical or indirect knowledge of Brahman gained from the scriptures is better than the practice (of restraining the modifications of the mind or worship of idols or self-mortification for the purpose of control of the mind and the senses) accompanied with ignorance. Meditation is better than theoretical knowledge. Renunciation of the fruits of actions is better than meditation. Renunciation of the fruits of all actions as a means to the attainment of supreme peace or moksha is merely eulogised here by the declaration of the superiority of one over the other to encourage Arjuna (and other spiritual aspirants) to practise Niskamya Karma Yoga, to create a strong desire in them to take up the Yoga of selfless action, in the same manner as by saying that the ocean was drunk by the brahmana sage Agastya even the brahmanas of this age are extolled because they are also brahmanas.

Desire is an enemy of peace. Desire causes restlessness of the mind. Desire is the source of all human miseries, sorrows and troubles. Stop the play of desire through discrimination, dispassion and enquiry into the nature of the Self; then you will enjoy supreme peace.

Renunciation of the fruits of action is prescribed for the purification of the aspirant's heart. It annihilates desire, the enemy of wisdom. The sage, too, renounces the fruits of actions. It has become natural to him to do so.]

#### 12.13

He who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving.

[Note: Lord Krishna gives a description of the nature of a bhagavata or a sage in the following eight verses. These eight verses are called 'Amrtaashtakam'.

The devotee who is established in God bears ill will to none. He looks upon all with love and great compassion. He regards all beings as himself. He does not hate even a single being, not even the creature, which gives him intense pain. He who entertains mercy towards suffering people and tries to relieve their sufferings is a man of Karuna (compassion). He puts himself in the position of the sufferer and feels the pain himself. Mercy is a divine attribute. God is all-merciful. If you wish to hold communion with the Lord, and if you desire to attain Godhead, you must also become all-merciful.

The perfect devotee offers full security of life (abhayadaan) to all beings. He is a Paramhansa Sanyasi. The devotee only can really understand the mysterious ways of the Lord. He beholds the Lord everywhere. He sees the Lord in all creatures. That is the reason why he has equal vision. He is like the sun or the river. The sun sheds its light equally on a palace or a cottage. Anyone can drink the water of a river. A river quenches the thirst of cows as well as tigers and lions. The idea of 'mine-ness' and 'I-ness' never arises in the devotee's mind. He has no sense of 'mine' and 'thine'. He is indifferent to pleasure and pain. He is not attached to pleasant objects. He does not hate the objects that give him pain. He is as forgiving as the earth. He is not affected a bit when anybody insults, abuses or beats him.]

#### 12.14

Ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction, with the mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to Me.

[Note: He knows that all that comes to him is the fruit of his own actions in the past and so he is ever contented. He does not endeavour to attain the finite or perishable objects. He fixes his mind and intellect on the Supreme Being or the Absolute, attains eternal satisfaction and stands adamant like the yonder

rock, amidst the vicissitudes of time.

Contentment ever dwells in the heart of My devotee. Like the ocean, which is ever full, his heart is ever full, as he has no cravings. He is ever cheerful and joyous. He has a feeling of fullness whether or not he gets the means for the bare sustenance of his body. He is satisfied with a little thing and he does not care whether it is good or not. He never grumbles, complains or murmurs when he does not obtain food and clothing, which are necessary for the maintenance of the body. His mind is ever filled with Me through constant and steady meditation.

Yogi: He who has evenness of mind always. He has controlled all the senses and desires. With a firm determination he has fixed his mind and intellect on Me in a spirit of perfect self-surrender. He is endowed with a firm conviction regarding the essential nature of the Self. He who has the knowledge through Self-realisation, 'I am *asanga akarta shuddha sacchidananda svayamprakasha advitiya Brahman*' (unattached, non-doer, pure, Existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute, self-luminous, non-dual Brahman) is a sage of firm determination. He has given to Me exclusively his mind (the faculty that wills and doubts) and the intellect (the faculty that determines). He is dear to Me as life itself. Such a comparison falls far short of the reality.]

#### 12.15

He by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, and who is freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety – he is dear to Me.

[Note: Harsha: Joy, exhilaration of the mind when one obtains an object of desire. This is indicated by hairs standing on their ends, tears flowing down the face, etc.]

Amarshat: Jealousy. Some interpret this as anger. Some say that it is a mixture of jealousy and anger.

Udvega: Anxiety, worry, sorrow, discomfort.

The knower of Brahman or the devotee of the Lord never injures any creature in thought, word or deed. He gives security of life to all creatures. Therefore, no creature is afraid of him. The sage feels that the world is his body, his own Self. How can he be afraid of the world then? He never hurts others and is not hurt by the words or deeds of others.

The mental modifications of joy, envy, fear and anxiety leave the sage or devotee of their own accord, just as the beasts and the birds leave the forest when it is on fire.]

#### 12.16

He who is free from wants, pure, expert, unconcerned, and untroubled, renouncing all undertakings or commencements – he who is (thus) devoted to Me, is dear to Me.

[Note: He is free from dependence. He is indifferent to the

body, the senses, the objects of the senses and their mutual connections. He has external and internal purity. External purity is attained through earth and water (washing and bathing). Inner purity is attained by the eradication of likes and dislikes, lust, anger, jealousy etc., and through the cultivation of the virtues (of) friendship (towards equals), compassion (towards those who are inferior) and complacency (towards superiors).

Daksha: prompt, swift and skilful in all actions; expert. He is able to decide rightly and immediately in matters that demand prompt attention and action.

Udasina: He who does not take up the side of a friend and the like (in a controversy); he who is indifferent to whatever happens.

Gatavyathah: He who is free from fear. He is not troubled even if he is beaten by a wicked man. He is not pained or afflicted by any result of any action or any happening.

Sarvarambhaparityagi: He habitually renounces all actions calculated to secure the objects of enjoyment, whether of this world or of the next. He has abandoned all egoistic, personal and mental initiative in all actions, mental and physical. He has merged his will in the cosmic will. He allows the divine will to work through him. He has neither preference nor personal desire and so he is swift, prompt and skilful in all actions. The divine will works through him in a dynamic manner.

Such a devotee is My own Self and so he is very dear to Me.]

12.17

He who neither rejoices, nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, renouncing good and evil, and who is full of devotion, is dear to Me.

[Note: What is described in verse 13 is dealt with at length in this verse.

He does not rejoice when he attains the desirable objects. He does not hate when he gets the undesirable objects. He does not grieve when he parts with his beloved objects. He does not desire the unattained.

*Shubhashubhaparityagi*: Here is a further description of *Sarvarambhaparityagi* of verse 16. He who has renounced good and evil actions that produce pleasure and pain is a devotee of the Lord.

Such a devotee or knower of Brahman, who is My own Self, is dear to Me. (Cf. Gita Ch. 7, verse 17 & ch. 9, v.29.)]

12.18

He who is the same to foe and friend, and also in honour and dishonour, who is the same in cold and heat and in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment.

[Note: The ordinary man of the world is ruled by the pairs of opposites,

honour and dishonour, cold and heat, and pleasure and pain (honour and dishonour at the intellectual level, cold and heat at the physical level & pleasure and pain at the mental or emotional level); but a Yogi or sage or a devotee (bhaagavat) has a balanced mind. He has poise or equanimity. He is not at all swayed by the blind forces of attraction and repulsion.

He who does wrong to others is a foe. He who does good to others is a friend.

The devotee or the sage has no attachment for objects of any kind.]

12.19

He to whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, content with anything, homeless, of a steady mind, and full of devotion- that man is dear to Me.

[Note: He is neither elated by praise nor pained by censure. He keeps a balanced state of mind. He has controlled the organ of speech and so he is silent. His mind also is serene and silent as he has controlled the thoughts also. He is quite content with the bare means of bodily sustenance. It is said in the Mahabharata (Shanti Parva Moksha Dharma): 'Who is dressed in anything, who eats any kind of food, who lies down anywhere, him the gods call a brahmana or a liberated sage or jivanmukta'.

He does not dwell in one place. He has no fixed abode. He is homeless. He regards the world as his dwelling place. His mind is ever fixed on Brahman (Cf. Ch. 7-17; 9-29; 12-17.)]

12.20

They verily who follow this immortal dharma (law or doctrine) as described above, endowed with faith, regarding Me as their supreme goal, the devotees, are exceedingly dear to Me.

[Note: The Blessed Lord has in this verse given a description of His excellent devotee.

Amrta dharma: Amrta is the life giving nectar. Dharma is righteousness or wisdom. Dharma is that which leads to immortality when practised. The real devotees regard Me as their final or supreme refuge.

‘Above’: Beginning with verse 13.

A great truth that should not go unnoticed is that the devotee and the man of wisdom and the Yogi have all the same fundamental characteristics.

He who follows this immortal dharma as described above becomes exceedingly dear to the Lord. Therefore, every aspirant who thirsts for salvation, and who longs to attain the Supreme Abode of the Lord should follow this immortal dharma with zeal and intense faith.]

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of the Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the twelfth discourse entitled:

The Yoga of Devotion.

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## **Gita - Chapter 13**

### **Kshetra-kshetrajna Vibhaga Yogah**

#### **The Yoga of Distinction Between the Field and the Knower of the Field**

Arjuna said:

I wish to learn about Nature (matter) and the Spirit (soul), the field and the knower of the field, knowledge and that, which ought to be known.

[Note: In some of the Gita books you may not find this introductory verse.]

The Blessed Lord said:

13.01

This body, O Arjuna, is called the field; he who knows it is called the knower of the field, by those who know them, i.e., by the sages.

13.02

Do thou also know Me as the knower of the field in all fields, O Arjuna. Knowledge of both the field and the knower of the field is considered by Me to be the knowledge.

13.03

What the field is and of what nature, what are its modifications and whence it is and also who He is and what His powers are – hear all that from Me in brief.

13.04

Sages have sung in many ways, in various distinctive chants and also in the suggestive words indicative of the Absolute, full of reasoning and decisive.

13.05

The great elements, egoism, intellect and also the unmanifested Nature, the ten senses and one, and the five objects of the senses.

[Note: The one: This is the mind. This is the eleventh sense



whose function is thinking and doubting (sankalpa and vikalpa).]

13.06

Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the aggregate (the body), intelligence, fortitude – the field has thus been briefly described with its modifications.

13.07

Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control.

13.08

Indifference to the objects of the senses and also absence of egoism, perception of (or reflection on) the evil in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain.

13.09

Non-attachment, non-identification of the Self with son, wife, home and the rest, and constant even-mindedness on the attainment of the desirable and the undesirable.

13.10

Unswerving devotion unto Me by the Yoga of non-separation, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of men.

[Note: Society of men: Distaste for the society of worldly-minded people, not of the wise, pure and holy. Satsanga or association with the wise is a means to the attainment of the knowledge of the Self.]

13.11

Constancy in Self-knowledge, perception of the end of true knowledge- this is declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance.

13.12

I will declare that which has to be known, knowing which one attains to immortality, the beginningless supreme Brahman, called neither being nor non-being.

13.13

With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, He exists in the worlds enveloping all.

13.14

Shining by the functions of all the senses, yet without the senses; unattached, yet supporting all; devoid of qualities, yet their experiencer.

13.15

Without and within (all) beings and unmoving and also the moving; because of Its subtlety, unknowable; and near and far away is That.

13.16

And undivided, yet He exists as if divided in beings; He is to be known as the supporter of beings; He devours and He generates.

13.17

That, the Light of all lights, is said to be beyond darkness; knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge, seated in the hearts of all.

13.18

Thus the field, as well as the knowledge and the knowable have been briefly stated. My devotee, knowing this, enters into My Being.

13.19

Know thou that Nature (matter) and the Spirit are both beginningless; and know also that all modifications and qualities are born of Nature.

13.20

In the production of the effect and the cause, the Nature (matter) is said to be the cause; in the experience of pleasure and pain, the soul is said to be the cause.

13.21

The soul seated in Nature experiences the qualities born of Nature; attachment to the qualities is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs.

13.22

The Supreme Soul in this body is also called the spectator, the permitter, the supporter, the enjoyer, the great Lord and the Supreme Lord.

13.23

He who thus knows the Spirit and Matter together with the qualities, in whatever condition he may be, he is not born again.

13.24

Some by meditation behold the Self in the Self by the Self, others by the Yoga of knowledge, and others by the Yoga of action.

13.25

Others also, not knowing thus, worship, having heard of it from others; they, too, cross beyond death, regarding what they have heard as the supreme refuge.

13.26

Wherever a being is born, whether unmoving or moving, know thou, O best of the Bharatas (Arjuna), that it is from the union between the field and its knower.

13.27

He sees who sees the Supreme Lord, existing equally in all beings, the unperishing within the perishing.

13.28

Because he who sees the same Lord equally dwelling everywhere does not destroy the Self by the self, he goes

to the highest goal.

[Note: This is the vision of a liberated sage. The Supreme Self abides in all forms. There is nothing apart from Him.

An ignorant man destroys the Self by identifying himself with the body and the modifications of the mind and by not seeing the one Self in all beings. He has a blurred vision. His mind is very gross. He cannot think of the subtle Self. He is swayed by the force of ignorance. He mistakes the impure body for the pure Self. He has false knowledge. But the sage has knowledge of the Self or true knowledge and so he beholds the one Self in all beings. An ignorant man is the slayer of his Self. He destroys this body and takes another body and so on. But he who beholds the one Self in all beings does not destroy the Self by the self. Therefore he attains the Supreme Goal, i.e., he attains release from the round of birth and death.]

13.29

He sees, who sees that all actions are performed by Nature alone and that the Self is actionless.

13.30

When a man sees the whole variety of beings as resting in the One, and spreading forth from That alone, he then becomes Brahman.

13.31

Being without beginning and being devoid of (any) qualities, the Supreme Self, imperishable, though dwelling in the body, O Arjuna, neither acts nor is tainted.

13.32

As the all-pervading space is not tainted, because of its subtlety, so the Self seated everywhere in the body is not tainted.

13.33

Just as the one sun illumines the whole world, so also the Lord of the field (Supreme Self) illumines the whole field, O Arjuna.

13.34

They who by the eye of knowledge, perceive the distinction between the field and its knower and also the liberation from the Nature of being, go to the Supreme.

[Note: In accordance with the doctrine of the Sankhyas bondage and freedom do not pertain to the Self because He is always unattached and He is the non-doer and non-enjoyer and also without limbs or parts. But on account of His union with Nature He assumes agency through superimposition. When ignorance is annihilated through the knowledge of the Self, Nature, which is conjoined with the Self is liberated.]

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the

science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the thirteenth discourse entitled:

The Yoga of the Discrimination Between  
The Field and the Knower of the Field.

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## **Gita - Chapter 14**

### **Gunatrayavibhaga Yogah**

#### **The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas**

The Blessed Lord said:

14.01

I will again declare ( to thee) that supreme knowledge, the best of all knowledge, having known which all the sages have gone to the supreme perfection after this life

14.02

They who, having taken refuge in this knowledge, have attained to unity with Me, are neither born at the time of creation nor are they disturbed at the time of dissolution.

14.03

My womb is the great Brahma; in that I place the germ; thence, O Arjuna, is the birth of all beings.

[Note: My womb is the great Nature. The cosmos is evolved out of His Nature. Nature is called the great Brahma for She is the resting place of the five subtle elements and also the mahat (cosmic mind). She is called the great Brahma because through Her the whole manifestation takes place.

All changes arise out of this great Nature. So she has got the name Mulaprakriti or Primordial Nature or the original principle. From the point of view of the Unmanifest She is called Avyaktam. The Vedantins call Her 'Maya' (illusion). The Sankhyas call Her 'Prakriti'.]

14.04

Whatever forms are produced, O Arjuna, in any womb whatsoever, the great Brahma is their womb and I am the seed-giving Father.

14.05

Purity, passion and inertia- these qualities, O Arjuna, born of Nature, bind fast in the body, the embodied, the indestructible.

14.06

Of these, Satva, which from its stainlessness, is luminous and healthy, binds by attachment to happiness and by attachment

to knowledge, O sinless one.

14.07

Know thou Rajas to be of the nature of passion, the source of thirst (for sensual enjoyment) and attachment; it binds fast, O Arjuna, the embodied one by attachment to action.

14.08

But know thou Tamas to be born of ignorance, deluding all embodied beings; it binds fast, O Arjuna, by heedlessness, indolence and sleep

14.09

Satva attaches to happiness, Rajas to action, O Arjuna, while Tamas verily shrouding knowledge attaches to heedlessness.

14.10

Now Satva arises (prevails), O Arjuna, having overpowered Rajas and Tamas; now Rajas, having overpowered Satva and Tamas; and now Tamas, having overpowered Satva and Rajas.

14.11

When through every gate (sense) in this body, the wisdom-light shines, then it may be known that Satva is predominant.

14.12

Greed, activity, the undertaking of actions, relentlessness, longing – these arise when Rajas is predominant, O Arjuna.

14.13

Darkness, inertness, heedlessness and delusion – these arise when Tamas is predominant, O Arjuna.

14.14

If the embodied one meets with death when Satva is predominant, then he attains to the spotless world of the knowers of the highest.

14.15

Meeting death in Rajas, he is born among those who are attached to action; and dying in Tamas, he is born in the womb of the senseless.

14.16

The fruit of good action, they say, is Satvika and pure; verily the fruit of Rajas is pain, and ignorance is the fruit of Tamas.

14.17

From Satva arises knowledge, and greed from Rajas; heedlessness and delusion arise from Tamas, and also ignorance.

14.18

Those who are seated in Satva go upwards; the Rajasic dwell in the middle; and the Tamasic, abiding in the function of the lowest guna, go downwards.

14.19

When the seer beholds no agent other than the gunas and knows that which is higher than them, he attains to My Being.

14.20

The embodied one having crossed beyond these three gunas out of which the body is evolved, is freed from birth, death, decay and pain, and attains to immortality.

Arjuna said:

14.21

What are the marks of him who has crossed over the three qualities, O Lord? What is the conduct and how does he go beyond these three qualities?

The Blessed Lord said:

14.22

Light, activity and delusion- when they are present, O Arjuna, he hates not, nor does he long for them when they are absent.

14.23

He who, seated like one unconcerned, is not moved by the qualities, and who, knowing that the qualities are active, is self-centred and moves not,

14.24

Alike in pleasure and pain, who dwells in the Self, to whom a clod of earth, stone and gold are alike, to whom the dear and the unfriendly are alike, firm, the same in censure and praise,

14.25

The same in honour and dishonour, the same to friend and foe, abandoning all undertakings – he is said to have crossed the qualities.

14.26

And he who serves Me with unswerving devotion, he, crossing beyond the qualities, is fit for becoming Brahman.

14.27

For I am the abode of Brahman, the immortal and the immutable, of everlasting dharma and of absolute bliss.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the fourteenth discourse entitled:

The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas

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## **Gita - Chapter 15**

### **Purushottama Yogah**

#### **The Yoga of the Supreme Spirit**

The Blessed Lord said:

15.01

They (the wise) speak of the indestructible Peepul tree having its root above and branches below, whose leaves are the metres or hymns: he who knows it is a knower of the Vedas.

15.02

Below and above, spread its branches, nourished by the gunas; sense objects are its buds; and below in the world of men stretch forth the roots, originating action.

15.03

Its form is not perceived here as such, neither its end nor its origin, nor its foundation nor resting place: having cut asunder this firmly rooted Peepul tree with the strong axe of non-attachment.

15.04

Then that goal should be sought for, whither having gone none returns again. I seek refuge in that Primeval Purusha Whence streamed forth the ancient activity or energy.

15.05

Free from pride and delusion, victorious over the evil of attachment, dwelling constantly in the Self, their desires having completely turned away, freed from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, the undeluded reach the eternal goal.

15.06

Neither does the sun illumine there nor the moon, nor the fire; having gone there they return not; that is My supreme abode.

15.07

An eternal portion of Myself having become a living soul (jiva) in the world of life, draws to (itself) the (five) senses with the mind for the sixth, abiding in Nature.

15.08

When the Lord obtains a body and when He leaves it, He takes these and goes (with them) as the wind takes the scents from their seats (flowers, etc.)

15.09

Presiding over the ear, touch, taste and smell, as well as mind, he enjoys the objects of the senses.

15.10



The deluded do not see Him Who departs, stays and enjoys;  
but they who possess the eye of knowledge behold Him.

15.11

The Yogis striving (for perfection) behold Him dwelling in the  
Self; but, the unrefined and the unintelligent, even though  
striving, see Him not.

15.12

That light which residing in the sun illumines the whole world,  
that which is in the moon and in fire- know that light to be Mine.

15.13

Permeating the earth I support all beings by (My) energy; and  
having become the watery moon I nourish all the herbs.

15.14

Having become the fire Vaishvanara, I abide in the body of  
living beings and, associated with the prana and the apana,  
digest the fourfold food.

[Note: The immanence of the Lord as the gastric  
fire in all living beings is described in this verse.

Vaishvanara: The fire that abides in the stomach. This fire is  
fanned by the bellows of the incoming and the outgoing  
breaths continuously and large quantities of food are digested. Inside the  
wonderful laboratory of the stomach I digest the  
food by taking the form of this gastric fire.

Four kinds of food: (1) Food that has to be eaten by  
mastication (bhakshyam). (2) That which has to be sucked in (bhojyam).  
(3) That which has to be licked (lehyam). (4) That  
which has to be devoured or swallowed (cosyam).

Another classification is as follows: (1) Paddy is prthvi-annam (solid-food)  
for human beings. (2) Water is apyannam  
(water food) for birds like the Chataka. (3) Fire is tejasannam  
(hot food) for certain creatures. (4) Air is vayvannam (air as  
food) for serpents.]

15.15

And, I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory, knowledge, as  
well as their absence. I am verily that which has  
to be known by all the Vedas; I am indeed the author of the  
Vedanta and the knower of the Vedas am I.

15.16

Two Purushas there are in this world, the perishable and the imperishable.  
All beings are the perishable and the kutastha is called the imperishable.

15.17

But distinct is the supreme Purusha called the highest Self, the  
indestructible Lord Who, pervading the three worlds, sustains  
them.

15.18

As I transcend the perishable and am even higher than the imperishable, I am declared as the highest Purusha in the world and in the Veda.

[Note: Purushottama is a well-known name of the Lord. The name is quite appropriate as He is the supreme Purusha.

Kshara: The perishable – the tree of samsara.

Akshara: The imperishable- the seed of the tree of samsara.

Because I excel the perishable (the tree of illusory samsara) and am more excellent also than the imperishable (the seed of the tree of the illusory samsara) and because I am thus superior to the perishable and the imperishable, I am proclaimed in the world and in the Veda as the highest Purusha. Devotees know Me as such. Poets also describe Me as such.

I am beyond all limitations. There is no sense of dualism in Me. Therefore, I am called by all and by the scriptures as the highest Purusha.]

15.19

He who, undeluded, knows Me thus as the highest Purusha, he, knowing all, worships Me with his whole being (heart), O Arjuna.

15.20

Thus, this the most secret science has been taught by Me, O sinless one; on knowing this, a man becomes wise, and all his duties are accomplished, O Arjuna.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the fifteenth discourse entitled:

The Yoga of the supreme spirit

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## **Gita - Chapter 16**

### **Devasurasampadvibhaga Yogah**

#### **The Yoga of Division Between The Divine and the Demoniactal**

The Blessed Lord said:

16.01

Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga, almsgiving, control of the senses, sacrifice,

study of scriptures, austerity and straightforwardness,

16.02

Harmlessness, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion towards beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness'

16.03

Vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride – these belong to the one born in a divine state, O Arjuna.

16.04

Hypocrisy, arrogance and self-conceit, anger and also harshness and ignorance, belong to the one who is born in a demoniacal state, O Arjuna.

16.05

The divine nature is deemed for liberation, and the demoniacal for bondage. Grieve not, o Arjuna, thou art born with divine properties.

16.06

There are two types of beings in this world, the divine and the demoniacal; the divine has been described at length; hear from Me, O Arjuna, of the demoniacal.

16.07

The demoniacal know not what to do and what to refrain from; neither purity, nor right conduct nor truth is found in them.

16.08

They say: 'This universe is without truth, without (moral) basis, without a God, brought about by mutual union, with lust for its cause; what else?'

16.09

Holding this view, these ruined souls of small intellect and fierce deeds, come forth as the enemies of the world for its destruction.

16.10

Filled with insatiable desires, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, holding evil ideas through delusion, they work with impure resolves.

16.11

Giving themselves over to immeasurable cares ending only with death, regarding gratification of lust as their highest aim, and feeling sure that that is all,

16.12

Bound by a hundred ties of hope, given over to lust and anger, strive to obtain by unlawful means hoards of wealth for sensual enjoyments.

16.13

'This has been gained by me today; this desire I shall obtain; this is mine and this wealth also shall be mine in future'.

16.14

16.14

'That enemy has been slain by me; and others also I shall slay.  
I am the lord. I enjoy. I am perfect, powerful and happy'.

16.15

'I am rich and born in a noble family. Who else is equal to me?  
I will sacrifice. I will give (charity). I will rejoice', - thus deluded by ignorance,

16.16

Bewildered by many a fancy, entangled in the snare of  
delusion, addicted to the gratification of lust, they fall into a  
foul hell.

16.17

Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with the pride and intoxication  
of wealth, they perform sacrifices in name out of ostentation,  
contrary to scriptural ordinances.

16.18

Given over to egoism, power, haughtiness, lust and anger,  
these malicious people hate Me in their own bodies and those  
of others.

16.19

These cruel haters, worst among men in the world, I hurl these evil-doers  
into the womb of demons only.

16.20

Entering into demoniacal wombs and deluded, birth after birth,  
not attaining Me, they thus fall, O Arjuna, into a condition still  
lower than that.

16.21

Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the self- lust, anger  
and greed; therefore one should abandon these three.

16.22

A man who is liberated from these three gates of darkness,  
O Arjuna, practises what is good for him and thus goes to the Supreme  
Goal.

16.23

He who, having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures,  
acts under the impulse of desire, attains not perfection, nor happiness nor  
the Supreme Goal.

16.24

Therefore, let the scripture be the authority in determining what  
ought to be done and what ought not be done. Having known  
what is said in the ordinance of the scriptures, thou shouldst  
act here in this world.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the  
science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue  
between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the sixteenth

discourse entitled:

## The Yoga of Division Between The Divine and the Demoniactal

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### **Gita - Chapter 17**

#### **Shraddhatrayavibhaga Yogah**

#### **The Yoga of Division of Threefold Faith**

Arjuna said:

17.01

Those who, setting aside the ordinances of the scriptures, perform sacrifice with faith, what is their condition, O Krishna? Is it Satva, Rajas or Tamas?

The Blessed Lord said:

17.02

Threefold is the faith of the embodied, which is inherent in their nature- the Satvic (pure), the Rajasic (passionate) and the Tamasic (dark). Do thou hear of it.

17.03

The faith of each is in accordance with his nature, O Arjuna. The man consists of his faith; as a man's faith is, so is he.

17.04

The Satvic or the pure men worship the gods; the Rajasic or the passionate worship the yakshas and the rakshasas; the others (the Tamasic or the deluded people) worship the ghosts and the hosts of the nature-spirits.

17.05

Those men who practise terrific austerities not enjoined by the scriptures, given to hypocrisy and egoism, impelled by the force of lust and attachment.

17.06

Senseless, torturing all the elements in the body and Me also, Who dwell in the body, - know thou these to be of demoniacal nature.

17.07

The food also which is dear to each is threefold, as also sacrifice, austerity and almsgiving. Hear thou the distinction of these.

17.08

The foods that increase life, purity, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness

(good appetite), that are savoury and oleaginous, substantial and agreeable, are dear to the Satvic (pure) people.

17.09

The foods that are bitter, sour, saline, excessively hot, pungent, dry and burning, are liked by the Rajasic and are productive of pain, grief and disease.

17.10

That which is stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten and impure refuse, is the food liked by the Tamasic.

17.11

That sacrifice which is offered by men without desire for reward as enjoined by the ordinance (scripture), with a firm faith that to do so is a duty, is Satvic or pure.

17.12

The sacrifice that is offered, O Arjuna, seeking a reward and for ostentation, know thou that to be a Rajasic yajna.

17.13

They declare that sacrifice to be Tamasic which is contrary to the ordinances of the scriptures, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of mantras and gifts, and which is devoid of faith.

17.14

Worship of the gods, the twice born, the teachers and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, celibacy and non-injury are called the austerities of the body.

17.15

Speech that causes no excitement, truthful, pleasant and beneficial, the practice of the study of the Vedas, are called austerity of speech.

17.16

Serenity of mind, good-heartedness, self-control, purity of nature – this is called mental austerity.

17.17

This threefold austerity, practised by steadfast men, with the utmost faith, desiring no reward, they call Satvic.

17.18

The austerity that is practised with the object of gaining good reception, honour and worship, and with hypocrisy, is here said to be Rajasic, unstable and transitory.

17.19

That austerity which is practised out of a foolish notion, with self-torture, or for the purpose of destroying another, is declared to be Tamasic.

17.20

That gift that is given to one who does nothing in return,

knowing it to be a duty to give in a fit place and time to a worthy person, that gift is held to be Satvic.

17.21

And, that gift which is given with a view to receive something in return, or looking for a reward, or reluctantly, is held to be Rajasic.

17.22

The gift that is given at a wrong place and time, to unworthy persons, without respect or with insult is declared to be Tamasic.

17.23

"Om tat sat": this has been declared to be the triple designation of Brahman. By that were created formerly, the brahmanas (brahmins), the Vedas and the sacrifices.

17.24

Therefore, with the utterance of "Om" are the acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity as enjoined in the scriptures, always begun by the students of Brahman.

17.25

Uttering 'Tat' without aiming at the fruits are the acts of sacrifice and austerity and the various acts of gift performed by the seekers of liberation.

17.26

The word 'Sat' is used in the sense of reality and of goodness; and so also, O Arjuna, the word 'Sat' is used in the sense of an auspicious act.

17.27

Steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity and gift, is also called 'Sat' and also action in connection with these (or for the sake of the Supreme) is called 'Sat'.

17.28

Whatever is sacrificed, given or performed, and whatever austerity is practised without faith, it is called 'asat', O Arjuna; it is naught here or hereafter (after death).

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the seventeenth discourse entitled:

The Yoga of Division of Threefold Faith

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## **Gita - Chapter 18**

### **Moksha-Sanyasa Yogah The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation**

Arjuna said:

18.01

I desire to know severally, O mighty armed, the essence or truth of renunciation, O Hrshikesha (Krishna), as also of abandonment, O slayer of Keshi.

The Blessed Lord said:

18.02

The sages understand sanyasa to be the renunciation of action with desire; the wise declare the abandonment of the fruits of all actions as tyaga.

18.03

Some philosophers declare that action should be abandoned as an evil; while others (declare) that acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished.

18.04

Hear from Me the conclusion or the final truth about this abandonment, O best of the Bharatas; abandonment, verily, O best of men, has been declared to be of three kinds.

18.05

Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity purify the hearts of those who have no desire for rewards. These actions are considered obligatory and ought to be performed. Actions that are skilfully performed lose their power to bind the soul and free it from earthly bondage.

Now, O Arjuna, I will explain to thee that skilful way by which actions can destroy their own effect.

18.06

But even these actions should be performed leaving aside attachment and the desire for rewards. O Arjuna; this is My certain and best conviction.

18.07

Verily the renunciation of obligatory action is not proper; the abandonment of the same from delusion is declared to be Tamasic.

18.08

He who abandons action on account of the fear of bodily trouble (because it is painful), he does not obtain the merit of renunciation by doing such Rajasic renunciation.

18.09

Whatever obligatory action is done, O Arjuna, merely because it ought to be done, abandoning attachment and also the desire for reward, that renunciation is regarded as Satvic (pure).

18.10

The man of renunciation, pervaded by purity, intelligent and with his doubts cut asunder, does not hate a disagreeable work nor is he attached to an agreeable one.

18.11

Verily, it is not possible for an embodied being to abandon actions entirely; but he who relinquishes the rewards of actions is verily called a man of renunciation.

18.12

The threefold fruit of action (evil, good and mixed) accrues after death to the non-abandoners, but never to the abandoners.

18.13

Learn from Me, O mighty armed Arjuna, these five causes as declared in the Sankhya system for the accomplishment of all actions.

18.14

The seat (body), the doer, the various senses, the different functions of various sorts, and the presiding deity (divinity), also, the fifth,

[Note: (By swami Swarupananda, Advaita Ashram, Mayavati, Himalayas) Presiding deity: Each of the senses has its god who presides over it, and by whose aid it discharges its own functions, e.g., Aditya (the Sun) is the presiding divinity of the eye, by whose aid it sees and acts; and so on with the other senses.]

18.15

Whatever action a man performs by his body, speech and mind – whether right or the reverse- these five are its causes.

18.16

Now, such being the case, verily he who – owing to untrained understanding- looks upon his Self, which is isolated, as the agent, he of perverted intelligence, sees not.

18.17

He who is free from the egoistic notion, whose intelligence is not tainted (by good or evil), though he slays these people, he slayeth not nor is he bound (by the action).

18.18

Knowledge, the knowable and the knower form the threefold impulse to action; the organ, the action and the agent form the threefold basis of action.

18.19

Knowledge, action and actor are declared in the science of the gunas

(Sankhya philosophy) to be of three kinds only, according to the distinction of the gunas. Hear them also duly.

18.20

That by which one sees the one indestructible Reality in all beings, not separate in all the separate beings – know thou that knowledge to be Satvic.

18.21

But that knowledge which sees in all beings various entities of distinct kinds as different from one another- know thou that knowledge to be Rajasic.

18.22

But that which clings to one single effect as if it were the whole, without reason, without foundation in Truth, and trivial – that is declared to be Tamasic.

[Note: The knowledge which regards that each and every object or being exists by itself and is perfect by itself, is Tamasic.

One single effect: Such as the body, thinking it to be the Self, or an idol, taking it for God, and thinking that there is nothing higher than that.]

18.23

An action which is ordained, which is free from attachment, and which is done without love or hatred by one who is not desirous of any reward – that action is declared to be Satvic.

18.24

But the action which is done by one longing for the fulfilment of desires or gain with egoism or with much effort- that is declared to be Rajasic (passionate).

18.25

That action which is undertaken from delusion, without a regard for the consequences, loss, injury and (one's own) ability- that is declared to be Tamasic (dark).

18.26

An agent who is free from attachment, non-egoistic, endowed with firmness and enthusiasm and unaffected by success or failure, is called Satvic (pure).

18.27

Passionate, desiring to obtain the reward of actions, greedy, cruel, impure, moved by joy and sorrow, such an agent is said to be Rajasic (passionate).

18.28

Unsteady, vulgar, unbending, cheating, malicious, lazy, desponding and procrastinating- such an agent is called Tamasic.

18.29

Hear thou the threefold division of intellect and firmness

according to the gunas, as I declare them fully and distinctly,  
O Arjuna.

18.30

That which knows the path of work and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation – that intellect is Satvic (pure), O Arjuna.

18.31

That by which one wrongly understands dharma and adharma and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done- that intellect, O Arjuna, is Rajasic (passionate).

[Note: Dharma: That which elevates you and takes you to the goal, i.e., Brahman or Self, is dharma.

Adharma: That which hurls you down in the dark abyss of ignorance is adharma. What is ordained in the scriptures is dharma; what is prohibited by them is adharma. A Rajasic intellect is not able to distinguish between right and wrong or to understand the difference between righteous and unrighteous actions.

Ayathavat: Wrongly: Contrary to what is determined by all authorities or men of wisdom or the highest knowledge.]

18.32

That which, enveloped in darkness, sees adharma as dharma, and all things perverted – that intellect, O Arjuna, is Tamasic (dark).

18.33

The unwavering firmness by which, through Yoga, the functions of the mind, the life force and the senses are restrained- that firmness, O Arjuna, is Satvic (pure).

18.34

But the firmness, O Arjuna, by which, on account of attachment and desire for reward, one holds fast to dharma (duty), enjoyment of pleasures and earning of wealth- that firmness, O Arjuna, is Rajasic (passionate).

18.35

That by which a stupid man does not abandon sleep, fear, grief, despair and also conceit – that firmness O Arjuna, is Tamasic.

18.36

And now hear from Me, O Arjuna, of the threefold pleasure, in which one rejoices by practice and surely comes to the end of pain.

18.37

That which is like poison at first but in the end like nectar – that pleasure is declared to be Satvic, born of the purity of one's own mind due to Self-realisation.

18.38

That pleasure which arises from the contact of the sense organs with the objects, which is at first like nectar, and in the end like poison- that is declared to be Rajasic.

18.39

That pleasure which at first and in the sequel is delusive of the self, arising from sleep, indolence and heedlessness- that pleasure is declared to be Tamasic.

18.40

There is no being on earth or again in heaven among the gods, that is liberated from the three qualities born of nature.

18.41

Of brahmanas (brahmins), kshatriyas and vaisyas, as also of sudras, O Arjuna, the duties are distributed according to the qualities born of their own nature.

18.42

Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness and also uprightness, knowledge, realisation and belief in God are the duties of the brahmanas (Brahmins), born of (their own) nature.

18.43

Prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity and also not fleeing from battle, generosity and lordliness are the duties of the kshatriyas, born of (their own) nature.

18.44

Agriculture, cattle rearing and trade are the duties of the vaisya (merchant), born of (their own) nature; and action consisting of service is the duty of the sudra (servant-class), born of (their own) nature.

18.45

Each man devoted to his own duty attains perfection. How he attains perfection while being engaged in his own duty, hear now.

18.46

He from whom all the beings have evolved and by whom all this is pervaded – worshipping Him with his own duty, man attains perfection.

18.47

Better is one's own duty (though) destitute of merits, than the duty of another well performed. He who does the duty ordained by his own nature incurs no sin.

18.48

One should not abandon, O Arjuna, the duty to which one is born, though faulty; for, all undertakings are enveloped by evil, as fire by smoke.

[Note: Sadosham; Faulty: For everything is constituted of the three gunas (Maya).]

18.49

18.49

He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, who has subdued his self, from whom desire has fled, - he by renunciation, attains the supreme state of freedom from action.

18.50

Learn from Me in brief, O Arjuna, how he who has attained perfection reaches Brahman (the Eternal), that supreme state of knowledge.

18.51

Endowed with a pure intellect, controlling the self by firmness, relinquishing sound and other objects and abandoning attraction and hatred.

18.52

Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, with speech, body and mind subdued, always engaged in meditation and concentration, taking refuge in dispassion.

18.53

Having abandoned egoism, strength, arrogance, desire, anger, and covetousness, and free from the notion of 'mine' and peaceful, - he is fit for becoming Brahman.

[Note: Balam: That strength which is combined or united with passion, desire and attachment, and not the physical or other strength. Physical strength is natural. It is not possible to abandon this physical strength.]

18.54

Becoming Brahman, serene in the Self, he neither grieves nor desires; the same to all beings, he obtains supreme devotion unto Me.

[Note: Brahmabhutah: He is firmly established in the idea that he is Brahman, though he has not yet attained direct Self-realization. His attainment of perfect freedom or oneness with the Supreme is described in the next verse.]

18.55

By devotion he knows Me in truth, what and who I am; then having known Me in truth, he forthwith enters into the Supreme.

[Note: My devotee, O Arjuna, who has attained union with Me through single-minded and unflinching devotion is verily My very Self. Devotion culminates in knowledge. Devotion begins with two and ends in one. Para Bhakti (supreme devotion) and Jnana (knowledge) are one. Devotion is the mother. Knowledge is the son. By devotion he knows that I am all-pervading pure consciousness; he knows that I am non-dual, unborn, non-decaying, causeless, self-luminous, indivisible, unchanging; he knows that I am destitute of all the differences caused by the limiting adjuncts; he knows that I am the support, source, womb, basis, and substratum of everything; he knows that I am the ruler of all beings; he knows that I am the Supreme Purusha, the controller of Maya, and that this world is a mere appearance. Thus knowing Me in truth or in essence, he

enters into Me soon after attaining Self-knowledge.

The act of 'knowing' and the act of 'entering' are not two distinct acts. Knowing is becoming. Knowing is attaining Self-knowledge. To know That is to become That. Entering is knowing or becoming That. Entering is the attainment of Self-knowledge or Self-realization.]

18.56

Doing all actions always, taking refuge in Me, by My grace he obtains the eternal indestructible state or abode.

18.57

Mentally renouncing all actions in Me, having Me as the highest goal, resorting to the Yoga of discrimination do thou ever fix thy mind on Me.

[Note: Do thou, O Arjuna, surrender all thy actions unto Me whilst at the same time fixing thy mind on discrimination. Then through that discrimination thou wilt see thy Self as separate from the body and activity and existing in My pure Being.]

18.58

Fixing thy mind on Me, thou shalt by My grace, overcome all obstacles; but if from egoism thou wilt not hear Me, thou shalt perish.

18.59

If, filled with egoism, thou thinkest; 'I will not fight', vain is this, thy resolve; Nature will compel thee.

18.60

O Arjuna, bound by thy own karma (action) born of thy own nature, that which from delusion thou wishest not to do, even that thou shalt do helplessly.

[Note: Thou art endowed, O Arjuna, with martial qualities, prowess, valour, skill, etc. (Arjuna is a kshatriya, of warrior caste, whose duty is to fight to uphold righteousness). Thou art, therefore, bound by these innate qualities. Thou wilt be forced to fight by thy own nature. The nature will constrain thee to fight much against thy will.]

18.61

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power, to revolve as if mounted on a machine.

[Note: The Lord abides in the hearts of all beings. It is He Who has given a gift of this marvellous machine to you. It is by His power that all bodies move. The Lord is the real actor within.]

18.62

Take refuge in Him with all thy heart, O Arjuna; by His grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace (and) the eternal abode.

18.63

Thus has wisdom, more secret than secrecy itself, been



declared unto thee by Me; having reflected over it fully, then act thou as thou wishest.

[Note: Thus has wisdom, more profound than all secrets been declared to thee by Me. This teaching is well known as the Gita, the essence of all the Vedas. If anyone follows it and lives in the spirit of this teaching he will certainly attain supreme peace, highest knowledge and immortality. There is no doubt of this. I have revealed the mystery of this secret treasure to thee as thou art dear to Me, O Arjuna.]

18.64

Hear thou again My supreme word, most secret of all; because thou art dearly beloved of Me, I will tell thee what is good.

18.65

Fix thy mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me. Thou shalt come even to Me; truly do I promise unto thee, (for) thou art dear to Me.

18.66

Abandoning all duties (relinquishing all dharmas) take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not.

[Note: All dharmas: Including adharma also. All actions, righteous or unrighteous, as absolute freedom from the bondage of all actions is intended to be taught here.

Take refuge in Me alone: Knowing that there is naught else except Me, the Self of all, dwelling the same in all.

Liberate thee: By manifesting Myself as thy own Self.]

18.67

This is never to be spoken by thee to one who is devoid of austerities or devotion, nor to one who does not render service or who does not desire to listen, nor to one who cavils at Me.

[Note; This: The scripture which has been taught to you.

Service: To the Guru.

The scripture can be taught to him who does not speak ill of the Lord, who is a man of austerities, who is devoted, who is thirsting to hear and who renders service to his Guru.]

18.68

He who with supreme devotion to Me will teach this supreme secret to My devotees shall doubtless come to Me.

[Note; Teach in the faith that he is thus doing service to the Lord, the Supreme Teacher.]

18.69

Nor is there any among men who does dearer service to Me, nor shall there

be another on earth dearer to Me than he.

[Note: He who hands down this Gita to My devotees (fit persons) does immense service to Me. He is very dear to Me.]

18.70

And he who will study this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I shall have been worshipped by the sacrifice of wisdom (by the Yajna of knowledge); such is my conviction.

[Note: Yajna of knowledge: A yajna can be performed in four ways, such as (1) Vidhi or ritual, (2) Japa (recitation of a mantra or Lord's name), (3) Upamsu or a prayer uttered in a low voice, or (4) Manasa or prayer offered with the mind. Jnana-Yajna or the Yajna of knowledge comes under the head of Manasa, and is therefore the highest.

The Gita is eulogised as Jnana-Yajna. (The study of the Gita will produce an effect equal to that of the Yajna of knowledge). He who studies this scripture with faith and devotion will attain the fruit that is equal to that of performing Jnana-Yajna or meditation on a deity and the like.]

18.71

The man who hears this, full of faith and free from malice, he, too, liberated, shall attain to the happy worlds of those of righteous deeds.

[Note: Liberated from sin.

Punyakarmanam: Those who have done Agnihotra (sacred fire ceremony) and such other sacrifices.

He too: Much more so who understands the teachings of the Gita, who lives in its spirit and who practises the most valuable spiritual instructions contained in it.]

18.72

Has this been heard, O Arjuna, with one pointed mind? Has the delusion of thy ignorance been destroyed, O Dhananjaya (Arjuna)?

Arjuna said:

18.73

Destroyed is my delusion as I have gained my memory (knowledge) through Thy grace, O Krishna. I am firm, my doubts are gone. I will act according to Thy word.

[Note: Memory: Of the true nature of the Self. The purpose of the knowledge of the Shastras (scriptures) is the destruction of doubts and delusions, and the recognition of the true nature of the Self.

Moha: Delusion: This is the strongest weapon of Maya to take the jivas (embodied souls) in Her clutch. (Maya is the illusive power of Brahman or the Supreme Reality. Maya is the veiling and projecting power of the universe, in the manner of a rope being mistaken, in the dark, for a serpent. Darkness or ignorance is the veiling power and the superimposition of the illusion of a serpent upon a rope is the projecting power).

Moha or delusion (the strongest weapon of Maya) is born of ignorance. It is

the cause of the whole evil of samsara (the process of worldly life).

The teachings of the Shastras or the Gita (scripture) is concluded here. The rest (the following verses) is to connect it with the main narrative of the Mahabharata (Bhishma Parva).]

Sanjaya said:

18.74

Thus I have heard this wonderful dialogue between Krishna and the high-souled Arjuna, which causes the hair to stand on end.

[Note: Wonderful because it deals with Yoga and transcendental spiritual matters that pertain to the mysterious immortal Self.

Whenever good, higher emotions manifest in the heart the hairs stand on end. Devotees often experience this horripilation.]

18.75

Through the grace of Vyasa I have heard this supreme and most secret Yoga direct from Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, Himself declaring it.

[Note: This dialogue is called Yoga because it treats of Yoga and it leads to the attainment of union with the Lord.]

18.76

O king, remembering this wonderful and holy dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna I rejoice again and again.

[Note: Rajan: King Dhrtarashtra to whom the Gita is narrated by Sanjaya.

Punyam: Holy because the mere hearing of the dialogue destroys a multitude of sins and makes the hearer pious and turns his mind towards God.]

18.77

And, remembering again and again, also that most wonderful form of Hari, great is my wonder, O King; and I rejoice again and again.

[Note; Form: The Cosmic Form. (Cf. Gita, chapter 11).]

18.78

Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever there is Arjuna, the archer, there are prosperity, victory, happiness and firm policy; such is my conviction.

[Note: This verse is called the Ekashloki Gita i.e., Bhagavad Gita in one verse. Repetition of even this verse bestows the benefits of reading the whole of the scripture.]

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the eighteenth discourse entitled:

The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation

Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!

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