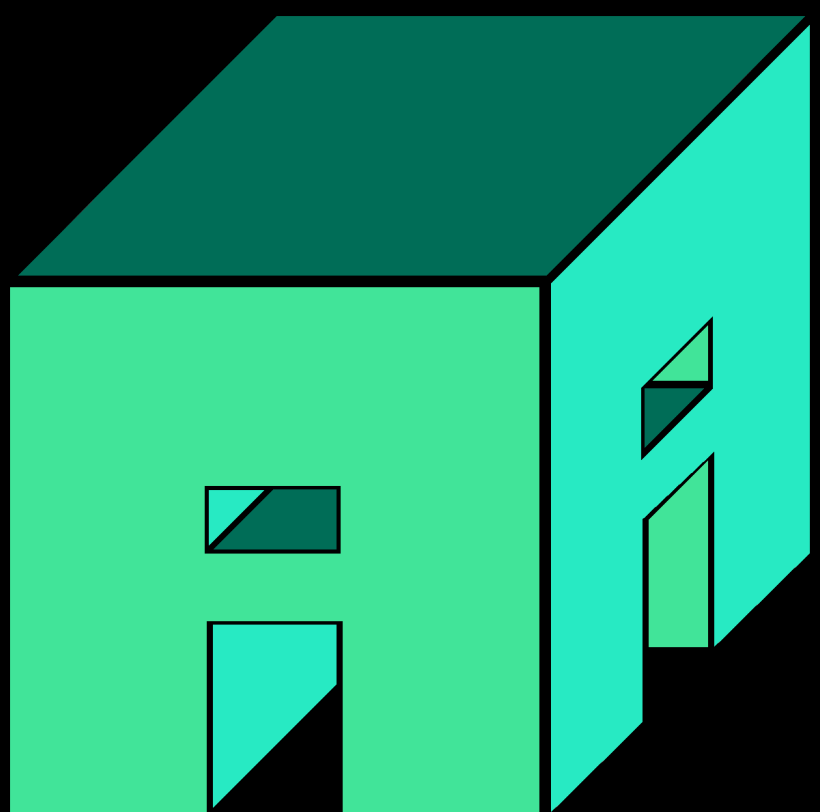
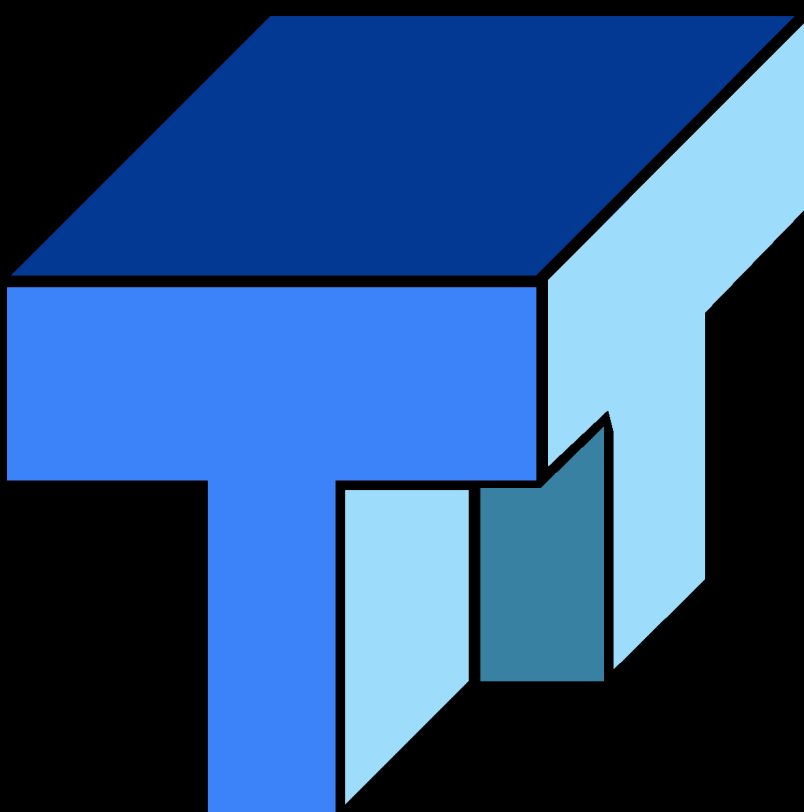
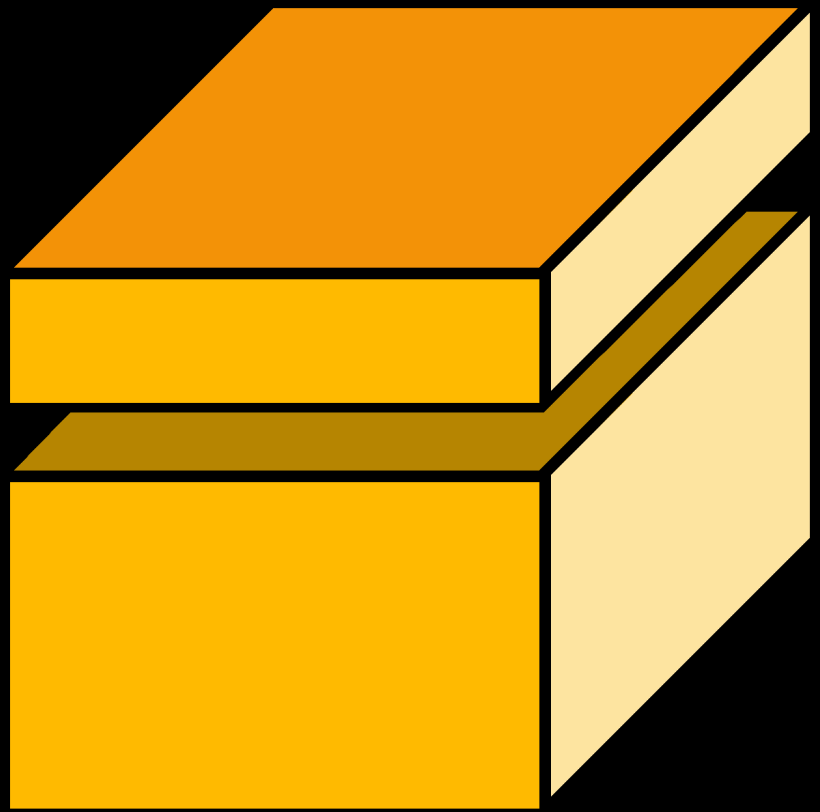
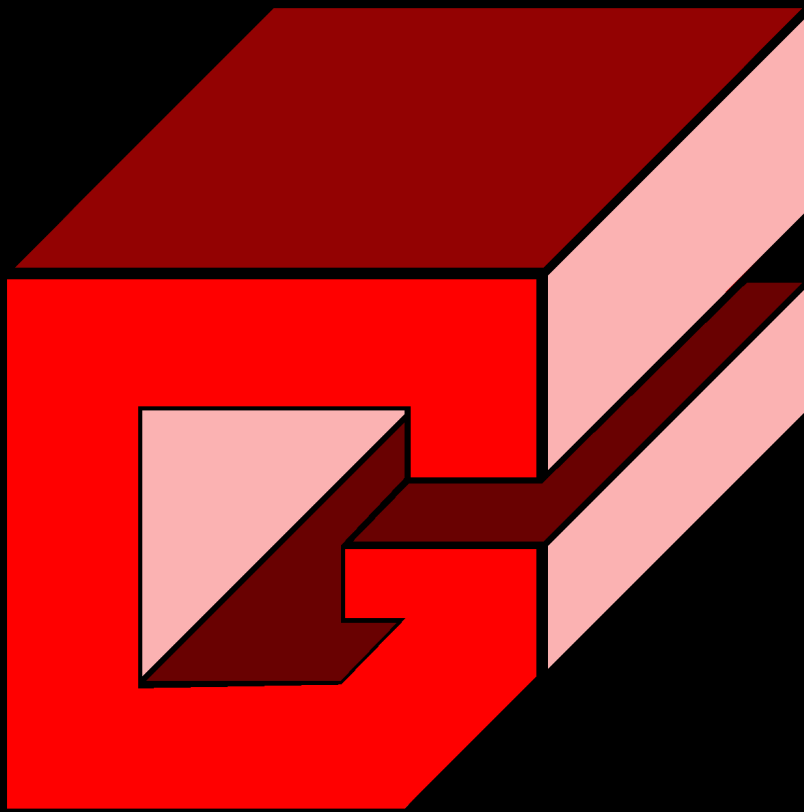


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Saurabh Sikka

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# INTRODUCTION

**The Red text** is the first edition of the Gita, as written by Brahmins after Ashoka the Great imposed Buddhism throughout his Empire, relegating Hinduism to a minor sect. In this period, the Brahmins expanded the Jaya into the Mahabharata to preserve and proselytize the tenets of Vedic tradition, prayers for the resurgence of Hinduism, and the destruction of Buddhism. They took up Ashoka's despondency after the Kalinga War, and transposed it on to the (probable, but quite unlikely) despondency of Arjuna before the Mahabharata War. They presented Ashoka a despicable failure and chastised him and his ideology through their insertion of the Gita into the text of the Mahabharata. This original insertion was merely 71 verses long - a fleeting conversation on the battlefield between Arjuna and his charioteer-cousin Krishna - but it held within its verses the essence of Brahminical Hinduism, its glories, its admonishments, its lures and its punishments. It was designed to bring Hinduism back from the brink of extinction.

**The Orange text** is the Gitopanisad, i.e. the Upanisadic attempt to reform the corrupting influence of Brahminism and Vedic hegemony. It was the first successful attempt to thwart the power of caste-brahmins and it introduced revolutionary concepts that not only replaced and superseded Vedic ones, but also created greater complexities, that were later exploited by the Brahmins who undermined them with extreme editing, jumbling of verses, counter-arguments and corrections that you read as the red underlined text.

**The Blue text** is the Bhagavad-Gita, i.e. the annex by the devotees of Krsna who introduced even more revolutionary concepts into the Song than the Upanisadists, and yet, they too were eventually undermined by the Brahmins, who infiltrated their ranks, and reinstated their old ritualistic religion under new improved and updated gimmickry (**The Purple Text**).

In the end, the Song became a hodgepodge of contradicting philosophies, all retained in text by virtue of their "divine" status, and it came to be accepted as a monolithic text of great profundity, that generations of scholars would expend their lives trying to decipher.

This book is the end of that exercise. If you are a serious reader of the Bhagavad Gita, or indeed of Hinduism, this is a must read.

# THE ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF BRAHMANISM

The Mahabharata is in essence the History of Ancient North India.

The epic itself claims to have been originally just 8,800 verses composed by Krsna Dvaipayana Vyasa and called the Jaya. Later, it became 24,000 verses, called the Bharata, when it was recited by Vaisampayana. Finally, it was recited as the 100,000 versed epic (the Mahabharata) by Ugrasravas, the son of Lomaharsana. Thus the tradition acknowledges that the Mahabharata grew in stages.

Panini's grammar (c. 400 BC) knows the Mahabharata. In the sutra 6.2.38, it mentions both the Bharata and the Mahabharata. Also, the Epic, in its long descriptions of the religions of the day, describes the Vedic, Sankhya, Yoga, Pasupata, and the Bhagavata traditions. There is no mention of Buddhism. The language of the Epic does not always follow Paninian constructions which also dates it prior to 500 BC.

The Great War itself is calculated to have occurred on the plains of Kurukshetra around the year 3132 BC as taken by Aryabhata (476-550 AD) who stated when he was 23 years old, that Kaliyuga started 3600 years before. Surya Siddhanta, a document evolved from roughly same period, states that sun was 54 degrees away from vernal equinox when Kaliyuga started on a new moon day, corresponding to February 17/18, 3102 BC, at Ujjain.

It is interesting to note that modern historians mark the Vedic era from 1500 BC to 500 BC, completely denying the possibility that the Arya civilisation had any impact on the subcontinent's history prior to that time. The Indus Valley Civilisation has been considered by them to be an aberrant mystery, so as to refute indigenous claims on the region. However, it is to be assured that this is far from the truth. The Harappan cities that were discovered and dated to 3000 BC were very much a part of the ancient settlements around the Saraswati river, along whose banks the Vedas were composed by seers called Rishis. They invariably were the original philosophers, inquiring deeply into the questions of workings of the cosmos. The Rigveda celebrates the Sarasvati as the greatest river of its day, going from the mountains to the sea (*giribhya asamudrat* in Rigveda 7.95.2). Archeological

evidence confirms a cultural continuity among agricultural and urban consolidations in that region as far back as 8000 BC.

The Sarasvati ceased to be a seagoing river about 3000 BC, giving further credence to the fact that the Vedas were anterior to that time. It also explains why the settlements dated to that time on the banks of the Sarasvati river end in the Bahawalpur region of the Punjab and do not reach the sea; there was a further shrinking of the river in about 1900 BC due to an earthquake that made its two principal tributaries to be captured by the Indus and the Ganga river systems, leading to the collapse of the Harappan civilisation, and shifting the cultural and religious centres further inward. Whereas Pushkara was the holiest centre in the Treta Age, that honour shifted to Kurukshetra in Dwapara, and thence to Prayag in Kaliyuga, after the end of the war.

## **KALIYUGA**

From 3000 to 500 BC, therefore, in the earliest centuries of Kaliyuga, Vedic civilisation continued its devolution. The principal deity in the Vedas was Indra, and to him were offered all sacrifices. The Brahmins, who inherited the mantle of philosophers from the Rishis, now put its philosophical aphorisms and hymns to poetic metre. These constituted a separated Veda - the Samaveda. Collections of the hymns were then compiled into the Yajurveda - as protocols for conducting complicated sacrifices. Chants, medicinal herbs and the knowledge of spells were collected in the Atharvaveda. All this required considerable poetic knowledge, and this gave the Brahmins considerable honour in the ancient society, for the ability to crystallise wisdom in memorable form. Notwithstanding the fact that these Vedas were not common knowledge, they were for internal circulation only, among the upper two castes, as it were. The Brahmins learnt and transmitted this knowledge by repetitive learning, and the memorisation of sound and recollection of pronunciation of each aphorism in chaste Sanskrit became a measure of intelligence, even among their ranks. Celebrated Brahmins took pride in their command of the ancient tongue and obtained favours from the royal order of the day for their skills in composition.

The schools of learning were only open to Brahmins and Ksatriyas. Vaisyas and Sudras, and indeed women were not admitted to Gurukula. To maintain exclusivity, to retain power within their own ranks, they had to justify this caste system, they came up with two brilliant doctrines: the doctrines of the Gunas of Prakriti (modes of material nature) and destiny of Karma. Brahmanic priests claimed that Prakriti manifested itself in the body of humans in the form of three Gunas (Qualities): Sattva (knowledge, culture, joy), Rajas (passion, greed, drive) and Tamas (ignorance, sloth, laziness). Based on these doctrines, Brahmanism divided

the society into four classes: Brahmins (the priestly class of Sattva Guna), Kshatriyas (the warrior class of Rajas Guna), Vaishyas and Sudras (the trader and labor class of Tamas Guna). They claimed that the Gunas were the source of all Actions (Karma). Everyone was totally helpless in the face of the Gunas. The product of one's action was known as Karmaphalam (fruit of action). All actions, except for Yajna, accumulated Karmaphalam. If one did good deeds, he earned good Karmaphalam (Punyam); if one did bad deeds, he earned bad Karmaphalam. After death, one's soul was reborn on earth in a higher or lower social status depending upon the quality of his deeds. They called this cycle of birth, death and rebirth Samsara. Brahmanism propagated the belief that everyone's life situation, societal status, and quality of action, was determined by the dictates of the doctrines of the Gunas of Prakriti and destiny of Karma. To protect the purity of their elite status, Brahmanism forbade class admixture (Varnasankara). An upper class man could marry a lower class woman, but vice versa was forbidden.

The noble goal of this system of primitive Constitution and a System of Justice was to counter chaos and preserve law and order in a society where kingdoms may come and go. Brahmanism had no power to arrest wrongdoers and deliver them corporal punishment. However, they had even greater power than corporal punishment: dishonour here on earth and repercussions in the hereafter. Those impertinent people who refused to perform their Varna-designated duty were sure to face the music in their next live, and therefore it became important to maintain the lower classes in servile helplessness, to serve as living proof of cosmic punishment for not following the designated Dharma.

## **ENTROPY**

**“DECAY IS INHERENT IN ALL THINGS.”  
- BUDDHA**

The Brahmins had a cosy relationship with the Kshatriya warriors, who depended on their wisdom to conduct sacrifices by which they could obtain victory in battle and prosperity for their kingdoms. In return, the Brahmins received gifts in cash and kind. Eventually, this relationship engendered corruption within all ranks, and the Brahmins began to devise more and more complex rituals in exchange for greater opulence.

In the words of the Buddha :

**"THEN CAME THEIR RUIN. SEEING BIT BY BIT THEIR KING EXPAND, WITH HIS FINELY DECKED WOMEN, HIS WELL-WROUGHT CHARIOTS YOKED WITH THOROUGHBREDS, HIS COLOURFUL STITCHING, HIS PALACES AND WELL-LAID-OUT CHAMBERS, THRIVING WITH HERDS OF COWS, WAITED ON BY BEVIES OF COMELY WOMEN, THOSE BRAHMINS BEGAN TO COVET THAT VAST HUMAN LUXURY. THEY COMPOSED MANTRAS THEN AND THERE, APPROACHED OKKAKA (KING) AND SAID, 'YOUR RICHES ARE ABUNDANT. SACRIFICE. YOU HAVE MUCH WEALTH. SACRIFICE. YOU HAVE MUCH MONEY!' PROMPTED BY THE BRAHMINS, THAT KING, A BULL AMONG WARRIORS, SACRIFICED UP HORSES, HUMANS, AND ANIMALS AND OFFERED VAJAPEYA IN UNBRIDLED FASHION; AND HE GAVE RICHES TO THE BRĀHMINS: COWS, BEDS, CLOTHES, FINELY DECKED WOMEN, ETC."**

# THE ORIGINAL GITA

Here is the original text of the insertion into the Jaya, Bhishma Parva, just after Chapter 22. Dhritarashtra is made to ask the question again, that he has already asked twice of Sanjaya, so that this insertion could be extracted at a later date:

1. 1.1: The King Dhritarashtra asked: “O Sanjaya! When my sons gathered against the Pandavas desiring to fight on the sacred battlefield of Kurukshetra, what did they do?”
2. 1.2: Sanjaya replied: “The Prince Duryodhana, when he saw the army of the Pandavas paraded, approached his preceptor Guru Drona and spoke as follows:
3. 1.3: Behold, O Teacher! this mighty host of the Pandavas, arranged into military phalanx by the son of King Drupada, your wise disciple.
4. 1.4: In it are heroes and great bowmen; the equals in battle of Arjuna and Bhima, Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada, great soldiers all;
5. 1.5: Dhrishtaketu, Chekitan, the valiant King of Benares, Purujit, Kuntibhoja, Shaibya – masters over men;
6. 1.6: Yudhamanyu, Uttamauja, and the sons of Subhadra and Draupadi, all great chariot fighters.
7. 1.7: Further, take note of all those captains who have ranged themselves on our side, O best of Spiritual Guides! The leaders of my army. I will name them for you.
8. 1.8: Your good self, Grandsire Bhishma, Karna, Kripa, who are always victorious in battle; Ashwatthama, Vikarna and the son of Somadhatta as well.
9. 1.9: And many other heroes, all ready to die for my sake; all armed with various weapons, all skilled in war.
10. 1.10: Yet our army seems the weaker, though commanded by Bhishma; their army seems the stronger, though commanded by Bhima.
11. 1.11: Therefore in the rank and file, let stand firm in their posts, according to battalions; and all you generals about Bhishma.
12. 1.12: Then to enliven his spirits, the brave Grandfather Bhishma, eldest of the Kuru-clan, blew his conch, till it sounded like a lion’s roar.
13. 1.13: Then suddenly all the conches and drums, the trumpets and horns, blared forth simultaneously in tumultuous uproar.
14. 1.14: Then seated in their mighty war chariot, yoked with white horses, Madhava and Arjuna sounded their divine conch-shells.
15. 1.15: Hrisikesa blew his conch-shell named ‘Panchajanya’ and Arjuna his Devadatta, the big-bellied Bhima his renowned shell, Paundra.
16. 1.16: King Yudhishthira, the son of Kunti, blew the Anantavijaya, Nakula and Sahadev, the Sugosh and Manipushpaka, respectively.



17. 1.17: And the Maharaja of Benares, the great archer, Shikhandi, the great soldier, Dhrishtayumna, Virata and Satyaki, the invincible,
18. 1.18: And O King! Drupada, the sons of Draupadi and Saubhadra (Abhimanyu), the mighty armed, all blew their respective conches.
19. 1.19: The tumult rent the hearts of the sons of Dhritarashtra, and violently shook heaven and earth with its echo.
20. 1.20: Then beholding the sons of Dhritarashtra drawn up on the battlefield ready to engage with weapons, Arjuna, whose flag bore the Hanuman, raised his bow and spoke the following words to Hrisikesa, O King:
21. 1.21: Arjuna said to: O Infallible one! Please draw up my chariot betwixt the two armies,
22. 1.22: So that I may observe those who must fight on my side, those who must fight against me;
23. 1.23: And gaze over this array of soldiers, eager to please the sinful sons of Dhritarashtra.”
24. 1.24: Sanjaya said: “Having listened to the request of Gudakesa, Hrisikesa drew up the excellent chariot exactly in the midst between the two armies

Gudakesa = Guda (Thick) + Kesa (Hair) = ‘Thick haired’. Hrisikesa means ‘Short hair’. We can infer that Krishna got a buzz cut before getting onto the battlefield, while Arjuna had thick matted locks. Either option is a smart move when you're expected to be busy fighting.

25. 1.25: In front of Bhishma and Drona and all the rulers of the earth, and spoke thus: O Partha! Behold all these members of the family of Kuru assembled.
26. 1.26: There Partha noticed fathers, grandfathers, teachers, uncles, cousins, sons, grandsons, friends, fathers-in-law and benefactors, arrayed in both armies.
27. 1.27: The son of Kunti, seeing all those kinsmen standing before him, overwhelmed with uncommon compassion, while lamenting spoke thus:
28. 1.28: O Krishna! When I see all these kinsmen, thirsting for battle, my limbs fail me and my throat is parched,
29. 1.29: My body trembles and my hair stands on end. The bow Gandeeva slips from my hand, and my skin burns.
30. 1.30: I can't stand straight and my mind is wandering. I'm also seeing adverse omens, Kesava.

Krishna is addressed here as Kesava, which means ‘beautiful long unshorn hair’. This is paradoxical because we’ve already learnt that Krishna has his hair shorn at the moment. Arjuna’s reminding Krishna of his (prior) habit of maintaining long beautiful hair. He’s looking back to a more carefree time, and regards Krishna’s shorn hair as a fearful declaration of the reality of the War. The point of no return is being challenged by our protagonist.

The Bhagavata devotees reinterpreted Kesava either as Ka (Water) + Esa (Lord) = Vishnu, or as killer of a demon called Kesi. Either way, it detracts from the original meaning of the verse and its context.

31. 1.31: O Krsna! Nor do I foresee any benefit from the slaughter of my own people in this fight? I crave not for victory, nor for the kingdom, nor for any royal comfort.
32. 1.32: What were a kingdom or happiness or life to me, O Govinda, when those for whose sake I desire these things stand here about to sacrifice their property and their lives:

Krishna is addressed as Govinda, which means ‘who enlivens up the senses’. Arjuna wants Krishna to address the symptoms of distress that are affecting his senses, asking his friend, cousin and confidante to bring him relief.

Reinterpreted by grammarians 'Go' (cow) + Vinda (pleasure). So Krishna pleases the cows...!?!)

**33. 1.33: Teachers, fathers and grandfathers, sons and grandsons, uncles, father-in-law, brothers-in-law and other relatives.**

**34. 1.34: I do not wish to kill them, even if I myself am killed, Madhusudana, not even for the three worlds; why then for this earth?**

Here we find the word 'Madhusudana'. 'Madhu' means that which is agreeable, pleasant, sweet. Honey, e.g. is called madhu. 'Sudana' means 'destroying', but also means 'putting things in order'.

Arjuna could be projecting on to Krishna's own role as a warrior, of either destroying order, or of restoring it.

The mythological interpretation had to invent a demon called Madhu whom Vishnu could destroy and then the appellation could connect Krishna to Vishnu.

**35. 1.35: O Janardana, what happiness can come from the death of these sons of Dhritarashtra? We shall sin if we kill these desperate men.**

Janardana means 'Jan' (People) + 'ardana' (disturbing, tormenting, destroying) = 'who annihilates the population'. It does not mean 'maintainer of all living entities'.

As the Bhagavatas took up the interpretation of the Gita, these appellations were given alternative meanings, sometimes changing the meaning of the root or the suffix, at other times simply deviating the meaning of the appellation on its head.

**36. 1.36: Sins would come upon us by killing these aggressors. We are certainly worthy of a nobler feat than to slaughter the sons of Dhritarashtra, our friends and relatives; for, Madhava, how can we be happy if we kill our kinsmen?**

This Madhava is another appeal by Arjuna to Krishna's sweet nature, to restore pleasure and well-being to his agitated cousin.

**37. 1.37: Although these men, blinded by greed, see no guilt in destroying their kin, or fighting against their friends,**

**38. 1.38: Should not we, whose eyes are open, who consider it to be wrong to annihilate our house, turn away from so great a crime, O Janardana?**

**39. 1.39: The destruction of our kindred means the destruction of the traditions of our ancient lineage, and when these are lost, irreligion will overrun our homes.**

**40. 1.40: When irreligion spreads, O descendent of Vrsni, the women of the house begin to stray; when they lose their purity, adulteration of the stock follows.**

The Brahmins who wrote the original text were very concerned with mixing of races. The word used by Arjuna is 'varna' (colour) + 'sankara' (intermixture, confusion). The appeal to Krishna's ancestry is to legitimize the apartheid of ancient Aryan society segregated on the basis of the colour of skin. Arjuna's (as the Brahmins' mouthpiece here) concern was that whole new sub-castes of mixed caste people would arise and cause an administrative nightmare. On top of that they are blaming the women for that happenstance, which establishes also the sexist nature of Indian society for all of eternity yet to come.

**41. 1.41: This caste-admixture sends to Hell, those who destroy the clan, as well as the clan itself; while the souls of our ancestors fall down, through lack of the funeral cakes and ablutions.**

Now we learn one of the real threats that the Brahmins faced - the collapse of their funeral business, among others. Note the fear they put into the populace - the souls of your ancestors will fall down, being deprived of food and water and everyone will go to Hell.

42. 1.42: By these faults - the destruction of the clan, caused by mixed children - eternally preserved class and clan traditions also perish.
43. 1.43: I have heard from others before me, O Janardana, that people whose ancient traditions have been destroyed always reside in Hell.
44. 1.44: Alas, it is strange that we have decided to perform great sins, trying to kill our own kinsmen, in order to enjoy the pleasures of a kingdom.
45. 1.45: If the sons of Dhritarashtra, with weapons in their hands, should slay me on the battlefield, unarmed and unresisting, that would be better for my welfare!"
46. 1.46: Sanjaya said: "Having spoken thus, in the midst of the armies, Arjuna sank on the seat of the chariot, casting away his bow and arrow; heartbroken with grief."
47. 2.1: Sanjaya then told how, seeing Arjuna overwhelmed with compassion, his eyes dimmed with flowing tears and full of despondency, Madhusudana consoled him:
48. 2.2: The Fortunate One said: Where, in this hour of crisis, has this stupefaction come upon you? It is uncivilized, causes infamy and closes the gates of heaven, Arjuna.
49. 2.3: O Partha, don't take up this impotence. It doesn't become you. Give up this petty weakness of the heart and stand up, O destroyer of enemies!
50. 2.31: Also, consider your own duty. You ought to never hesitate to fight a righteous war; indeed, for a Kshatriya, there is no other creditable activity.
51. 2.32: Happy are the warriors who are offered such a fight on a platter, unsought, as an open door to heaven.
52. 2.33: Therefore, if you won't perform your duty in this righteous war, then losing your honor, you will incur sin.
53. 2.34: Men will talk forever of your disgrace; and to the noble, dishonor is worse than death.
54. 2.35: Great generals will think that you have fled from the battlefield through cowardice; though once honored you will seem despicable.
55. 2.36: Your enemies will spread scandal and mock at your courage. Can anything be more humiliating?
56. 2.37: If killed, you will attain Heaven; if victorious, enjoy the kingdom of earth. Therefore arise, O Son of Kunti, and fight!
57. 2.38: Look upon pleasure and pain, victory and defeat, with an equal eye. Make ready for the combat, and you shall commit no sin.
58. 3.5: Krishna said: No one can even for a moment remain really inactive, for the Qualities of Nature will compel him to act whether he will or no.
59. 3.27: Action is the product of the Qualities inherent in Nature. Misled by personal egotism, one says: 'I am the doer.'
60. 3.28: But he, O Mighty One, who understands correctly the relation of the Qualities to action, is not attached to the act for he perceives that it is merely the action and reaction of the Qualities among themselves.
61. 3.29: Those who do not understand the Qualities are interested in the act. Still, the wise man who knows the truth should not disturb the mind of him who does not.

62. 3.33: Even the wise man acts in conformity with his own nature; indeed, all creatures act according to their natures. What can repression do?
63. 3.35: It is better to do your own duty, however lacking in merit, than to do that of another, even though efficiently. It is better to die doing one's own duty, for to do the duty of another is fraught with danger.
64. 18.40: There is nothing anywhere on earth or in the higher heavenly worlds of the Gods, or again, which is free from the three Qualities born of Nature.
65. 18.47: It is better to do one's own duty, however defective it may be, than to follow the duty of another, however well one may perform it. He who does his duty as his own nature reveals it, never sins.
66. 18.48: The duty that of itself falls to one's lot should not be abandoned, though it may have its defects. All acts are marred by defects, as fire is obscured by smoke.
67. 18.59: If you in your vanity think in false determination of avoiding this fight, your will shall not be fulfilled, for Nature herself will compel you.
68. 18.60: Born of your own nature, O son of Kunti, and conditioned by your own activities, that which in your delusion you desire not to do, that very thing you will do involuntarily.
69. 18.72: O Partha! Have you listened attentively to my words? Has your ignorance and your delusion gone, O obtainer of wealth?
70. 18.73: Arjuna replied: My delusion has been destroyed and my memory has been regained by me, by your Grace, O Changeless One. I stand removed of doubts ready to do as you say."
71. 18.74: Sanjaya told: "Thus have I heard this rare, wonderful and soul-stirring discourse of the Lord Shri Krishna and the great-souled Arjuna.

And that's the end of the Original Gita.

# THE GITOPANISAD

By 500 BC, schools of learning mushroomed along the Ganga. Among these alternative philosophical systems were also Jainism and Buddhism; the latter would give the Brahminical systems much grief and a religious competition would arise. Buddhism and Jainism gave the common populace an alternative system of deliverance and spiritual elevation that eroded the economic base of the Brahminical system which had become corrupt and engaged in bloody sacrifices. At this time, an internal puritanical movement occurred, with support from conscientious Brahmins, as well as their Ksatriya patrons.

These Ksatriya princes and the well meaning Brahmins began to compile their school notes, and enjoined each other to debate philosophical concepts, in an effort to promote excellence within their own ranks, and to be able to engage with the increasingly popular Buddhist schools. The Vedantists, who compiled the Upanisads challenged the ancient Vedic gods, especially Indra, and their proponents sought to reform Vedic society from within. A sort of “back to the Rishis” kind of rebellion was taking shape. The challenge was not oppositional, they were far too wise to resort to such immature tactics. They presented their philosophy as Vedanta - as the summer bonum, the culmination, indeed quite literally “the end of the Vedas”. They replaced the Vedic concept of the social collective sacrifice of Yagya as a means of spiritual evolution, with the personal sacrificial method of Yoga. Indra and all his retinue were subjugated into the higher Truth, the amorphous Unity of Brahman, and the Brahmins were exhorted to return to their original role of Brahman-realisation, or Self-realisation. All this was meant to purify the members of Brahmin caste who had become addicted to wealth and opulence. It was the first Vedic Reform Movement.

Chapter Two begins with these verses, reiterated here for those readers who would wish to follow the original text along with the jumps from the original Gita:

**2.1: Sanjaya then told how, seeing Arjuna overwhelmed with compassion, his eyes dimmed with flowing tears and full of despondency, Madhusudana consoled him:**

**2.2: The Fortunate One said: Where, in this hour of crisis, has this stupefaction come upon you? It is uncivilized, causes infamy and closes the gates of heaven, Arjuna.**

**2.3: O Partha, don't take up this impotence. It doesn't become you. Give up this petty weakness of the heart and stand up, O destroyer of enemies!**

*At this point to continue Krishna's advice to Arjuna, one must jump to verse 2.31*

Evidence of the the Vedantists attempt at reform is found here in the second chapter. The following verses were inserted by them, starting by repetition of Arjuna's argument in the tail end of the previous chapter, specifically 1.34. The following verses introduce the philosophy of the Vedantists, by reintroducing the dilemma of the young prince and building upon it an alternative reply to the one given by the original Krishna. Indeed, they had to continue with Krishna as their mouthpiece, in order to preserve some semblance of continuity with the text. The change is subtle, but not impossible to detect. The Vedantists introduce the concept and importance of Guru.

**2.4: Arjuna argued: O Madhusudana, O killer of enemies! How can I, when the battle rages, send an arrow through Bhishma and Drona, who should receive my reverence?**

Arjuna addresses Krishna as both Madhusudana (restorer of harmony) and Arisudana (killer of enemies) in this verse. The dichotomy in his mind is indicated thus.

**2.5: Rather would I content myself with a beggar's crust than kill these teachers of mine, these precious noble souls! To slay these masters who are my benefactors would be to stain the sweetness of life's pleasures with their blood.**

**2.6: Nor can I say whether it were better that they conquer me or for me to conquer them, since I would no longer care to live if I killed these sons of Dhritarashtra, now standing in front of us.**

**2.7: (Arjuna said) My heart is oppressed with pity; and my mind confused as to what my duty is. Therefore, my Lord, tell me what is best for my spiritual welfare, for I am your disciple. Please direct me, I pray.**

**2.8: For should I attain the monarchy of the visible world, or over the invisible world, it would not drive away the anguish which is now paralysing my senses."**

**2.9: Sanjaya continued: "Arjuna, the conqueror of all enemies, then told Hrisikesa that he would not fight, and became silent, O King!**

...and we return to the theme at the end of the first chapter, in 1.46... so that Guru Krishna may now provide an alternative answer:

**2.10: Thereupon Hrisikesa, with a gracious smile, addressed him who was so much depressed in the midst of the two armies.**

Krishna is still being addressed as Hrisikesa, but he is now the Guru in the Upanisadic tradition, and starts his discourse on the philosophy of the Vedanta.

**2.11: The Fortunate One said: Why grieve for those for whom no grief is due, and yet profess wisdom? The wise grieve neither for the dead nor the living.**

**2.12: There was never a time when I was not, nor you, nor these princes were not; there will never be a time when we shall cease to be.**

**2.13: As the soul experiences in this body infancy, youth and old age, so finally it passes into another. The wise have no delusion about this.**

**2.14: Those external relations which bring cold and heat, pain and happiness, they come and go; they are not permanent. Endure them bravely, O Prince!**



**2.15: The hero whose soul is unmoved by circumstance, who accepts pleasure and pain with equanimity, only he is fit for immortality.**

**2.16: That which is not, shall never be; that which is, shall never cease to be. To the wise, these truths are self-evident.**

**2.17: The Spirit, which pervades all that we see, is imperishable. Nothing can destroy the Spirit.**

**2.18: The material bodies which this Eternal, Indestructible, Immeasurable Spirit inhabits are all finite. Therefore fight, O Valiant Man!**

**2.19: He who thinks that the Spirit kills, and he who thinks of It as killed, are both ignorant. The Spirit kills not, nor is It killed.**

**2.20: It was not born; It will never die, nor once having been, can It cease to be. Unborn, Eternal, Ever-enduring, yet Most Ancient, the Spirit dies not when the body is dead.**

**2.21: He who knows the Spirit as Indestructible, Immortal, Unborn, Always-the-Same, how should he kill or cause to be killed?**

**2.22: As a man discards his threadbare robes and puts on new, so the Spirit throws off Its worn- out bodies and takes fresh ones.**

**2.23: Weapons cleave It not, fire burns It not, water drenches It not, and wind dries It not.**

**2.24: It is impenetrable; It can be neither drowned nor scorched nor dried. It is Eternal, All- pervading, Unchanging, Immovable and Most Ancient.**

**2.25: It is named the Unmanifest, the Unthinkable, the immutable. Wherefore, knowing the Spirit as such, you have no cause to grieve.**

**2.26: Even if you think of It as constantly being born, constantly dying, even then, O Mighty Man, you still have no cause to grieve.**

**2.27: For death is as sure for that which is born, as birth is for that which is dead. Therefore grieve not for what is inevitable.**

**2.28: The end and the beginning of beings are unknown. We see only the intervening formations. Then what cause is there for grief?**

**2.29: One hears of the Spirit with surprise, another thinks It marvellous, the third listens without comprehending. Thus, though many are told about It, scarcely is there one who knows It.**

This verse refers to the old Brahmins of yore, whose livelihood depended on interpretation of the Vedas and in creating new and exorbitant Yajnas for the Kshatriyas to fund. The concepts of Atman and Brahman were created by the Vedantists, and therefore were unknowable by the Brahmin Ritwiks. The Upanisadists surrounded them with mystery and accurately describe in this verse, how these concepts were received in Brahminical society. The Upanisadists were heretical to the Vedas, even dismissive of them, and therefore termed their philosophy as Vedanta (the end of the Vedas)

**2.30: Be not anxious about these armies. The Spirit in man is imperishable.**

*To continue with the instructions from Guru Krishna of the Vedantists, jump to 2.39*



*Continuing from 2.3, the original Gita presses on with the Brahminical viewpoint:*

**2.31: Also, consider your own duty. You ought to never hesitate to fight a righteous war; indeed, for a Kshatriya, there is no other creditable activity.**

The original is 'svadharma', your own duty , '-api', also. The word 'also' is significant here because it maintains the continuity of the narrative from 2.3 (... "give up your weakness, and also consider your dharma"). It does not connect with 2.30. This should be obvious.

**2.32: Happy are the warriors who are offered such a fight on a platter, unsought, as an open door to heaven.**

**2.33: Therefore, if you won't perform your duty in this righteous war, then losing your honor, you will incur sin.**

**2.34: Men will talk forever of your disgrace; and to the noble, dishonor is worse than death.**

**2.35: Great generals will think that you have fled from the battlefield through cowardice; though once honored you will seem despicable.**

**2.36: Your enemies will spread scandal and mock at your courage. Can anything be more humiliating?**

**2.37: If killed, you will attain Heaven; if victorious, enjoy the kingdom of earth. Therefore arise, O Son of Kunti, and fight!**

**2.38: Look upon pleasure and pain, victory and defeat, with an equal eye. Make ready for the combat, and you shall commit no sin.**

*To continue the original narrative, jump to Verse 3.5*



*Continuing from 2.3, Guru Krishna proceeds with the philosophy*

**2.39: I have just described the fundamentals of the Yoga of Intelligence. Now listen how joined to Intelligence, O Partha, you will break through the bondage of all action.**

This verse further corroborates that the jumps I've flagged are in the right place. If you've followed them this should be obvious. However, if you've disregarded the jumps and just been reading the text "as it is" written, you've either started to become confused, because what Krishna has 'just' described in 2.38, is not the Yoga of Intelligence, but a bit of chastisement for his friend and cousin. Or you've not been paying attention.

**2.40: On this Path, endeavor is never wasted, nor can it ever be diminished. Even a very little of its practice protects one from great danger.**

**2.41: By its means, O beloved of the Kurus, the straying intellect becomes one-pointed; whereas the minds of the irresolute stray into bypaths innumerable.**

**2.42: Only the ignorant speak in flowery language. It is they who extol the letter of the Vedic scriptures, saying, 'There is nothing deeper than this.'**

This is a direct reference to the Ritwik Brahmins, who were ignorant about Vedantic philosophy, and remained attached to the Vedas

**2.43: Driven by their own desires, aiming to achieve heaven or good birth resulting from Karmakanda, devising arduous and complex rites to secure their own pleasure and their own power; and the only result is rebirth.**

This is the most accurate description of the Brahmin-Kshatriya nexus, the former offered heaven as a reward to Kshatriyas for funding and performing Yajnas, the tangible benefits of which were immediately available to the Brahmins. Their purpose is hereby revealed.



**2.44: While their bewildered minds are absorbed with ideas of power and personal enjoyment, they cannot bring their Intelligence to concentrate on one-pointedness.**

**2.45: The Vedic Scriptures tell of the three constituents of life – the Qualities. Rise above all of them, O Arjuna, above all the pairs of opposing sensations; be steady in truth, free from worldly anxieties and centered in the Self.**

Now the Vedantists directly attack the Brahminical injunction that the Gunas are all-controlling. They give here the cheat-code that it is indeed possible to transcend them. Simultaneously they introduce the concept of the higher Self within.

**2.46: All the Vedas are as useful to an enlightened man, as is a tank in a place flooded with water.**

Finally, they attack the Vedas, which are associated with the Brahmins and their self-serving sacrifices. Guru Krishna says “When your intelligence has been fired up, the Vedas are going to shrink in comparison to your own understanding.”

**2.47: You have only the right to perform Karma(kanda), but not to the fruit thereof. Let not then the fruit of your action be your motive; nor yet be you enamored of inaction.**

This verse is directed at the Brahmins - who greedily partook of all that was ‘sacrificed’ in the elaborate rituals of Karmakanda, while neglecting their prime duty of Self-Realization. This admonishment comes to them from the mouth of Guru Krishna - “Don’t be motivated by the rewards obtained by performing Yajnas and become lazy.”

**2.48: Perform all your Karma(kanda) with an equipoised mind, renouncing attachment and looking upon success and failure with an equal eye. Becoming equipoised is called Yoga.**

This was the Vedantic philosophy, as given to all the Brahmins, dovetailing their performance of the Yajnas with the inner self-control through Yoga while taking away the lure of the Karmakanda sacrifices.

**2.49: Karma(kanda) is far inferior to an intellect equipoised. Have recourse then to Equipoised Intellect. It is only the petty-minded who work for reward.**

Now Guru Krishna admonishes the Karmakanda Brahmins, encouraging them to focus on their own self-realisation.

**2.50: When a man attains to Equipoised Intellect, he discards here in this world the results of good and evil alike. Prepare to skilfully conjoin all Karma to Yoga.**

Further instructions on how to dovetail Yajna with Yoga.

**2.51: The sages guided by Equipoised Intellect renounce the fruit of action; and, freed from the chains of rebirth, they reach the highest bliss.**

Going beyond the offers of heavenly rewards that the Brahminical Krishna was suggesting, Guru Krishna offers freedom from the cycle of rebirth itself. It is quite likely that the Buddhist philosophy had quite a stranglehold on the minds of men, and despite the offers of heaven, the fears of rebirth could only be addressed and countered by the Upanisadic philosophy.

**2.52: When your reason has crossed the entanglements of delusion, then will you become indifferent both to the philosophies you have heard and to those you may yet hear.**

This verse effectively inoculated the reader from any new philosophy that was yet to be invented, and in all probability there were many opposing viewpoints that were being added to the scriptures, even as these were being written. This was the Vedantists prescription for battling it out with Buddhism. etc.

**2.53: When your intellect no longer bewildered by the multiplicity of holy scripts, stands unperturbed, then you will have achieved Yoga.**

This verse is directed at the layman, who was being bombarded with countless contradictory philosophies arising in ancient India at the time.

**2.54: Arjuna asked: O Kesava! What is the mark of the one who is of steady intelligence, steady in mind, and situated in equanimity? What does he speak? How does he sit? How does he walk?**

**2.55: Guru Krishna replied: When a man has given up the desires of his heart and is satisfied in the Self, by the Self alone, then he is called one of steady intelligence.**

**2.56: Whose mind is unruffled in suffering, whose desire is not roused by enjoyment, who is without attachment, anger or fear – is called a Sage of steady intelligence.**

**2.57: One who is attached to no desire, and achieving that state who accepts good and evil alike, neither welcoming the one nor shrinking from the other – his intellect is fixed.**

**2.58: He who can withdraw his senses from the attraction of their objects, as the tortoise draws his limbs within its shell – his intellect is fixed.**

**2.59: The objects of sense turn from him who is abstemious. Even the relish for them is lost in him who has experienced far superior things.**

**2.60: O son of Kunti, the excited senses of even a wise man, though he be striving for perfection, impetuously carry away his mind.**

**2.61: Restraining all senses, one must sit engaged in contemplation of Me; thus subjugating his senses, one achieves fixed consciousness.**

Taking a cue from the Upanisadists, the Bhagavatas inserted this verse to qualify further the process of meditative Yoga, and in order to answer the problem stated in 2.60. How to deal with the impetuous senses that bewilder even wise men? Meditate on Krishna as an object of devotion!

**2.62: When a man dwells on the objects of sense, he creates an attraction for them; attraction develops into desire, and desire breeds anger.**

**2.63: Anger induces delusion; delusion, loss of memory; through loss of memory, reason is shattered; and loss of reason leads to destruction.**

**2.64: But the disciplined self, moving among sense-objects with senses free from attraction and repulsion, mastered by the Self, attains Peace.**

**2.65: Having attained Peace, he becomes free from misery, and becoming of cheerful disposition, indeed, very quickly he attains equilibrium.**

**2.66: Right discrimination is not for him who cannot concentrate. Without concentration, there can be no fixity of mind, without which there can be no peace; and without peace, how can anyone expect happiness?**

**2.67: As a ship at sea is tossed by the tempest, so the reason is carried away by the mind when preyed upon by straying senses.**

**2.68: Therefore, O mighty-armed! whose senses are detached from their objects, consider his intelligence to be steadfast.**

**2.69: The introspective sage is awake when the world sleeps, and he ignores that for which the world lives.**

**2.70: He attains Peace, into whom desires flow as rivers into the ocean, which though brimming with water remains ever the same; not he whom desire carries away.**

**2.71: He attains Peace who, giving up desire, moves through the world without aspiration, possessing nothing which he can call his own, and free from pride.**

**2.72: O Partha! This is the state of the Self, the Supreme Spirit, to which if a man once attain, it shall never be taken from him. Even at the time of leaving the body, he will remain firmly enthroned there, and will become one with the Eternal."**

The following verses were tacked on the Chapter 4 however they belong here as the narrative continues from the Vedantists. They were edited by the Bhagavatas and again by the Brahmins, who tried to bring back their influence into the text. The Upanisadic discourse that follows is the Path of Wisdom

**4.1: "Guru Krishna said: This imperishable philosophy I taught to Viwaswana, the founder of the Sun dynasty, Viwaswana gave it to Manu the lawgiver, and Manu to King Ikshwaku!**

**4.2: The Divine Kings knew it, for it was their tradition. Then, after a long time, at last it was forgotten.**

Guru Krishna now declares that the Kshatriyas too possessed Divine Wisdom, secrets of the Occult unknown to the Vedic Brahmins. Indeed, this is a hallmark of the Vedantists - where Kshatriyas take on the role of preceptors to the Brahmins.

**4.3: It is the same ancient Path that I have now revealed to you, since you are My devotee and My friend. It is the supreme Secret.**

Not to be left behind, the Bhagavatas added on the layer of devotion to Krishna, sealing his divinity.

**4.4: Arjuna asked: My Lord! Viwaswana was born before you; how then can you have revealed it to him?**

**4.5: Lord Shri Krishna replied: I have been born again and again, from time to time; you too, O Arjuna! My births are known to Me, but you know not yours.**

This was pure advertising from the Vedantists - how their philosophy could help the practitioner transcend death. The Buddhists had made much of the Buddha's previous lives and their events in the Jataka. This had to be countered.

**4.6: I have no beginning. though I am imperishable, as well as Lord of all that exists, yet by My own will and power do I manifest Myself.**

The Bhagavatas piled on...

**4.7: Whenever spirituality decays and materialism is rampant, then, O Arjuna, I reincarnate Myself!**

**4.8: To protect the righteous, to destroy the wicked and to establish the principles of Dharma, I do appear from age to age.**

**4.9: He who realises the divine truth concerning My birth and life is not born again; and when he leaves his body, he becomes one with Me.**

**4.10: Many have merged their existences in Mine, being freed from desire, fear and anger, filled always with Me and purified by the illuminating flame of self-abnegation.**

They introduced the concept of merging into Krishna as equivalent to merging Atman with Brahman. It became a metaphor for Yoga that could be applied in mythological terms.

**4.11: Howsoever men try to worship Me, so do I welcome them. By whatever path they travel, it leads to Me at last.**

To finalize the superiority of their philosophy, they declared that in the end, one must turn to Bhakti and to Krishna.

**4.12: Those who look for success, worship the Demigods by Yajnas; and in this world their actions bear immediate fruit.**

One can immediately see that this verse was introduced by the Brahmins, who wanted to counter this monotheistic worship of Krishna and the whole merging into Him in the afterlife adventure. Their advertising was direct: “For immediate results in this world, perform Yajnas to Demigods, Now!”

**5.29: Knowing me as Him who gladly receives all offerings of austerity and sacrifice, as the Might Ruler of all the Worlds and the Friend of all beings, he passes to Eternal Peace.”**

**4.13: The four divisions of society (the wise, the soldier, the merchant, the laborer) were created by Me, according to the distribution of Modes of Nature and Karma. I am the author of them, though I Myself do no action, and am changeless.**

This was the unkindest cut of them all. Brahminical usurpers in the egalitarian Bhagvata tradition advanced the notion that Krishna created the Caste System reintroducing the Modes of Nature and Karma as a basis for membership of the castes. They furthered their own agenda by declaring that Krishna, even while authoring them was the non-doer (and therefore blameless) and unchangeable (and therefore to remain unchallenged).

**4.14: My actions do not fetter Me, nor do I desire anything that they can bring. He who thus realizes Me is not enslaved by action.**

The Bhagavatas further expanded the Upanisadic theory of Non-Action (a thoroughly confusing idea for the Vedic Brahmins) and applied that the same freedom was available to the devotees, who had “realized” Krishna.

# THE PATH OF WISDOM

In this discourse, the Vedantists describe the Path of Wisdom. This is where it really starts, however as we saw, the preceding verses were just a battle ground for the philosophies.

**4.15: In the light of wisdom, our ancestors, who sought deliverance, performed their acts. Act you also, as did our fathers of old.**

This is Upanisadic Krishna goading Arjuna to seek deliverance through actions guided by wisdom (not by ritualism) as was practiced by the original Vedic seers, who were not motivated by greed and selfishness in their performance of Yajnas.

**4.16: What is action and what is inaction? It is a question which has bewildered the wise. But I will declare unto you the philosophy of action, and knowing it, you will be free from evil.**

**4.17: It is necessary to consider what is right action, what is wrong action, and what is inaction, for mysterious is the law of action.**

It is designed to elaborate upon the Law of Karma, by adding complexity that would not be available to the ordinary Vedic Brahmin.

**4.18: He who can see inaction in action, and action in inaction, is the wisest among men. He is a sage, even though he still acts.**

**4.19: The wise call him a sage, for whatever he undertakes is free from the motive of desire, and his deeds are purified by the fire of Wisdom.**

This one explains the concept further - desirelessness in the light of wisdom is the key to solving the mystery of action/inaction/non-action. The Buddhist concept too was that action was qualified by its reaction. Inaction too had reaction. Non-action, that horribly vague sounding notion, was one that had no reaction. Without going too much into Upanisadic philosophy, let us understand that it's essential purpose was to bewilder the Vedic Brahmins, establish a mysterious new philosophy that they could butt their heads against, while introducing an equality among men that Buddhism catered to.

**4.20: Having surrendered all claim to the results of his actions, always contented and independent, in reality he does nothing, even though he is apparently acting.**

**4.21: Expecting nothing, his mind and personality controlled, without greed, doing bodily actions only; though he acts, yet he remains untainted.**

**4.22: Content with what comes to him without effort of his own, mounting above the pairs of opposites, free from envy, his mind balanced both in success and failure; though he acts, yet the consequences do not bind him.**

**4.23: He who is without attachment, free, his mind centered in wisdom, his actions, being done as a sacrifice, leave no trace behind.**

**4.24: For him, the sacrifice itself is the Spirit; the Spirit and the oblation are one; it is the Spirit Itself which is sacrificed in Its own fire, and the man even in action is united with God, since while performing his act, his mind never ceases to be fixed on Him.**

Now they usurped the Yajna Sacrifice that was the basis of livelihood and greed for the Vedic Brahmins. The Sacrifice now became an esoteric adventure - pouring the lower self into the Higher Self, the meditative Yoga took over the messy Yajna.

**4.25: Some sages sacrifice to the Demigods; others offer themselves on the altar of the Eternal.**

And yet, not being too oppositional, the Upanisadists recognized the Yajnas within the “broader” category of Sacrifice and elaborated further the different kinds of sacrifice:

**4.26: Some sacrifice their physical senses in the fire of self-control; others offer up their contact with external objects in the sacrificial fire of their senses.**

**4.27: Others again sacrifice their activities and their vitality in the Spiritual fire of self- abnegation, kindled by wisdom.**

**4.28: And yet others offer as their sacrifice wealth, austerities and meditation. Monks wedded to their vows renounce their scriptural learning and even their spiritual powers.**

**4.29: There are some who practice control of the Vital Energy and govern the subtle forces of Prana and Apana, thereby sacrificing their Prana unto Apana, or their Apana unto Prana.**

**4.30: Others, controlling their diet, sacrifice their worldly life to the spiritual fire. All understand the principal of sacrifice, and by its means their sins are washed away.**

**4.31: Tasting the nectar of immortality, as the reward of sacrifice, they reach the Eternal. This world is not for those who refuse to sacrifice; much less the other world.**

**4.32: In this way other sacrifices too may be undergone for the Spirit's sake. Know you that they all depend on action. Knowing this, you will be free.**

**4.33: The sacrifice of wisdom is superior to any material sacrifice, for, O Arjuna, the climax of action is always Realization of Wisdom.**

Having established the superiority of Yoga over the traditional Yajnas, they declared that the end result of it all was Wisdom.

**4.34: This will you learn by prostrating Yourself at the Master's feet, by questioning Him and by serving Him. The wise who have realized the Truth will teach you wisdom.**

Now comes the need for having a Guru, and all the attendant trials one goes through. The idea was to establish an authority superior to the Vedic Brahmins, who could teach the new Yoga philosophy to the masses.

**4.35: Having known That, you will never again be confounded; and, O Arjuna, by the power of that wisdom, you will see all these people as if they were your own Self, and therefore as Me.**

In the context of the original distress of Arjuna it has no meaning whatsoever, for Arjuna already sees the armies in front of him “as they were his own”. The Bhagvatas inserted this verse; it breaks the continuity between 4.34 and 4.36.

**4.36: Be you the greatest of sinners, yet you will cross over all sin by the ferryboat of wisdom.**

Only when one truly realizes that all beings are united in their essence by the Brahman, one can atone for one's sins with all honesty.

**4.37: As the kindled fire consumes the fuel, so, O Arjuna, in the flame of wisdom the embers of action are burnt to ashes.**

**4.38: There is nothing in the world so purifying as wisdom; and he who is a perfect saint finds that at last in his own Self.**

**4.39: He who is full of faith attains wisdom, and he too who can control his senses, having attained that wisdom, he shall before long attain Supreme Peace.**

**4.40: But the ignorant man, and he who has no faith, and the sceptic are lost. Neither in this world nor elsewhere is there any happiness in store for him who always doubts.**

This is for those recalcitrant Brahmins who would not dare to change to the new philosophy.

**4.41: But the man who has renounced his action for Yoga, who has cleft his doubt in twain by the sword of wisdom, who remains always enthroned in his Self, is not bound by his acts.**

**4.42: Therefore, cleaving asunder with the sword of wisdom the doubts of the heart, which your own ignorance has engendered, follow the Path of Wisdom and arise!”**



# THE PATH OF ACTION

**3.1: “Arjuna questioned: My Lord! If Wisdom is above action, why do you advise me to engage in this terrible fight?**

See how Chapters 3 and 4 were interchanged?

We're finally on track!

**3.2: Your language perplexes me and confuses my reason. Therefore please tell me the only way by which I may, without doubt, secure my spiritual welfare.**

**3.3:Guru Krishna replied: In this world, as I have said, there is a twofold path, O Sinless One! There is the Path of Wisdom for those who meditate, and the Path of Action for those who work.**

**3.4: No man can attain freedom from activity by refraining from action; nor can he reach perfection by merely refusing to act.**

*To continue jump to Verse 3.6*



*Continuing from 3.5, Krishna introduces the Gunas*

**3.5: Krishna said: No one can even for a moment remain really inactive, for the Qualities of Nature will compel him to act whether he will or no.**

So now that Arjuna has declared his refusal to act, Brahminical Krishna counters his inertia by introducing the concept of the Three Qualities of Nature: Guna is translated as Quality but is also the name for Indian hemp that was used as a bowstring!

*To continue jump to Verse 3.27*



*Meanwhile, continuing from 3.4, Guru Krishna continues to speak about inaction*

**3.6: He who remains motionless, refusing to act, but all the while brooding over sensuous object, that deluded soul is simply a hypocrite.**

**3.7: But, O Arjuna! All honour to him whose mind controls his senses, for he is thereby beginning to practise Karma-Yoga, the Path of Right Action, keeping himself always unattached.**

**3.8: Do your duty as prescribed, for action for duty's sake is superior to inaction. Even the maintenance of the body would be impossible if man remained inactive.**

**3.9: In this world people are fettered by action, unless it is performed as a sacrifice. Therefore, O Arjuna, let your acts be done without attachment, as sacrifice only.**

**3.10: In the beginning, when God created all beings by the sacrifice of Himself, He said unto them: `Through sacrifice you can procreate, and it shall satisfy all your desires.**



**3.11: Worship the Powers of Nature (demigods) thereby, and let them nourish you in return; thus supporting each other, you shall attain your highest welfare.**

**3.12: For, fed, on sacrifice, nature will give you all the enjoyment you can desire. But he who enjoys what she gives without returning is, indeed, a robber.'**

**3.13: The sages who enjoy the food that remains after the sacrifice is made are freed from all sin; but the selfish who spread their feast only for themselves feed on sin only.**

**3.14: All creatures are the product of food, food is the product of rain, rain comes by sacrifice, and sacrifice is the noblest form of action.**

**3.15: All action originates in the Supreme Spirit, which is Imperishable, and in sacrificial action the all-pervading Spirit is consciously present.**

**3.16: Thus he who does not help the revolving wheel of sacrifice, but instead leads a sinful life, rejoicing in the gratification of his senses, O Arjuna, he breathes in vain.**

Here the separated Yajna from the greed exhibited by the Vedic Brahmins

**3.17: On the other hand, the soul who meditates on the Self is content to serve the Self and rests satisfied within the Self; there remains nothing more for him to accomplish.**

**3.18: He has nothing to gain by the performance or non-performance of action. His welfare depends not on any contribution that an earthly creature can make.**

**3.19: Therefore do your duty perfectly, without care for the results, for he who does his duty disinterestedly attains the Supreme.**

**3.20: King Janaka and others attained perfection through action alone. Even for the sake of enlightening the world, it is your duty to act;**

**3.21: For whatever a great man does, others imitate. People conform to the standard which he has set.**

**3.22: There is nothing in this universe, O Arjuna, that I am compelled to do, nor anything for Me to attain; yet I am persistently active.**

**3.23: For were I not to act without ceasing, O prince, people would be glad to do likewise.**

**3.24: And if I were to refrain from action, the human race would be ruined; I should lead the world to chaos, and destruction would follow.**

**3.25: As the ignorant act, because of their fondness for action, so should the wise act without such attachment, fixing their eyes, O Arjuna, only on the welfare of the world.**

*To continue jump to Verse 3.28*

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**3.26: But a wise man should not perturb the minds of the ignorant, who are attached to action; let him perform his own actions in the right spirit, with concentration on Me, thus inspiring all to do the same.**

*Krishna continues on the theme of the Gunas*

**3.27: Action is the product of the Qualities inherent in Nature. Misled by personal egotism, one says: 'I am the doer.'**

This introduced the concept of learned helplessness and defeatism that became the hallmark of the Indian people in the centuries to come. If all action was the product of the interaction of the three qualities (Purity, Passion, and Ignorance) alone, then one had no need to initiate anything. We were all puppets on three strings.

**3.28: But he, O Mighty One, who understands correctly the relation of the Qualities to action, is not attached to the act for he perceives that it is merely the action and reaction of the Qualities among themselves.**

**3.29: Those who do not understand the Qualities are interested in the act. Still, the wise man who knows the truth should not disturb the mind of him who does not.**

*Go to 3.33*

**3.30: Therefore, surrendering your actions unto Me, your thoughts concentrated on the Absolute, free from selfishness and without anticipation of reward, with mind devoid of excitement, begin you to fight.**

**3.31: Those who always act in accordance with My precepts, firm in faith and without cavilling, they too are freed from the bondage of action.**

**3.32: But they who ridicule My word and do not keep it, are ignorant, devoid of wisdom and blind. They seek but their own destruction.**

**3.33: Even the wise man acts in conformity with his own nature; indeed, all creatures act according to their natures. What can repression do?**

The 'wise man' refers to one who is in control of himself, as opposed to Arjuna, who has declared that he has lost his bearings.

*Skip to 3.35*

**3.34: The love and hate which are aroused by the objects of sense arise from Nature; do not yield to them. They only obstruct the path.**

**3.35: It is better to do your own duty, however lacking in merit, than to do that of another, even though efficiently. It is better to die doing one's own duty, for to do the duty of another is fraught with danger.**

So, now we are back to duty, that Krishna referred to in 2.31, 2,33. Only, now we are told that the Gunas of Nature determine it within us, and we are helpless in the face of them.

*Go to 14.5*

**3.36: Arjuna asked: My Lord! Tell me, what is it that drives a man to sin, even against his will and as if by compulsion?**

**3.37: Krishna: It is desire, it is aversion, born of passion. Desire consumes and corrupts everything. It is man's greatest enemy.**

**3.38: As fire is shrouded in smoke, a mirror by dust and a child by the womb, so is the universe enveloped in desire.**

**3.39: It is the wise man's constant enemy; it tarnishes the face of wisdom. It is as insatiable as a flame of fire.**

**3.40: It works through the senses, the mind and the reason; and with their help destroys wisdom and confounds the soul.**

**3.41: Therefore, O Arjuna, first control your senses and then slay desire, for it is full of sin, and is the destroyer of knowledge and of wisdom.**

**3.42: It is said that the senses are powerful. But beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is the intellect, and beyond and greater than intellect is He.**

**3.43: Thus, O Mighty-in-Arms, knowing Him to be beyond the intellect and, by His help, subduing your personal egotism, kill thine enemy, Desire, extremely difficult though it be.”**

# THE RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

5.1: “Arjuna said: My Lord! At one moment you praise renunciation of action; at another, right action. Tell me truly, I pray, which of these is the more conducive to my highest welfare?”

5.2: Lord Shri Krishna replied: Renunciation of action and the path of right action both lead to the highest; of the two, right action is the better.

5.3: He is a true ascetic who never desires or dislikes, who is uninfluenced by the opposites and is easily freed from bondage.

5.4: Only the unenlightened speak of wisdom and right action as separate, not the wise. If any man knows one, he enjoys the fruit of both.

5.5: The level which is reached by wisdom is attained through right action as well. He who perceives that the two are one, knows the truth.

5.6: Without concentration, O Mighty Man, renunciation is difficult. But the sage who is always meditating on the Divine, before long shall attain the Absolute.

5.7: He who is spiritual, who is pure, who has overcome his senses and his personal self, who has realised his highest Self as the Self of all, such a one, even though he acts, is not bound by his acts.

5.8: Though the saint sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, moves, sleeps and breathes, yet he knows the Truth, and he knows that it is not he who acts.

5.9: Though he talks, though he gives and receives, though he opens his eyes and shuts them, he still knows that his senses are merely disporting themselves among the objects of perception.

5.10: He who dedicates his actions to the Spirit, without any personal attachment to them, he is no more tainted by sin than the water lily is wetted by water.

5.11: The sage performs his action dispassionately, using his body, mind and intellect, and even his senses, always as a means of purification.

5.12: Having abandoned the fruit of action, he wins eternal peace. Others unacquainted with spirituality, led by desire and clinging to the benefit which they think will follow their actions, become entangled in them.

5.13: Mentally renouncing all actions, the self-controlled soul enjoys bliss in this body, the city of the nine gates, neither doing anything himself nor causing anything to be done.

5.14: The Lord of this universe has not ordained activity, or any incentive thereto, or any relation between an act and its consequences. All this is the work of Nature.

5.15: The Lord does not accept responsibility for any man's sin or merit. Men are deluded because in them wisdom is submerged in ignorance.

5.16: Surely wisdom is like the sun, revealing the supreme truth to those whose ignorance is dispelled by the wisdom of the Self.

5.17: Meditating on the Divine, having faith in the Divine, concentrating on the Divine and losing themselves in the Divine, their sins dissolved in wisdom, they go whence there is no return.

5.18: Sages look equally upon all, whether he be a minister of learning and humility, or an infidel outcaste, or whether it be a cow, an elephant or a dog.

5.19: Even in this world they conquer their earth-life whose minds, fixed on the Supreme, remain always balanced; for the Supreme has neither blemish nor bias.

5.20: He who knows and lives in the Absolute remains unmoved and unperturbed; he is not elated by pleasure or depressed by pain.

5.21: He finds happiness in his own Self, and enjoys eternal bliss, whose heart does not yearn for the contacts of earth and whose Self is one with the Everlasting.

5.22: The joys that spring from external associations bring pain; they have their beginning and their endings. The wise man does not rejoice in them.

5.23: He who, before he leaves his body, learns to surmount the promptings of desire and anger is a saint and is happy.

5.24: He who is happy within his Self and has found Its peace, and in whom the inner light shines, that sage attains Eternal Bliss and becomes the Spirit Itself.

5.25: Sages whose sins have been washed away, whose sense of separateness has vanished, who have subdued themselves, and seek only the welfare of all, come to the Eternal Spirit.

5.26: Saints who know their Selves, who control their minds, and feel neither desire nor anger, find Eternal Bliss everywhere.

5.27: Excluding external objects, his gaze fixed between the eyebrows, the inward and outward breathings passing equally through his nostrils;

5.28: Governing sense, mind and intellect, intent on liberation, free from desire, fear and anger, the sage is forever free.

## SELF-CONTROL

6.1: “Guru Krishna said: He who acts because it is his duty, not thinking of the consequences, is really spiritual and a true ascetic; and not he who merely observes rituals or who shuns all action.

6.2: O Arjuna! Renunciation is in fact what is called Right Action. No one can become spiritual who has not renounced all desire.

6.3: For the sage who seeks the heights of spiritual meditation, practice is the only method, and when he has attained them, he must maintain himself there by continual self-control.

6.4: When a man renounces even the thought of initiating action, when he is not interested in sense objects or any results which may flow from his acts, then in truth he understands spirituality.

6.5: Let him seek liberation by the help of his Highest Self, and let him never disgrace his own Self. For that Self is his only friend; yet it may also be his enemy.

6.6: To him who has conquered his lower nature by Its help, the Self is a friend, but to him who has not done so, It is an enemy.

6.7: The Self of him who is self-controlled, and has attained peace is equally unmoved by heat or cold, pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour.

6.8: He who desires nothing but wisdom and spiritual insight, who has conquered his senses and who looks with the same eye upon a lump of earth, a stone or fine gold, is a real saint.

6.9: He looks impartially on all – lover, friend or foe; indifferent or hostile; alien or relative; virtuous or sinful.

6.10: Let the student of spirituality try unceasingly to concentrate his mind; Let him live in seclusion, absolutely alone, with mind and personality controlled, free from desire and without possessions.

6.11: Having chosen a holy place, let him sit in a firm posture on a seat, neither too high nor too low, and covered with a grass mat, a deer skin and a cloth.

6.12: Seated thus, his mind concentrated, its functions controlled and his senses governed, let him practise meditation for the purification of his lower nature.

6.13: Let him hold body, head and neck erect, motionless and steady; let him look fixedly at the tip of his nose, turning neither to the right nor to the left.

6.14: With peace in his heart and nor fear, observing the vow of celibacy, with mind controlled and fixed on Me, let the student lose himself in contemplation of Me.

6.15: Thus keeping his mind always in communion with Me, and with his thoughts subdued, he shall attain that Peace which is mine and which will lead him to liberation at last.

6.16: Meditation is not for him who eats too much, not for him who eats not at all; not for him who is overmuch addicted to sleep, not for him who is always awake.

6.17: But for him who regulates his food and recreation, who is balanced in action, in sleep and in waking, it shall dispel all unhappiness.

6.18: When the mind, completely controlled, is centered in the Self, and free from all earthly desires, then is the man truly spiritual.

6.19: The wise man who has conquered his mind and is absorbed in the Self is as a lamp which does not flicker, since it stands sheltered from every wind.

6.20: There, where the whole nature is seen in the light of the Self, where the man abides within his Self and is satisfied there, its functions restrained by its union with the Divine, the mind finds rest.

6.21: When he enjoys the Bliss which passes sense, and which only the Pure Intellect can grasp, when he comes to rest within his own highest Self, never again will he stray from reality.

6.22: Finding That, he will realise that there is no possession so precious. And when once established here, no calamity can disturb him.

6.23: This inner severance from the affliction of misery is spirituality. It should be practised with determination and with a heart which refuses to be depressed.

6.24: Renouncing every desire which imagination can conceive, controlling the senses at every point by the power of mind;

6.25: Little by little, by the help of his reason controlled by fortitude, let him attain peace; and, fixing his mind on the Self, let him not think of any other thing.

6.26: When the volatile and wavering mind would wander, let him restrain it and bring it again to its allegiance to the Self.

6.27: Supreme Bliss is the lot of the sage, whose mind attains Peace, whose passions subside, who is without sin, and who becomes one with the Absolute.

6.28: Thus, free from sin, abiding always in the Eternal, the saint enjoys without effort the Bliss which flows from realisation of the Infinite.

6.29: He who experiences the unity of life sees his own Self in all beings, and all beings in his own Self, and looks on everything with an impartial eye;

6.30: He who sees Me in everything and everything in Me, him shall I never forsake, nor shall he lose Me.

6.31: The sage who realises the unity of life and who worships Me in all beings, lives in Me, whatever may be his lot.

6.32: O Arjuna! He is the perfect saint who, taught by the likeness within himself, sees the same Self everywhere, whether the outer form be pleasurable or painful.

6.33: Arjuna said: I do not see how I can attain this state of equanimity which you have revealed, owing to the restlessness of my mind.

6.34: My Lord! Verily, the mind is fickle and turbulent as the wind, obstinate and strong, extremely difficult to control.

6.35: Lord Shri Krishna replied: Doubtless, O Mighty One, the mind is fickle and exceedingly difficult to restrain, but, O Son of Kunti, with practice and renunciation it can be done.

6.36: It is not possible to attain Self-Realisation if a man does not know how to control himself; but for him who, striving by proper means, learns such control, it is possible.

6.37: Arjuna asked: He who fails to control himself, whose mind falls from spiritual contemplation, who attains not perfection but retains his faith, what of him, my Lord?

6.38: Having failed in both, my Lord, is he without hope, like a riven cloud having no support, lost on the spiritual road?

6.39: My Lord! you are worthy to solve this doubt once and for all; save Yourself there is no one competent to do so.

6.40: Guru Krishna replied: There is no destruction for him, either in this world or in the next, dear fellow! No evil fate awaits him who treads the path of righteousness.

6.41: Having reached the worlds where the righteous dwell, and having remained there for many years, he who has slipped from the path of spirituality will be born again in the family of the pure, benevolent and prosperous.

6.42: Or, he may be born in the family of the wise sages, though a birth like this is, indeed, very difficult to obtain.

6.43: Then the experience acquired in his former life will revive, and with its help he will strive for perfection more eagerly than before.

6.44: Unconsciously he will return to the practices of his old life; so that he who tries to realise spiritual consciousness is certainly superior to one who only talks of it.

6.45: Then after many lives, the student of spirituality, who earnestly strives, and whose sins are absolved, attains perfection and reaches the Supreme.

6.46: The wise man is superior to the ascetic and to the scholar and to the man of action; therefore be you a wise man, O Arjuna!

6.47: I look upon him as the best of mystics who, full of faith, worships Me and abides in Me.”

# KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE

7.1: “Lord Shri Krishna said: Listen, O Arjuna! And I will tell you how you shall know Me in my Full perfection, practising meditation with your mind devoted to Me, and having Me for your refuge.

7.2: I will reveal to this knowledge unto you, and how it may be realised; which, once accomplished, there remains nothing else worth having in this life.

7.3: Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection, and even amongst those who gain occult powers, perchance but one knows me in truth.

7.4: Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and personality; this is the eightfold division of My Manifested Nature.

7.5: This is My inferior Nature; but distinct from this, O Valiant One, know you that my Superior Nature is the very Life which sustains the universe.

7.8: It is the womb of all being; for I am He by Whom the worlds were created and shall be dissolved.

7.9: O Arjuna! There is nothing higher than Me; all is strung upon Me as rows of pearls upon a thread.

7.10: O Arjuna! I am the Fluidity in water, the Light in the sun and in the moon. I am the mystic syllable Om in the Vedic scriptures, the Sound in ether, the Virility in man.

7.11: I am the Fragrance of earth, the Brilliance of fire. I am the Life Force in all beings, and I am the Austerity of the ascetics.

7.12: Know, O Arjuna, that I am the eternal Seed of being; I am the Intelligence of the intelligent, the Splendour of the resplendent.

7.13: I am the Strength of the strong, of them who are free from attachment and desire; and, O Arjuna, I am the Desire for righteousness.

7.14: Whatever be the nature of their life, whether it be pure or passionate or ignorant, they are all derived from Me. They are in Me, but I am not in them.

7.15: The inhabitants of the world, misled by those natures which the Qualities have engendered, know not that I am higher than them all, and that I do not change.

7.16: Verily, this Divine Illusion of Phenomenon manifesting itself in the Qualities is difficult to surmount. Only they who devote themselves to Me and to Me alone can accomplish it.

7.17: The sinner, the ignorant, the vile, deprived of spiritual perception by the glamour of Illusion, and he who pursues a godless life – none of them shall find Me.

7.18: O Arjuna! The righteous who worship Me are grouped by stages: first, they who suffer, next they who desire knowledge, then they who thirst after truth, and lastly they who attain wisdom.

7.19: Of all of these, he who has gained wisdom, who meditates on Me without ceasing, devoting himself only to Me, he is the best; for by the wise man I am exceedingly beloved and the wise man, too, is beloved by Me.

7.20: Noble-minded are they all, but the wise man I hold as my own Self; for he, remaining always at peace with Me, makes me his final goal.



7.21: After many lives, at last the wise man realises Me as I am. A man so enlightened that he sees Me everywhere is very difficult to find.

7.22: They in whom wisdom is obscured by one desire or the other, worship the lesser Powers, practising many rites which vary according to their temperaments.

7.23: But whatever the form of worship, if the devotee have faith, then upon his faith in that worship do I set My own seal.

7.24: If he worships one form alone with real faith, then shall his desires be fulfilled through that only; for thus have I ordained.

7.25: The fruit that comes to men of limited insight is, after all, finite. They who worship the Lower Powers attain them; but those who worship Me come unto Me alone.

7.26: The ignorant think of Me, who am the Unmanifested Spirit, as if I were really in human form. They do not understand that My Superior Nature is changeless and most excellent.

7.27: I am not visible to all, for I am enveloped by the illusion of Phenomenon. This deluded world does not know Me as the Unborn and the Imperishable.

7.28: I know, O Arjuna, all beings in the past, the present and the future; but they do not know Me.

7.29: O brave Arjuna! Man lives in a fairy world, deceived by the glamour of opposite sensations, infatuated by desire and aversion.

7.30: But those who act righteously, in whom sin has been destroyed, who are free from the infatuation of the conflicting emotions, they worship Me with firm resolution.

7.31: Those who make Me their refuge, who strive for liberation from decay and Death, they realise the Supreme Spirit, which is their own real Self, and in which all action finds its consummation.

7.32: Those who see Me in the life of the world, in the universal sacrifice, and as pure Divinity, keeping their minds steady, they live in Me, even in the crucial hour of death.”

# DEVOTION TO ONE SUPREME

8.1: “Arjuna asked: O Lord of Lords! What is that which men call the Supreme Spirit, what is man’s Spiritual Nature, and what is the Law? What is Matter and what is Divinity?”

8.2: Who is it who rules the spirit sacrifice in many; and at the time of death how may those who have learned self-control come to the knowledge of you?

8.3: The Lord Shri Krishna replied: The Supreme Spirit is the Highest Imperishable Self, and Its Nature is spiritual consciousness. The worlds have been created and are supported by an emanation from the Spirit which is called the Law.

8.4: Matter consists of the forms that perish; Divinity is the Supreme Self; and He who inspires the spirit of sacrifice in man, O noblest of your race, is I Myself, Who now stand in human form before you.

8.5: Whosoever at the time of death thinks only of Me, and thinking thus leaves the body and goes forth, assuredly he will know Me.

8.6: On whatever sphere of being the mind of a man may be intent at the time of death, thither he will go.

8.7: Therefore meditate always on Me, and fight; if your mind and your reason be fixed on Me, to Me will you surely come.

8.8: He whose mind does not wander, and who is engaged in constant meditation, attains the Supreme Spirit.

8.9: Whoso meditates on the Omniscient, the Ancient, more minute than the atom, yet the Ruler and Upholder of all, Unimaginable, Brilliant like the Sun, Beyond the reach of darkness;

8.10: He who leaves the body with mind unmoved and filled with devotion, by the power of his meditation gathering between his eyebrows his whole vital energy, attains the Supreme.

8.11: Now I will speak briefly of the imperishable goal, proclaimed by those versed in the scriptures, which the mystic attains when free from passion, and for which he is content to undergo the vow of continence.

8.12: Closing the gates of the body, drawing the forces of his mind into the heart and by the power of meditation concentrating his vital energy in the brain;

8.13: Repeating Om, the Symbol of Eternity, holding Me always in remembrance, he who thus leaves his body and goes forth reaches the Spirit Supreme.

8.14: To him who thinks constantly of Me, and of nothing else, to such an ever-faithful devotee, O Arjuna, am I ever accessible.

8.15: Coming thus unto Me, these great souls go no more to the misery and death of earthly life, for they have gained perfection.

8.16: The worlds, with the whole realm of creation, come and go; but, O Arjuna, who comes to Me, for him there is no rebirth.

8.17: Those who understand the cosmic day and cosmic night know that one day of creation is a thousand cycles, and that the night is of equal length.

8.18: At the dawning of that day all objects in manifestation stream forth from the Unmanifest, and when evening falls they are dissolved into It again.

8.19: The same multitude of beings, which have lived on earth so often, all are dissolved as the night of the universe approaches, to issue forth anew when morning breaks. Thus is it ordained.

8.20: In truth, therefore, there is the Eternal Unmanifest, which is beyond and above the Unmanifest Spirit of Creation, which is never destroyed when all these being perish.

8.21: The wise say that the Unmanifest and Indestructible is the highest goal of all; when once That is reached, there is no return. That is My Supreme Abode.

8.22: O Arjuna! That Highest State of being, in Whom all beings abide, and Who pervades the entire universe, is reached only by wholehearted devotion.

8.23: Now I will tell you, O Arjuna, of the times at which, if the mystics go forth, they do not return, and at which they go forth only to return.

8.24: If knowing the Supreme Spirit the sage goes forth with fire and light, in the daytime, in the fortnight of the waxing moon and in the six months before the Northern summer solstice, he will attain the Supreme.

8.25: But if he departs in gloom, at night, during the fortnight of the waning moon and in the six months before the Southern solstice, then he reaches but lunar light and he will be born again.

8.26: These bright and dark paths out of the world have always existed. Whoso takes the former, returns not; he who chooses the latter, returns.\*

8.27: O Arjuna! The saint knowing these paths is not confused. Therefore meditate perpetually.

8.29: The sage who knows this passes beyond all merit that comes from the study of the scriptures, from sacrifice, from austerities and charity, and reaches the Supreme Primeval Abode."

# SUPREME SCIENCE & MYSTERY

9.1: “Lord Shri Krishna said: I will now reveal to you, since you doubt not, that profound mysticism, which when followed by experience, shall liberate you from sin.

9.2: This is the Premier Science, the Sovereign Secret, the Purest and Best; intuitional, righteous; and to him who practises it, pleasant beyond measure.

9.3: They who have no faith in this teaching cannot find Me, but remain lost in the purlieus of this perishable world.

9.4: The whole world is pervaded by Me, yet My form is not seen. All living things have their being in Me, yet I am not limited by them.

9.5: Nevertheless, they do not consciously abide in Me. Such is My Divine Sovereignty that though I, the Supreme Self, am the cause and upholder of all, yet I remain outside.

9.6: As the mighty wind, though moving everywhere, has no resting place but space, so have all these beings no home but Me.

9.7: All beings, O Arjuna, return at the close of every cosmic cycle into the realm of Nature, which is a part of Me, and at the beginning of the next I send them forth again.

9.8: With the help of Nature, again and again I pour forth the whole multitude of beings, whether they will or no, for they are ruled by My Will.

9.9: But these acts of mine do not bind Me. I remain outside and unattached.

9.10: Under my guidance, Nature produces all things movable and immovable. Thus it is, O Arjuna, that this universe revolves.

9.11: Fools disregard Me, seeing Me clad in human form. They know not that in My higher nature I am the Lord-God of all.

9.12: Their hopes are vain, their actions worthless, their knowledge futile; they are without sense, deceitful, barbarous and godless.

9.13: But the Great Souls, O Arjuna! Filled with My Divine Spirit, they worship Me, they fix their minds on Me and on Me alone, for they know that I am the imperishable Source of being.

9.14: Always extolling Me, strenuous, firm in their vows, prostrating themselves before Me, they worship Me continually with concentrated devotion.

9.15: Others worship Me with full consciousness as the One, the Manifold, the Omnipresent, the Universal.

9.16: I am the Oblation, the Sacrifice and the Worship; I am the Fuel and the Chant, I am the Butter offered to the fire, I am the Fire itself, and I am the Act of offering.

9.17: I am the Father of the universe and its Mother; I am its Nourisher and its Grandfather; I am the Knowable and the Pure; I am Om; and I am the Sacred Scriptures.

9.18: I am the Goal, the Sustainer, the Lord, the Witness, the Home, the Shelter, the Lover and the Origin; I am Life and Death; I am the Fountain and the Seed Imperishable.

9.19: I am the Heat of the Sun, I release and hold back the Rains. I am Death and Immortality; I am Being and Not-Being.

9.20: Those who are versed in the scriptures, who drink the mystic Soma-juice and are purified from sin, but who while worshipping Me with sacrifices pray that I will lead them to heaven; they reach the celestial world where lives Indra, the Controller of the Powers of Nature, and they enjoy the feasts of Paradise.

9.21: Yet although they enjoy the spacious glories of Paradise, nevertheless, when their merit is exhausted, they are born again into this world of mortals. They have followed the letter of the scriptures, yet because they have sought but to fulfill their own desires, they must depart and return again and again.

9.22: But if a man will meditate on Me and Me alone, and will worship Me always and everywhere, I will take upon Myself the fulfillment of his aspiration, and I will safeguard whatsoever he shall attain.

9.23: Even those who worship the lesser Powers, if they do so with faith, they thereby worship Me, though not in the right way.

9.24: I am the willing recipient of sacrifice, and I am its true Lord. But these do not know me in truth, and so they sink back.

9.25: The votaries of the lesser Powers go to them; the devotees of spirits go to them; they who worship the Powers of Darkness, to such Powers shall they go; and so, too, those who worship Me shall come to Me.

9.26: Whatever a man offers to Me, whether it be a leaf, or a flower, of fruit, or water, I accept it, for it is offered with devotion and purity of mind.

9.27: Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you do sacrifice and give, whatever austerities you practise, do all as an offering to Me.

9.28: So shall your action be attended by no result, either good or bad; but through the spirit of renunciation you will come to Me and be free.

9.29: I am the same to all beings. I favour none, and I hate none. But those who worship Me devotedly, they live in Me, and I in them.

9.30: Even the most sinful, if he worship Me with his whole heart, will be considered righteous, for he is treading the right path.

9.31: He shall attain spirituality ere long, and Eternal Peace shall be his. O Arjuna! Believe me, My devotee is never lost.

9.32: For even the children of sinful parents, and those miscalled the weaker sex, and merchants, and labourers, if only they will make Me their refuge, they shall attain the Highest.

9.33: What need then to mention the holy Ministers of God, the devotees and the saintly rulers? Do you, therefore, born in this changing and miserable world, too worship Me.

9.34: Fix your mind on Me, devote Yourself to Me, sacrifice for Me, surrender to Me, make Me the object of your aspirations, and you will assuredly become one with Me, Who am thine own Self."

# THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS

10.1: “Lord Shri Krishna said: Now, O Prince! Listen to My supreme advice, which I give you for the sake of your welfare, for you art My beloved.

10.2: Neither the professors of divinity nor the great ascetics know My origin, for I am the source of them all.

10.3: He who knows Me as the unborn, without beginning, the Lord of the universe, he, stripped of his delusion, becomes free from all conceivable sin.

10.4: Intelligence, wisdom, non-illusion, forgiveness, truth, self-control, calmness, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear and fearlessness;

10.5: Harmlessness, equanimity, contentment, austerity, beneficence, fame and failure, all these, the characteristics of beings, spring from Me only.

10.6: The seven Great Seers<sup>1</sup>, the Progenitors of mankind, the Ancient Four<sup>2</sup>, and the Lawgivers were born of My Will and come forth direct from Me. The race of mankind has sprung from them.

10.7: He who rightly understands My manifested glory and My Creative Power, beyond doubt attains perfect peace.

10.8: I am the source of all; from Me everything flows. Therefore the wise worship Me with unchanging devotion.

10.9: With minds concentrated on Me, with lives absorbed in Me, and enlightening each other, they ever feel content and happy.

10.10: To those who are always devout and who worship Me with love, I give the power of discrimination, which leads them to Me.

10.11: By My grace, I live in their hearts; and I dispel the darkness of ignorance by the shining light of wisdom.

10.12: Arjuna said: you are the Supreme Spirit, the Eternal Home, the Holiest of the Holy, the Eternal Divine Self, the Primal God, the Unborn and the Omnipresent.

10.13: So have said the seers and the divine sage Narada; as well as Asita, Devala and Vyasa; and you Yourself also say it.

10.14: I believe in what you have said, my Lord! For neither the godly nor the godless comprehend your manifestation.

10.15: you alone know Yourself, by the power of your Self; you the Supreme Spirit, the Source and Master of all being, the Lord of Lords, the Ruler of the Universe.

10.16: Please tell me all about your glorious manifestations, by means of which you pervade the world.

10.17: O Master! How shall I, by constant meditation, know you? My Lord! What are your various manifestations through which I am to mediate on you?

10.18: Tell me again, I pray, about the fullness of your power and your glory; for I feel that I am never satisfied when I listen to your immortal words.

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<sup>1</sup> Mareechi, Atri, Angira, Pulah, Kratu, Pulastya, Vahishta.

<sup>2</sup> The Masters: Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatan, Sanatkumar.

10.19: Lord Shri Krishna replied: So be it, My beloved friend! I will unfold to you some of the chief aspects of My glory. Of its full extent there is no end.

10.20: O Arjuna! I am the Self, seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning and the life, and I am the end of them all.

10.21: Of all the creative Powers I am the Creator, of luminaries the Sun; the Whirlwind among the winds, and the Moon among planets.

10.22: Of the Vedas I am the Hymns, I am the Electric Force in the Powers of Nature; of the senses I am the Mind; and I am the Intelligence in all that lives.

10.23: Among Forces of Vitality I am the life, I am Mammon to the heathen and the godless; I am the Energy in fire, earth, wind, sky, heaven, sun, moon and planets; and among mountains I am the Mount Meru.

10.24: Among the priests, know, O Arjuna, that I am the Apostle Brihaspati; of generals I am Skanda, the Commander-in-Chief, and of waters I am the Ocean.

10.25: Of the great seers I am Bhrigu, of words I am Om, of offerings I am the silent prayer, among things immovable I am the Himalayas.

10.26: Of trees I am the sacred Fig-tree, of the Divine Seers Narada, of the heavenly singers I am Chitraratha, their Leader, and of sages I am Kapila.

10.27: Know that among horses I am Pegasus, the heaven-born; among the lordly elephants I am the White one, and I am the Ruler among men.

10.28: I am the Thunderbolt among weapons; of cows I am the Cow of Plenty, I am Passion in those who procreate, and I am the Cobra among serpents.

10.29: I am the King-python among snakes, I am the Aqueous Principle among those that live in water, I am the Father of fathers, and among rulers I am Death.

10.30: And I am the devotee Prahlad among the heathen; of Time I am the Eternal Present; I am the Lion among beasts and the Eagle among birds.

10.31: I am the Wind among purifiers, the King Rama among warriors; I am the Crocodile among the fishes, and I am the Ganges among rivers.

10.32: I am the Beginning, the Middle and the End in creation; among sciences, I am the science of Spirituality; I am the Discussion among disputants.

10.33: Of letters I am A; I am the copulative in compound words; I am Time inexhaustible; and I am the all-pervading Preserver.

10.34: I am all-devouring Death; I am the Origin of all that shall happen; I am Fame, Fortune, Speech, Memory, Intellect, Constancy and Forgiveness.

10.35: Of hymns I am Brihatsama, of metres I am Gayatri, among the months I am Margasheersha (December), and I am the Spring among seasons.

10.36: I am the Gambling of the cheat and the Splendour of the splendid; I am Victory; I am Effort; and I am the Purity of the pure.

10.37: I am Shri Krishna among the Vishnu-clan and Arjuna among the Pandavas; of the saints I am Vyasa, and I am Shukracharya among the sages.

10.38: I am the Sceptre of rulers, the Strategy of the conquerors, the Silence of mystery, the Wisdom of the wise.

10.39: I am the Seed of all being, O Arjuna! No creature moving or unmoving can live without Me.

10.40: O Arjuna! The aspects of My divine life are endless. I have mentioned but a few by way of illustration.

10.41: Whatever is glorious, excellent, beautiful and mighty, be assured that it comes from a fragment of My splendour.

10.42: But what is the use of all these details to you? O Arjuna! I sustain this universe with only small part of Myself.”



# THE COSMIC VISION

11.1: “Arjuna said: My Lord! Your words concerning the Supreme Secret of Self, given for my blessing, have dispelled the illusions which surrounded me.

11.2: O Lord, Whose eyes are like the lotus petal! you have described in detail the origin and the dissolution of being, and Your own Eternal Majesty.

11.3: I believe all as You have declared it. I long now to have a vision of Your Divine Form, O You Most High!

11.4: If You think that it can be made possible for me to see it, show me, O Lord of Lords, Your own Eternal Self.

11.5: Lord Shri Krishna replied: Behold, O Arjuna! My celestial forms, by hundred and Thousands, various in kind, in colour and in shape.

11.6: Behold you the Powers of Nature: fire, earth, wind and sky; the sun, the heavens, the moon, the stars; all forces of vitality and of healing; and the roving winds. See the myriad wonders revealed to none but you.

11.7: Here in Me living as one, O Arjuna, behold the whole universe, movable and immovable, and anything else that you would see!

11.8: Yet since with mortal eyes you cannot see Me, lo! I give you the Divine Sight. See now the glory of My Sovereignty.”

11.9: Sanjaya continued: “Having thus spoken, O King, the Lord Shri Krishna, the Almighty Prince of Wisdom, showed to Arjuna the Supreme Form of the Great God.

11.10: There were countless eyes and mouths, and mystic forms innumerable, with shining ornaments and flaming celestial weapons.

11.11: Crowned with heavenly garlands, clothed in shining garments, anointed with divine unctions, He showed Himself as the Resplendent One, Marvelous, Boundless, Omnipresent.

11.12: Could a Thousand suns blaze forth together it would be but a faint reflection of the radiance of the Lord God.

11.13: In that vision Arjuna saw the universe, with its manifold shapes, all embraced in One, its Supreme Lord.

11.14: Thereupon Arjuna, dumb with awe, his hair on end, his head bowed, his hands clasped in salutation, addressed the Lord thus:

11.15: Arjuna said: O almighty God! I see in You the powers of Nature, the various creatures of the world, the Progenitor on his lotus throne, the Sages and the shining angels.

11.16: I see You, infinite in form, with, as it were, faces, eyes and limbs everywhere; no beginning, no middle, no end; O You Lord of the Universe, Whose Form is universal!

11.17: I see You with the crown, the sceptre and the discus; a blaze of splendour. Scarce can I gaze on You, so radiant are You, glowing like the blazing fire, brilliant as the sun, immeasurable.

11.18: Imperishable are You, the Sole One worthy to be known, the priceless Treasure-house of the universe, the immortal Guardian of the Life Eternal, the Spirit Everlasting.

11.19: Without beginning, without middle and without end, infinite in power, Your arms all- embracing, the sun and moon Your eyes, your face beaming with the fire of sacrifice, flooding the whole universe with light.

11.20: Alone You fill all the quarters of the sky, earth and heaven, and the regions between. O Almighty Lord! Seeing Your marvellous and awe-inspiring Form, the spheres tremble with fear.

11.21: The troops of celestial beings enter into you, some invoking you in fear, with folded palms; the Great Seers and Adepts sing hymns to your Glory, saying `All Hail.'

11.22: The Vital Forces, the Major stars, Fire, Earth, Air, Sky, Sun, Heaven, Moon and Planets; the Angels, the Guardians of the Universe, the divine Healers, the Winds, the Fathers, the Heavenly Singers; and hosts of Mammon-worshippers, demons as well as saints, are amazed.

11.23: Seeing your stupendous Form, O Most Mighty, with its myriad faces, its innumerable eyes and limbs and terrible jaws, I myself and all the worlds are overwhelmed with awe.

11.24: When I see you, touching the Heavens, glowing with colour, with open mouth and wide open fiery eyes, I am terrified. O My Lord! My courage and peace of mind desert me.

11.25: When I see your mouths with their fearful jaws like glowing fires at the dissolution of creation, I lose all sense of place; I find no rest. Be merciful, O Lord in whom this universe abides!

11.26: All these sons of Dhritarashtra, with the hosts of princes, Bhishma, Drona and Karna, as well as the other warrior chiefs belonging to our side;

11.27: I see them all rushing headlong into Your mouths, with terrible tusks, horrible to behold. Some are mangled between your jaws, with their heads crushed to atoms.

11.28: As rivers in flood surge furiously to the ocean, so these heroes, the greatest among men, fling themselves into Your flaming mouths.

11.29: As moths fly impetuously to the flame only to be killed, so these men rush into Your mouths to court their own destruction.

11.30: You seem to swallow up the worlds, to lap them in flame. Your glory fills the universe. Your fierce rays beat down upon it irresistibly.

11.31: Tell me then who You are, that wear this dreadful Form? I bow before You, O Mighty One! Have mercy, I pray, and let me see You as You were at first. I do not know what you intend.

11.32: Lord Shri Krishna replied: I have shown myself to you as the Destroyer who lays waste the world and whose purpose is destruction. In spite of your efforts, all these warriors gathered for battle shall not escape death.

11.33: Then gird up your loins and conquer. Subdue your foes and enjoy the kingdom in prosperity. I have already doomed them. Be you my instrument, Arjuna!

11.34: Drona and Bhishma, Jayadratha and Karna, and other brave warriors – I have condemned them all. Destroy them; fight and fear not. your foes shall be crushed.”

11.35: Sanjaya continued: “Having heard these words from the Lord Shri Krishna, the Prince Arjuna, with folded hands trembling, prostrated himself and with choking voice, bowing down again and again, and overwhelmed with awe, once more addressed the Lord.

11.36: Arjuna said: My Lord! It is natural that the world revels and rejoices when it sings the praises of your glory; the demons fly in fear and the saints offer you their salutations.

11.37: How should they do otherwise? O You Supreme Self, greater than the Powers of creation, the First Cause, Infinite, the Lord of Lords, the Home of the universe, Imperishable, Being and Not-Being, yet transcending both.

11.38: You are the Primal God, the Ancient, the Supreme Abode of this universe, the Knower, the Knowledge and the Final Home. You fill everything. Your form is infinite.

11.39: You are the Wind, you are Death, You are the Fire, the Water, the Moon, the Father and the Grandfather. Honour and glory to you a thousand and a thousand times! Again and again, salutation be to you, O my Lord!

11.40: Salutations to you in front and on every side, You who encompasses me round about. your power is infinite; Your majesty immeasurable; You uphold all things; you Yourself are All.

11.41: Whatever I have said unto You in rashness, taking You only for a friend and addressing you as `O Krishna! O Yadava! O Friend!' in thoughtless familiarity, not understanding Your greatness;

11.42: Whatever insult I have offered to You in jest, in sport or in repose, in conversation or at the banquet, alone or in a multitude, I ask Your forgiveness for them all, O You Who are without an equal!

11.43: For you are the Father of all things movable and immovable, the Worshipful, the Master of Masters! In all the worlds there is none equal to You, how then superior, O you who stand alone, Supreme.

11.44: Therefore I prostrate myself before You, O Lord! Most Adorable! I salute you, I ask Your blessing. Only you can be trusted to bear with me, as father to son, as friend to friend, as lover to his beloved.

11.45: I rejoice that I have seen what never man saw before; yet, O Lord! I am overwhelmed with fear. Please take again the Form I know. Be merciful, O Lord! you Who are the Home of the whole universe.

11.46: I long to see you as you were before, with the crown, the sceptre and the discus in your hands; in your other Form, with your four hands, O You Whose arms are countless and Whose forms are infinite.

11.47: Lord Shri Krishna replied: My beloved friend! It is only through My grace and power that you have been able to see this vision of splendour, the Universal, the Infinite, the Original. Never has it been seen by any but you.

11.48: Not by study of the scriptures, not by sacrifice or gift, not by ritual or rigorous austerity, is it possible for man on earth to see what you have seen, O you foremost hero of the Kuru- clan!

11.49: Be not afraid or bewildered by the terrible vision. Put away your fear and, with joyful mind, see Me once again in My usual Form.”

11.50: Sanjaya continued: “Having thus spoken to Arjuna, Lord Shri Krishna showed Himself again in His accustomed form; and the Mighty Lord, in gentle tones, softly consoled him who lately trembled with fear.

11.51: Arjuna said: Seeing you in your gentle human form, my Lord, I am myself again, calm once more.

11.52: Lord Shri Krishna replied: It is hard to see this vision of Me that you have seen. Even the most powerful have longed for it in vain.

11.53: Not by study of the scriptures, or by austerities, not by gifts or sacrifices, is it possible to see Me as you have done.

11.54: Only by tireless devotion can I be seen and known; only thus can a man become one with Me, O Arjuna!

11.55: He whose every action is done for My sake, to whom I am the final goal, who loves Me only and hates no one – O My dearest son, only he can realize Me!”

# THE PATH OF DEVOTION

12.1: “Arjuna asked: My Lord! Which are the better devotees who worship you, those who try to know you as a Personal God, or those who worship you as Impersonal and Indestructible?”

12.2: Lord Shri Krishna replied: Those who keep their minds fixed on Me, who worship Me always with unwavering faith and concentration; these are the very best.

12.3: Those who worship Me as the Indestructible, the Undefinable, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Primeval, the Immutable and the Eternal;

12.4: Subduing their senses, viewing all conditions of life with the same eye, and working for the welfare of all beings, assuredly they come to Me.

12.5: But they who thus fix their attention on the Absolute and Impersonal encounter greater hardships, for it is difficult for those who possess a body to realise Me as without one.

12.6: Verily, those who surrender their actions to Me, who muse on Me, worship Me and meditate on Me alone, with no thought save of Me,

12.7: O Arjuna! I rescue them from the ocean of life and death, for their minds are fixed on Me.

12.8: Then let your mind cling only to Me, let your intellect abide in Me; and without doubt you will live hereafter in Me alone.

12.9: But if you canst not fix your mind firmly on Me, then, My beloved friend, try to do so by constant practice.

12.10: And if you are not strong enough to practise concentration, then devote Yourself to My service, do all thine acts for My sake, and you will still attain the goal.

12.11: And if you art too weak even for this, then seek refuge in union with Me, and with perfect self-control renounce the fruit of your action.

12.12: Knowledge is superior to blind action, meditation to mere knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of action to meditation, and where there is renunciation peace will follow.

12.13: He who is incapable of hatred towards any being, who is kind and compassionate, free from selfishness, without pride, equable in pleasure and in pain, and forgiving,

12.14: Always contented, centred in the Self, self-controlled, resolute, with mind and reason dedicated to Me, such a devotee of Mine is My beloved.

12.15: He who does not harm the world, and whom the world cannot harm, who is not carried away by any impulse of joy, anger or fear, such a one is My beloved.

12.16: He who expects nothing, who is pure, watchful, indifferent, unruffled, and who renounces all initiative, such a one is My beloved.

12.17: He who is beyond joy and hate, who neither laments nor desires, to whom good and evil fortunes are the same, such a one is My beloved.

12.18: He to whom friend and foe are alike, who welcomes equally honour and dishonour, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, who is enamoured of nothing,

**12.19: Who is indifferent to praise and censure, who enjoys silence, who is contented with every fate, who has no fixed abode, who is steadfast in mind, and filled with devotion, such a one is My beloved.**

**12.20: Verily those who love the spiritual wisdom as I have taught, whose faith never fails, and who concentrate their whole nature on Me, they indeed are My most beloved.”**

# SPIRIT AND MATTER

13.1: “Arjuna asked: My Lord! Who is God and what is Nature; what is Matter and what is the Self; what is that they call Wisdom, and what is it that is worth knowing? I wish to have this explained.

13.2: Lord Shri Krishna replied: O Arjuna! The body of man is the playground of the Self; and That which knows the activities of Matter, sages call the Self.

13.3: I am the Omniscient self that abides in the playground of Matter; knowledge of Matter and of the all-knowing Self is wisdom.

13.4: What is called Matter, of what it is composed, whence it came, and why it changes, what the Self is, and what Its power – this I will now briefly set forth.

13.5: Seers have sung of It in various ways, in many hymns and sacred Vedic songs, weighty in thought and convincing in argument.

13.6: The five great fundamentals (earth, fire, air, water and ether), personality, intellect, the mysterious life force, the ten organs of perception and action, the mind and the five domains of sensation;

13.7: Desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, sympathy, vitality and the persistent clinging to life, these are in brief the constituents of changing Matter.

13.8: Humility, sincerity, harmlessness, forgiveness, rectitude, service of the Master, purity, steadfastness, self-control;

13.9: Renunciation of the delights of sense, absence of pride, right understanding of the painful problem of birth and death, of age and sickness;

13.10: Indifference, non-attachment to sex, progeny or home, equanimity in good fortune and in bad;

13.11: Unswerving devotion to Me, by concentration on Me and Me alone, a love for solitude, indifference to social life;

13.12: Constant yearning for the knowledge of Self, and pondering over the lessons of the great Truth – this is Wisdom, all else ignorance.

13.13: I will speak to you now of that great Truth which man ought to know, since by its means he will win immortal bliss – that which is without beginning, the Eternal Spirit which dwells in Me, neither with form, nor yet without it.

13.14: Everywhere are Its hands and Its feet; everywhere It has eyes that see, heads that think and mouths that speak; everywhere It listens; It dwells in all the worlds; It envelops them all.

13.15: Beyond the senses, It yet shines through every sense perception. Bound to nothing, It yet sustains everything. Unaffected by the Qualities, It still enjoys them all.

13.16: It is within all beings, yet outside; motionless yet moving; too subtle to be perceived; far away yet always near.

13.17: In all beings undivided, yet living in division, It is the upholder of all, Creator and Destroyer alike;

13.18: It is the Light of lights, beyond the reach of darkness; the Wisdom, the only thing that is worth knowing or that wisdom can teach; the Presence in the hearts of all.

13.19: Thus I have told you in brief what Matter is, and the Self worth realising and what is Wisdom. He who is devoted to Me knows; and assuredly he will enter into Me.

13.20: Know you further that Nature and God have no beginning; and that differences of character and quality have their origin in Nature only.

13.21: Nature is the Law which generates cause and effect; God is the source of the enjoyment of all pleasure and pain.

13.22: God dwelling in the heart of Nature experiences the Qualities which nature brings forth; and His affinity towards the Qualities is the reason for His living in a good or evil body.

13.23: Thus in the body of man dwells the Supreme God; He who sees and permits, upholds and enjoys, the Highest God and the Highest Self.

13.24: He who understands God and Nature along with her qualities, whatever be his condition in life, he comes not again to earth.

13.25: Some realise the Supreme by meditating, by its aid, on the Self within, others by pure reason, others by right action.

13.26: Others again, having no direct knowledge but only hearing from others, nevertheless worship, and they, too, if true to the teachings, cross the sea of death.

13.27: Wherever life is seen in things movable or immovable, it is the joint product of Matter and Spirit.

13.28: He who can see the Supreme Lord in all beings, the Imperishable amidst the perishable, he it is who really sees.

13.29: Beholding the Lord in all things equally, his actions do not mar his spiritual life but lead him to the height of Bliss.

13.30: He who understands that it is only the Law of Nature that brings action to fruition, and that the Self never acts, alone knows the Truth.

13.31: He who sees the diverse forms of life all rooted in One, and growing forth from Him, he shall indeed find the Absolute.

13.32: The Supreme Spirit, O Prince, is without beginning, without Qualities and Imperishable, and though it be within the body, yet It does not act, nor is It affected by action.

13.33: As space, though present everywhere, remains by reason of its subtlety unaffected, so the Self, though present in all forms, retains its purity unalloyed.

13.34: As the one Sun illuminates the whole earth, so the Lord illumines the whole universe.

13.35: Those who with the eyes of wisdom thus see the difference between Matter and Spirit, and know how to liberate Life from the Law of Nature, they attain the Supreme.”

# THE THREE MODES SEPARATED

14.1: “Lord Shri Krishna continued: Now I will reveal unto the Wisdom which is beyond knowledge, by attaining which the sages have reached Perfection.

14.2: Dwelling in Wisdom and realising My Divinity, they are not born again when the universe is re-created at the beginning of every cycle, nor are they affected when it is dissolved.

14.3: The eternal Cosmos is My womb, in which I plant the seed, from which all beings are born, O Prince!

14.4: O illustrious son of Kunti! Through whatever wombs men are born, it is the Spirit Itself that conceives, and I am their Father.

14.5: Purity, Passion and Ignorance are the Qualities which the Law of nature brings forth. They fetter the free Spirit in all beings.

14.6: O Sinless One! Of these, Purity, being luminous, strong and invulnerable, binds one by its yearning for happiness and illumination.

14.7: Passion, engendered by thirst for pleasure and attachment, binds the soul through its fondness for activity.

14.8: But Ignorance, the product of darkness, stupefies the senses in all embodied beings, binding them by chains of folly, indolence and lethargy.

14.9: Purity brings happiness, Passion commotion, and Ignorance, which obscures wisdom, leads to a life of failure.

14.10: O Prince! Purity prevails when Passion and Ignorance are overcome; Passion, when Purity and Ignorance are overcome; and Ignorance when it overcomes Purity and Passion.

14.11: When the light of knowledge gleams forth from all the gates of the body, then be sure that Purity prevails.

14.12: O best of Indians! Avarice, the impulse to act and the beginning of action itself are all due to the dominance of Passion.

14.13: Darkness, stagnation, folly and infatuation are the result of the dominance of Ignorance, O joy of the Kuru-clan!

14.14: When Purity prevails, the soul on quitting the body passes on to the pure regions where live those who know the Highest.

14.15: When Passion prevails, the soul is reborn among those who love activity; when Ignorance rules, it enters the wombs of the ignorant.

14.16: They say the fruit of a meritorious action is spotless and full of purity; the outcome of Passion is misery, and of Ignorance darkness.

14.17: Purity engenders Wisdom, Passion avarice, and Ignorance folly, infatuation and darkness.

14.18: When Purity is in the ascendant, the man evolves; when Passion, he neither evolves nor degenerates; when Ignorance, he is lost.

*Go to 18.40*



**14.19: As soon as man understands that it is only the Qualities which act and nothing else, and perceives That which is beyond, he attains My divine nature.**

**14.20: When the soul transcends the Qualities, which are the real cause of physical existence, then, freed from birth and death, from old age and misery, he quaffs the nectar of immortality.**

**14.21: Arjuna asked: My Lord! By what signs can he who has transcended the Qualities be recognized? How does he act? How does he live beyond them?**

**14.22: Lord Shri Krishna replied: O Prince! He who shuns not the Quality which is present, and longs not for that which is absent;**

**14.23: He who maintains an attitude of indifference, who is not disturbed by the Qualities, who realises that it is only they who act, and remains calm;**

**14.24: Who accepts pain and pleasure as it comes, is centred in his Self, to whom a piece of clay or stone or gold are the same, who neither likes nor dislikes, who is steadfast, indifferent alike to praise or censure;**

**14.25: Who looks equally upon honour and dishonour, loves friends and foes alike, abandons all initiative, such is he who transcends the Qualities.**

**14.26: And he who serves Me and only Me, with unfaltering devotion, shall overcome the Qualities, and become One with the Eternal.**

**14.27: For I am the Home of the Spirit, the continual Source of immortality, of eternal Righteousness and of infinite Joy.”**

# ATTAINING THE SUPREME

15.1: “Lord Shri Krishna continued: This phenomenal creation, which is both ephemeral and eternal, is like a tree, but having its seed above in the Highest and its ramifications on this earth below. The scriptures are its leaves, and he who understands this, knows.

15.2: Its branches shoot upwards and downwards, deriving their nourishment from the Qualities; its buds are the objects of sense; and its roots, which follow the Law causing man’s regeneration and degeneration, pierce downwards into the soil.

15.3: In this world its true form is not known, neither its origin nor its end, and its strength is not understood., until the tree with its roots striking deep into the earth is hewn down by the sharp axe of non-attachment.

15.4: Beyond lies the Path, from which, when found, there is no return. This is the Primal God from whence this ancient creation has sprung.

15.5: The wise attain Eternity when, freed from pride and delusion, they have conquered their love for the things of sense; when, renouncing desire and fixing their gaze on the Self, they have ceased to be tossed to and fro by the opposing sensations, like pleasure and pain.

15.6: Neither sun, moon, nor fire shines there. Those who go thither never come back. For, O Arjuna, that is my Celestial Home!

15.7: It is only a very small part of My Eternal Self, which is the life of the universe, drawing round itself the six senses, the mind the last, which have their source in Nature.

15.8: When the Controller enters a body or leaves it, He gathers these senses together and travels on with them, as the wind gathers perfume while passing through the flowers.

15.9: He is the perception of the ear, the eye, the touch, the taste and the smell, yea and of the mind also; and the enjoyment the things which they perceive is also His.

15.10: The ignorant do not see that it is He Who is present in life and Who departs at death or even that it is He Who enjoys pleasure through the Qualities. Only the eye of wisdom sees.

15.11: The saints with great effort find Him within themselves; but not the unintelligent, who in spite of every effort cannot control their minds.

15.12: Remember that the Light which, proceeding from the sun, illumines the whole world, and the Light which is in the moon, and That which is in the fire also, all are born of Me.

15.13: I enter this world and animate all My creatures with My vitality; and by My cool moonbeams I nourish the plants.

15.14: Becoming the fire of life, I pass into their bodies and, uniting with the vital streams of Prana and Apana, I digest the various kinds of food.

15.15: I am enthroned in the hearts of all; memory, wisdom and discrimination owe their origins to Me. I am He Who is to be realised in the scriptures; I inspire their wisdom and I know their truth.

15.16: There are two aspects in Nature: the perishable and the imperishable. All life in this world belongs to the former, the unchanging element belongs to the latter.

15.17: But higher than all am I, the Supreme God, the Absolute Self, the Eternal Lord, Who pervades the worlds and upholds them all.

15.18: Beyond comparison of the Eternal with the non-eternal am I, Who am called by scriptures and sages the Supreme Personality, the Highest God.

15.19: He who with unclouded vision sees Me as the Lord-God, knows all there is to be known, and always shall worship Me with his whole heart.

15.20: Thus, O Sinless One, I have revealed to you this most mystic knowledge. He who understands gains wisdom and attains the consummation of life.”

# DIVINE AND DEMONIAIC

16.1: “Lord Shri Krishna continued: Fearlessness, clean living, unceasing concentration on wisdom, readiness to give, self-control, a spirit of sacrifice, regular study of the scriptures, austerities, candour,

16.2: Harmlessness, truth, absence of wrath, renunciation, contentment, straightforwardness, compassion towards all, uncovetousness, courtesy, modesty, constancy,

16.3: Valour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom from hate and vanity; these are his who possesses the Divine qualities, O Arjuna!

16.5: Hypocrisy, pride, insolence, cruelty, ignorance belong to him who is born of the Demoniak qualities.

16.6: Divine qualities lead to liberation; Demoniak to bondage. Do not be anxious, Prince! you have the Divine qualities.

16.7: All beings are of two classes: Divine and Demoniak. The Divine I have described; I will now describe the other.

16.8: The Demoniak do not know how to act or how to renounce. They have neither purity nor truth. They do not understand the right principles of conduct.

16.9: They say the universe is an accident with no purpose and no God. Life is created by sexual union, a product of lust and nothing else.

16.10: Thinking thus, these degraded souls, these enemies of mankind – whose intelligence is negligible and whose deeds are monstrous – come into the world only to destroy.

16.11: Giving themselves up to insatiable passions, hypocritical, self-sufficient and arrogant, cherishing false conception founded on delusion, they work only to carry out their own unholy purposes.

16.12; Poring anxiously over evil resolutions, which only end in death; seeking only the gratification of desire as the highest goal; seeing nothing beyond;

16.13; Caught in the toils of a hundred vain hopes, the slaves of passion and wrath, they accumulate hoards of unjust wealth, only to pander to their sensual desire.

16.14; This I have gained today; tomorrow I will gratify another desire; this wealth is mine now, the rest shall be mine ere long;

16.15: I have slain one enemy, I will slay the others also; I am worthy to enjoy, I am the Almighty, I am perfect, powerful and happy;

16.16: I am rich, I am well-bred; who is there to compare with me? I will sacrifice, I will give, I will pay – and I will enjoy. Thus blinded by Ignorance,

16.17: Perplexed by discordant thoughts, entangled in the snares of desire, infatuated by passion, they sink into the horrors of hell.

16.18: Self-conceited, stubborn, rich, proud and insolent, they make a display of their patronage, disregarding the rules of decency.

16.19: Puffed up by power and inordinate conceit, swayed by lust and wrath, these wicked people hate Me Who am within them, as I am within all.

16.20: Those who thus hate Me, who are cruel, the dregs of mankind, I condemn them to a continuous, miserable and godless rebirth.

16.21: So reborn, they spend life after life, enveloped in delusion. And they never reach Me, O Prince, but degenerate into still lower forms of life.

16.22: The gates of hell are three: lust, wrath and avarice. They destroy the Self. Avoid them.

16.23: These are the gates which lead to darkness; if a man avoid them he will ensure his own welfare, and in the end will attain his liberation.

16.24: But he who neglects the commands of the scriptures, and follows the promptings of passion, he does not attain perfection, happiness or the final goal.

16.25: Therefore whenever there is doubt whether you should do a thing or not, let the scriptures guide your conduct. In the light of the scriptures should you labour the whole of your life.”

# THREE DIVISIONS OF FAITH

17.1: “Arjuna asked: My Lord! Those who do acts of sacrifice, not according to the scriptures but nevertheless with implicit faith, what is their condition? Is it one of Purity, of Passion or of Ignorance?”

17.2: Lord Shri Krishna replied: Man has an inherent faith in one or another of the Qualities – Purity, Passion and Ignorance. Now listen.

17.3: The faith of every man conforms to his nature. By nature he is full of faith. He is in fact what his faith makes him.

17.4: The Pure worship the true God; the Passionate, the powers of wealth and magic; the Ignorant, the spirits of the dead and of the lower orders of nature.

17.5: Those who practise austerities not commanded by scripture, who are slaves to hypocrisy and egotism, who are carried away by the fury of desire and passion,

17.6: They are ignorant. They torment the organs of the body; and they harass Me also, Who lives within. Know that they are devoted to evil.

17.7: The food which men enjoy is also threefold, like the ways of sacrifice, austerity and almsgiving. Listen to the distinction.

17.8: The foods that prolong life and increase purity, vigour, health, cheerfulness and happiness are those that are delicious, soothing, substantial and agreeable. These are loved by the Pure.

17.9: Those in whom Passion is dominant like foods that are bitter, sour, salty, over-hot, pungent, dry and burning. These produce unhappiness, repentance and disease.

17.10: The Ignorant love food which is stale, not nourishing, putrid and corrupt, the leavings of others and unclean.

17.11: Sacrifice is Pure when it is offered by one who does not covet the fruit thereof, when it is done according to the commands of scripture, and with implicit faith that the sacrifice is a duty.

17.12: Sacrifice which is performed for the sake of its results, or for self-glorification – that, O best of Aryans, is the product of Passion.

17.13: Sacrifice that is contrary to scriptural command, that is unaccompanied by prayers or gifts of food or money, and is without faith – that is the product of Ignorance.

17.14: Worship of God and the Master; respect for the preacher and the philosopher; purity, rectitude, continence and harmlessness – all this is physical austerity.

17.15: Speech that hurts no one, that is true, is pleasant to listen to and beneficial, and the constant study of the scriptures – this is austerity in speech.

17.16: Serenity, kindness, silence, self-control and purity – this is austerity of mind.

17.17: These threefold austerities performed with faith, and without thought of reward, may truly be accounted Pure.

17.18: Austerity coupled with hypocrisy or performed for the sake of self-glorification, popularity or vanity, comes from Passion, and its result is always doubtful and temporary.

17.19: Austerity done under delusion, and accompanied with sorcery or torture to oneself or another, may be assumed to spring from Ignorance.

17.20: The gift which is given without thought of recompense, in the belief that it ought to be made, in a fit place, at an opportune time and to a deserving person – such a gift is Pure.

17.21: That which is given for the sake of the results it will produce, or with the hope of recompense, or grudgingly – that may truly be said to be the outcome of Passion.

17.22: And that which is given at an unsuitable place or time or to one who is unworthy, or with disrespect or contempt – such a gift is the result of Ignorance.

17.23: `Om Tat Sat' is the triple designation of the Eternal Spirit, by which of old the Vedic Scriptures, the ceremonials and the sacrifices were ordained.

17.24: Therefore all acts of sacrifice, gifts and austerities, prescribed by the scriptures, are always begun by those who understand the Spirit with the word Om.

17.25: Those who desire deliverance begin their acts of sacrifice, austerity or gift with the word `Tat' (meaning `That'), without thought of reward.

17.26: `Sat' means Reality or the highest Good, and also, O Arjuna, it is used to mean an action of exceptional merit.

17.27: Conviction in sacrifice, in austerity and in giving is also called `Sat.' So too an action done only for the Lord's sake.

17.28: Whatsoever is done without faith, whether it be sacrifice, austerity or gift or anything else, is called `Asat' (meaning `Unreal') for it is the negation of `Sat,' O Arjuna! Such an act has no significance, here or hereafter."





# THE SPIRIT OF RENUNCIATION

18.1: “Arjuna asked: O mighty One! I desire to know how relinquishment is distinguished from renunciation.

18.2: Lord Shri Krishna replied: The sages say that renunciation means forgoing an action which springs from desire; and relinquishing means the surrender of its fruit.

18.3: Some philosophers say that all action is evil and should be abandoned. Others that acts of sacrifice, benevolence and austerity should not be given up.

18.4: O best of Indians! Listen to my judgment as regards this problem. It has a threefold aspect.

18.5: Acts of sacrifice, benevolence and austerity should not be given up but should be performed, for they purify the aspiring soul.

**18.6: But they should be done with detachment and without thought of recompense. This is my final judgment.**

18.7: It is not right to give up actions which are obligatory; and if they are misunderstood, it is the result of sheer ignorance.

18.8: To avoid an action through fear of physical suffering, because it is likely to be painful, is to act from passion, and the benefit of renunciation will not follow.

18.9: He who performs an obligatory action, because he believes it to be a duty which ought to be done, without any personal desire to do the act or to receive any return – such renunciation is Pure.

18.10: The wise man who has attained purity, whose doubts are solved, who is filled with the spirit of self-abnegation, does not shrink from action because it brings pain, nor does he desire it because it brings pleasure.

**18.11: But since those still in the body cannot entirely avoid action, in their case abandonment of the fruit of action is considered as complete renunciation.**

**18.12: For those who cannot renounce all desire, the fruit of action hereafter is threefold – good, evil, and mixed. But for him who has renounced, there is none.**

**18.13: I will tell you now, O Mighty Man, the five causes which, according to the final decision of philosophy, must concur before an action can be accomplished.**

**18.14: They are a body, a personality, physical organs, their manifold activity and destiny.**

**18.15: Whatever action a man performs, whether by muscular effort or by speech or by thought, and whether it be right or wrong, these five are the essential causes.**

18.16: But the fool who supposes, because of his immature judgment, that it is his own Self alone that acts, he perverts the truth and does not see rightly.

18.17: He who has no pride, and whose intellect is unalloyed by attachment, even though he kill these people, yet he does not kill them, and his act does not bind him.

**18.18: Knowledge, the knower and the object of knowledge, these are the three incentives to action; and the act, the actor and the instrument are the threefold constituents.**

18.19: The knowledge, the act and the doer differ according to the Qualities. Listen to this too:

18.20: That knowledge which sees the One Indestructible in all beings, the One Indivisible in all separate lives, may be truly called Pure Knowledge.

18.21: The knowledge which thinks of the manifold existence in all beings as separate – that comes from Passion.

18.22: But that which clings blindly to one idea as if it were all, without logic, truth or insight, that has its origin in Darkness.

18.23: An obligatory action done by one who is disinterested, who neither likes nor dislikes it, and gives no thought to the consequences that follow, such an action is Pure.

18.24: But even though an action involve the most strenuous endeavour, yet if the doer is seeking to gratify his desires, and is filled with personal vanity, it may be assumed to originate in Passion.

18.25: An action undertaken through delusion, and with no regard to the spiritual issues involved, or the real capacity of the doer, or to the injury which may follow, such an act may be assumed to be the product of Ignorance.

18.26: But when a man has no sentiment and no personal vanity, when he possesses courage and confidence, cares not whether he succeeds or fails, then his action arises from Purity.

18.27: In him who is impulsive, greedy, looking for reward, violent, impure, torn between joy and sorrow, it may be assumed that in him Passion is predominant.

18.28: While he whose purpose is infirm, who is low-minded, stubborn, dishonest, malicious, indolent, despondent, procrastinating – he may be assumed to be in Darkness.

18.29: Reason and conviction are threefold, according to the Quality which is dominant. I will explain them fully and severally, O Arjuna!

18.30: That intellect which understands the creation and dissolution of life, what actions should be done and what not, which discriminates between fear and fearlessness, bondage and deliverance, that is Pure.

18.31: The intellect which does not understand what is right and what is wrong, and what should be done and what not, is under the sway of Passion.

18.32: And that which, shrouded in Ignorance, thinks wrong right, and sees everything perversely, O Arjuna, that intellect is ruled by Darkness.

18.33: The conviction and steady concentration by which the mind, the vitality and the senses are controlled – O Arjuna! They are the product of Purity.

18.34: The conviction which always holds fast to rituals, to self-interest and wealth, for the sake of what they may bring forth – that comes from Passion.

18.35: And that which clings perversely to false idealism, fear, grief, despair and vanity is the product of Ignorance.

18.36: Hear further the three kinds of pleasure. That which increases day after day delivers one from misery,

18.37: Which at first seems like poison but afterwards acts like nectar – that pleasure is Pure, for it is born of Wisdom.

18.38: That which as first is like nectar, because the senses revel in their objects, but in the end acts like poison – that pleasure arises from Passion.

18.39: While the pleasure which from first to last merely drugs the senses, which springs from indolence, lethargy and folly – that pleasure flows from Ignorance.

**18.40: There is nothing anywhere on earth or in the higher heavenly worlds of the Gods, or again, which is free from the three Qualities born of Nature.**

With this, Krishna effectively binds Arjuna to act - for even after offering him the heavenly destination as reward, he informs him that even after attaining that he will still be bound by the Gunas, as are the gods.

*Go to 18.47*

18.41: O Arjuna! The duties of spiritual teachers, the soldiers, the traders and the servants have all been fixed according to the dominant Quality in their nature.

18.42: Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, as well as uprightness, knowledge, wisdom and faith in God – these constitute the duty of a spiritual Teacher.

18.43: Valour, glory, firmness, skill, generosity, steadiness in battle and ability to rule – these constitute the duty of a soldier. They flow from his own nature.

18.44: Agriculture, protection of the cow and trade are the duty of a trader, again in accordance with his nature. The duty of a servant is to serve, and that too agrees with his nature.

18.45: Perfection is attained when each attends diligently to his duty. Listen and I will tell you how it is attained by him who always minds his own duty.

**18.46: Man reaches perfection by dedicating his actions to God, Who is the source of all being, and fills everything.**

**18.47: It is better to do one's own duty, however defective it may be, than to follow the duty of another, however well one may perform it. He who does his duty as his own nature reveals it, never sins.**

Now Krishna addresses duty, as in 3.35, and combines it with the Guna and absolves Arjuna of the sins that he's been harping on about.

**18.48: The duty that of itself falls to one's lot should not be abandoned, though it may have its defects. All acts are marred by defects, as fire is obscured by smoke.**

Furthermore, if you're still not convinced that simply performing one's allotted duty absolves one of sin, Krishna accepts that it may have defects, and rather, all actions have defects, even the purifying element of Fire is itself obscured by smoke.

*Jump to 18.59*

**18.49: He whose mind is entirely detached, who has conquered himself, whose desires have vanished, by his renunciation reaches that stage of perfect freedom where action completes itself and leaves no seed.**

**18.50: I will now state briefly how he, who has reached perfection, finds the Eternal Spirit, the state of Supreme Wisdom.**

**18.51: Guided always by pure reason, bravely restraining himself, renouncing the objects of sense and giving up attachment and hatred;**

**18.52: Enjoying solitude, abstemiousness, his body, mind and speech under perfect control, absorbed in meditation, he becomes free – always filled with the spirit of renunciation.**

**18.53: Having abandoned selfishness, power, arrogance, anger and desire, possessing nothing of his own and having attained peace, he is fit to join the Eternal Spirit.**

**18.54: And when he becomes one with the Eternal, and his soul knows the bliss that belongs to the Self, he feels no desire and no regret, he regards all beings equally and enjoys the blessing of supreme devotion to Me.**

**18.55: By such devotion, he sees Me, who I am and what I am; and thus realising the Truth, he enters My Kingdom.**

18.56: Relying on Me in all his action and doing them for My sake, he attains, by My Grace, Eternal and Unchangeable Life.

18.57: Surrender then your actions unto Me, live in Me, concentrate thine intellect on Me, and think always of Me.

18.58: Fix but your mind on Me, and by My grace you will overcome the obstacles in your path. But if, misled by pride, you wilt not listen, then indeed you will be lost.

18.59: If you in your vanity think in false determination of avoiding this fight, your will shall not be fulfilled, for Nature herself will compel you.

18.60: Born of your own nature, O son of Kunti, and conditioned by your own activities, that which in your delusion you desire not to do, that very thing you will do involuntarily.

Having declared that Arjuna was in effect completely helpless in the face of the Qualities of nature, and duty bound, Krishna completes his instruction to his cousin.

*Jump to 18.72*

18.61: God dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna! He causes them to revolve as it were on a wheel by His mystic power.

18.62: With all your strength, fly unto Him and surrender Yourself, and by His grace will you attain Supreme Peace and reach the Eternal Home.

18.63: Thus have I revealed to you the Truth, the Mystery of mysteries. Having thought it over, you art free to act as you will.

18.64: Only listen once more to My last word, the deepest secret of all; you art My beloved, you are My friend, and I speak for your welfare.

18.65: Dedicate Yourself to Me, worship Me, sacrifice all for Me, prostrate Yourself before Me, and to Me you will surely come. Truly do I pledge you; you art My own beloved.

18.66: Give up then your earthly duties, surrender Yourself to Me only. Do not be anxious; I will absolve you from all your sin.

18.67: Speak not this to one who has not practiced austerities, or to him who has no devotion, or who is not a disciple, or one who is envious of Me.

The Brahminical tendencies to maintain secrecy of sacred texts invades Bhagavata Movement

18.68: But he who teaches this great secret to My devotees, his is the highest devotion, and verily he shall come unto Me.

18.69: Nor is there among men any who can perform a service dearer to Me than this, or any man on earth more beloved by Me than he.

18.70: He who will study this spiritual discourse of ours, I assure you, he shall thereby worship Me at the altar of Wisdom.

18.71: Yea, he who listens to it with faith and without doubt, even he, freed from evil, will rise to the worlds which the virtuous attain through righteous deeds.

18.72: O Partha! Have you listened attentively to my words? Has your ignorance and your delusion gone, O obtainer of wealth?

**18.73: Arjuna replied: My delusion has been destroyed and my memory has been regained by me, by your Grace, O Changeless One. I stand removed of doubts ready to do as you say.”**

**18.74: Sanjaya told: “Thus have I heard this rare, wonderful and soul-stirring discourse of the Lord Shri Krishna and the great-souled Arjuna.**

And that’s the end of the Original Gita.

**18.75: Through the blessing of the sage Vyasa, I listened to this secret and supreme mysticism directly from the lips of its Master, Krishna.**

**18.76: O King! The more I think of that marvelous and holy discourse, the more I lose myself in joy.**

The Upanisadists relished philosophical discourse.

**18.77: As memory recalls again and again the exceeding beauty of the Lord, I am filled with amazement and happiness.**

The Bhagavatas relished the beauty of the Lord, above all.

**18.78: Wherever is the Lord Shri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever is Arjuna, the Great Archer, I am more than convinced that good fortune, victory, happiness and righteousness will follow”**

Thus, the Vedantists concluded the Gitopanisad and got the last word.