

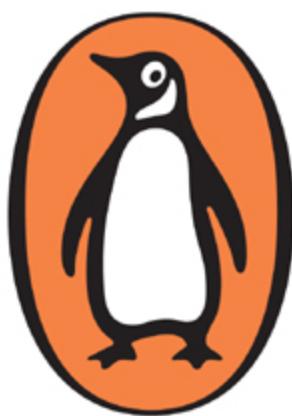


P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

*The Bhagavad Gita*



Penguin

TRANSLATED BY BIBEK DEBROY

The Bhagavad Gita



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## विषय सूची

अर्जुनविषादयोगः  
सांख्ययोगः  
कर्मयोगः  
ज्ञानकर्मसंयासयोगः  
संन्यासयोगः  
ध्यानयोगः  
ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगः  
अक्षरब्रह्मयोगः  
राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः  
विभूतियोगः  
विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगः  
भक्तियोगः  
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगः  
गुणत्रयविभागयोगः  
पुरुषोत्तमयोगः  
दैवासुरसम्पदिभागयोगः  
श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगः  
मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः

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THE BHAGAVAD GITA

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# Introduction

If there is one text that captures the essence of Hinduism, it is the *Gita* or, more accurately, the *Bhagavad Gita*. As the word *Gita* suggests, the text was meant to be sung and has therefore been translated into English as the Song Celestial. However, the *Bhagavad Gita* is not the only *Gita* that is available, although it is almost certainly the first. Following the *Bhagavad Gita*, clearly in imitation, various other *Gita* texts surfaced. For instance, the *Mahabharata* itself has the *Kama Gita* and the *Anu Gita*. The *Bhagavad Gita* is the most important of this *Gita* literature and represents the teachings of Bhagavan/Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the eve of the Kurukshetra war. However, the teachings do not actually start until *shloka* (verse) 11 of Chapter 2. And one should not presume Krishna speaks every *shloka* in the *Gita*. As will be seen, there are many *shlokas* spoken by others. Indeed, there is also an impression that the *Gita* was told by Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra. That impression is correct. But again, very few *shlokas* are actually spoken by Sanjaya or even by Dhritarashtra. Actually, Dhritarashtra speaks only one *shloka*, the first. The other *shlokas* are utterances by Sanjaya, Krishna and Arjuna.

The *Gita* forms part of the *Mahabharata*—specifically of the *Bhishma Parva* of the epic, that is, that period of the Kurukshetra war when Bhishma is the Kaurava general. Chapters 14–40 of *Bhishma Parva* deal with the *Bhagavad Gita*, although the *Bhagavad Gita* proper begins with Chapter 23 of *Bhishma Parva* and ends with Chapter 40. The *Bhagavad Gita* proper has eighteen chapters and 700 *shlokas*, as can be seen in the table below. Each chapter is qualified with the word *yoga*, which means union or, even, path.

<i>Chapter No.</i>	<i>Sanskrit Title of Chapter</i>	<i>English Title of Chapter</i>	<i>Number of Shlokas</i>
1	<i>Arjunavishada Yoga</i>	Arjuna's Dejection	47
2	<i>Sankhya Yoga</i>	The Knowledge of the Self	72
3	<i>Karma Yoga</i>	The Path of Action	43
4	<i>Jnana-karma-sannyasa Yoga</i>	The Path of Knowledge, Action and Renunciation	42
5	<i>Sannyasa Yoga</i>	The Path of Renunciation	29
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7	<i>Jnanavijnana Yoga</i>	The Path of Knowledge	30
8	<i>Akshara Brahma Yoga</i>	The Path to the Supreme Spirit	28
9	<i>Rajavidya Rajaguhya Yoga</i>	The Path of Royal Knowledge and Royal Secrets	34
10	<i>Vibhuti Yoga</i>	The Divine Glory	42
11	<i>Vishvarupadarshana Yoga</i>	Vision of the Universal Form	55
12	<i>Bhakti Yoga</i>	The Path of Devotion	20
13	<i>Kshettrakshetr-ajnavibhaga Yoga</i>	Discrimination between Nature and the Self	34
14	<i>Gunatrayavibhaga Yoga</i>	Separation between the Three Gunas	27
15	<i>Purushottama Yoga</i>	Union with the Supreme Being	20
16	<i>Daivasurasampa-addvibhaga Yoga</i>	Distinction between the Divine and the Demonic	24
17	<i>Shraddhatray-avibhaga Yoga</i>	Distinction between the Three Types of Faith	28
18	<i>Mokshasannyasa Yoga</i>	The Path of Liberation and Renunciation	78

Probably everyone knows that there are three paths to liberation: *jnana yoga*, *karma yoga* and *bhakti yoga*. *Jnana yoga* is the path of knowledge, *karma yoga* is the path of action and *bhakti yoga* is the path of devotion. *Yoga* means union, between the human and the divine. Broadly speaking, the first six chapters of the *Gita* are primarily about *karma yoga*, the next six chapters about *bhakti yoga* and the last six about *jnana yoga*. But this is a very rough division, because every chapter has all three elements. However, one will notice the increasing importance of *bhakti yoga* as one goes along. There are some *shlokas* that have become so common that most people will recognize them. These usually occur in the second, third and fourth chapters.

It is possible that the *Bhagavad Gita* originally had 750 *shlokas*. Some regional variations still have this number. But after Shankaracharya's (CE 788–820) commentary on the *Gita*, versions with these extra *shlokas* disappeared. And the *Bhagavad Gita* became more or less standardized with 699 or 700 *shlokas*. The difference occurs in the first chapter, which sometimes has forty-six *shlokas* and sometimes forty-seven. But this difference is not in content: it is only a variation in which *shloka* includes what part of the text. Shankaracharya did not have a commentary on the first chapter and, because of this, the numbering in the other chapters is now standardized. The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune has a critical or authenticated edition of the *Mahabharata*, and therefore a critical or authenticated edition of the *Gita*. That is the version followed in this translation. Notwithstanding this, there are very few variations across different versions of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Apart from numbering, they are really minor and occur only in the first chapter and are indicated in the text that follows. Some variations in numbering (that is, which part of the text is included in which *shloka*) occur in the first and the fourth chapters.

Shankaracharya's commentary also seems to have made the *Bhagavad Gita* much more popular. There is not much evidence of its popularity before that. Indeed, the *Bhagavad Gita* is included in the *smriti* (memorized texts that come down orally through the sages) rather than the

*shruti* tradition of texts that have been revealed. The *Mahabharata* was not composed at one point in time and went through different versions. While some sections of the *Mahabharata* imply knowledge of the teachings of the *Gita*, other sections display ignorance about the *Gita*. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the *Bhagavad Gita* was interpolated and added to earlier sections of the *Mahabharata* and was already in existence when later parts of the *Mahabharata* were compiled. That suggests anything between the fifth century BCE and the second century BCE for the first version of the *Gita* and something like the second century CE for the final version.

There is no reason to presume that the *Gita* had a single author. The *Gita* is a text that synthesizes and incorporates many teachings of the *Upanishads*. In fact, many *shlokas* from the *Upanishads* are found in the *Gita*, with minor changes. Attempts have been made to detect internal inconsistencies across parts that represent *bhakti* or theism and parts that draw on Vedanta and are pantheistic. Or between parts that draw on Vedanta and others that draw on *sankhya* philosophy. However, these attempts are not terribly convincing. And there are also some *shlokas* that are clearly old, because they follow grammatical norms that would later have been regarded as not quite correct.

The reader may wonder why another translation of the *Gita* has been attempted when so many exist. And one must remember that there are several non-English translations as well, the *Gita* having been translated into almost fifty languages. Well, the reason is not one. Because the more the *Gita* is read, the better. Because each generation should have its own translation and because the English in some of the earlier translations now seems archaic. And because there is some reason for dissatisfaction with translations that are available. A translator's job is to translate, not to interpret. Especially when the sense of the translation is not obvious, translators tend to interpret and superimpose their own commentaries and this is particularly true of translations in English. That is deliberately avoided in this translation.<sup>1</sup> Interpretations are best left to those who are learned. This text is therefore pure translation. To the extent

interpretations are needed, they are in the notes. But all said and done, there is no substitute to reading the Sanskrit.

An international bibliography of the *Gita*<sup>2</sup> (covering the period 1785 to 1979) published in 1983 by Jagdish Chander Kapoor had 2795 entries in fifty languages and 6000 citations. The year 1785 was chosen as that was when Charles Wilkin's first English translation of the *Gita* was published as 'Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon' through the Asiatic Society of Bengal, with a preface written by Warren Hastings. The study ended in 1979, before the explosion of information technology and the advent of the Internet. One is no longer talking about English-language translations in the print medium alone. There are audio-visual renderings of the *Gita*, which too have English translations, as well as CD-ROMs and the Internet. It is said that there are more than 200 English-language translations. Though extremely difficult to compute, this figure seems a gross underestimate: around 1000 may be more accurate.<sup>3</sup>

There are different ways to categorize these translations. First, there is the young adult versus adult distinction, but that only sets apart Rosetta Williams from the others. Second, there are verse translations and prose ones. For instance, Edwin Arnold, Parrinder, Easwaran, Barbara Miller, P. Lai, Woodham, Sanderson Beck and Stephen Mitchell are in verse. Prabhavananda and Isherwood is part verse and part prose. Third, there are translations that are academic and absolutely correct and impeccable, contrasted with ones that are purely popular. Almost inevitably, the former set is peppered with notes and annotations. In the academic category, one includes Telang, Edgerton, Deutsch, Zaehner, Bolle, Buitenen and Sargeant, especially Edgerton, Zaehner and Buitenen. Usually, there are no question marks about the authenticity and correctness of these translations and this particular translation is not meant to compete with that category. Unfortunately, such academic translations are rarely popular and are not sufficiently reader-friendly. Fourth, there are translations that emanate from religious organizations or quasi-religious ones (Judge, Annie Besant, Sarupananda, Paramananda, Sivananda, Nikhilananda, Yogananda, Mahesh Yogi, Prabhupada, Chinmayananda, Vireswarananda, Chidbhavananda,

Tapasyananda, Adhidevananda, Ramananda Prasad, Satchidananda, Gambhirananda), contrasted with ones that are more secular and mainstream. Of course, one should not drive this distinction too hard, because the *Gita* is a religious text. But the distinction is relevant. Fifth, there are translations by Westerners and there are translations by Indians and there is one instance of collaboration in Prabhavananda and Isherwood.

Whether the translation is by an Indian or by a Westerner should make no difference. But this distinction too becomes important, as the authorship often determines the target audience. Since the translation is in English, one obviously has an English-speaking audience in mind, though this can be Indians in India, Indians living abroad or Westerners. Indian authors probably wish to cater to all three audiences. However, Western authors almost certainly pick the last two, perhaps even only the last. And this often leads to a tendency to oversimplify. The *Gita* is such that dilettantes do not get into the business of translation. At least, normally. The expectation is that the translator knows Sanskrit and is translating from the Sanskrit and is not translating from other English-language translations. It is doubtful that this is true of Hawley, Rosetta Williams, Stephen Mitchell, Sanderson Beck or Taylor and Stanley. The following examples will serve to illustrate the point.

Gudakesha is one of Arjuna's names and is used quite often in the *Gita*. Arjuna is thus named because he has conquered sleep. *Gudaka* means sleep and *isha* means lord, so Gudakesha is the lord of sleep. Most Indians, or Westerners who know about India, will know the meaning, if not the etymology. One is therefore somewhat alarmed when Taylor and Stanley tell us that Gudakesha is someone 'whose hair is in a bun'. That is an etymological derivation that is hypothetically possible, but is completely implausible. Similarly, Krishna is often called Janardana. That is because Krishna killed a demon named Jana. *Ardana* means killing, hurting, paining. There is always a problem with transcribing Sanskrit words in English, especially if the writer is not using diacritical marks and is not writing for an academic audience. *Jana* is also a collective word for men

and thus, Taylor and Stanley tell us that Janardana is ‘harasser of men’. Why pick on Taylor and Stanley alone? Another of Krishna’s names is Hrishikesha. This translates as lord of the senses, since *hrishika* is a sense organ and *isha* is, of course, lord. However, Chinmayananda tells us, ‘But the word “*Hrishika*” is an obscure one. Modern commentators prefer to explain it as *Hrish+kesa*, “having short hair”.’ *Kesha* certainly means hair. But few commentators will agree, for the very simple reason that Chinmayananda means *hrash*, not *hrish*. Following Chinmayananda’s route, one would have to translate Hrishikesha as someone with bristling or erect hair, not short hair. Chinmayananda also describes Gudakesha as ‘knotted-hair warrior’.

Before turning translator, I was an ordinary reader of the *Gita*. And since we are on the subject of proper names, let me illustrate the kinds of problems I had with proper names. There is no teaching in Chapter 1. It merely describes the setting and Arjuna’s sorrow. In 1.4, the warriors on the Pandava side are partially described. And my translation of 1.4 is, ‘Here, there are courageous warriors with mighty bows, the equals of Bhima and Arjuna in battle—Yuyudhana, Virata, Drupada and other great warriors.’ Who is Yuyudhana? To explain that, this note has been added: ‘Another name for Satyaki of the Yadava clan. Satyaki studied martial arts under Arjuna.’ This entire translation is based on the assumption that the reader compares the translation with the Sanskrit and reads the Sanskrit. If I read the Sanskrit, I will find the word *maharatha*. Who is a *maharatha*? The following note has been added to explain: ‘The word used is *maharatha*. A *maharatha* is someone who can fight with 10,000 archers at the same time, keeping his own chariot and horses unharmed, and is skilled in the use of weapons.’ The point is simple. If I have read the *Mahabharata*, I know what a *maharatha* is. And I also know that Yuyudhana is one of Satyaki’s names. But if it is a *Gita* translation in English, it is quite probable that the reader has not read the *Mahabharata* and does not know who Yuyudhana is and what a *maharatha* is. Have other translators done an adequate job of explaining? Take Ramananda Prasad first and here is what we have: ‘O Master, behold this mighty army of the

Pandava, arranged in battle formation by your other talented disciple! There are many great warriors, valiant men, heroes, and mighty archers.' Obviously, this is not quite an authentic translation: the names have been suppressed. One may argue the names are irrelevant for the main purpose of the *Gita*. But the fact remains this is not quite a proper translation. Prabhupada gives us, 'Here in this army are many heroic bowmen equal in fighting to Bhima and Arjuna: great fighters like Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada.' The Yuyudhana problem remains, the *maharatha* problem has been suppressed and one can also complain about the translation. There are also other great warriors mentioned, in addition to Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada. Where did they disappear? Gambhirananda gives us, 'Here are the heroes wielding great bows, who in battle are compeers of Bhima and Arjuna, Yuyudhana (Satyaki) and Virata, and the *maharatha* (great chariot rider) Drupada.' At least we now know who Yuyudhana is. But notice, the *shloka* does not say that Drupada is the only *maharatha*, as Gambhirananda makes it out to be.

Let us move on to 1.5. I have translated it as, 'Dhristaketu and Chekitana, the valiant king of Kashi, Purujit from the Kuntibhoja clan and Shaibya, greatest among men.' There is no need to reproduce the notes on Dhristaketu and Chekitana. But who is Purujit and who is Kuntibhoja? As the translation makes clear, Purujit and Kuntibhoja are not two separate people. Purujit is from the Kuntibhoja clan. And the reader will be surprised at how many translators get this wrong and think Purujit and Kuntibhoja are two separate people: Sanderson Beck, Prabhupada, Edwin Arnold, Telang, Radhakrishnan, Gambhirananda, Chinmayananda, Vireswarananda. It is almost as if the translators have forgotten the rest of the *Mahabharata*. With so many people on the other side, the reader may be tempted to think that this translator has got his *Mahabharata* wrong. So here is Gandhi on this: 'Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana, valorous Kashiraja, Purujit the Kuntibhoja, and Shaibya, chief among men.'

You have a similar problem with Asita-Devala in 10.15 and here is my translation: 'All the sages and Devarshi Narada and Asita-Devala and Vyasa describe you thus. You have yourself also told me this.' My note on

Asita-Devala states, ‘Many translations translate Asita and Devala as separate sages. That is not correct. The same sage, who lived on the banks of the Sarasvati river, is sometimes called Asita, sometimes Devala and sometimes Asita-Devala.’ In Ramananda Prasad, we find the name has been suppressed. Prabhupada gives us, ‘All the great sages such as Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa confirm this truth about You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me.’ Radhakrishnan has, ‘All the sages say this of Thee, as well as the divine seer Narada, so also Asita, Devala, Vyasa and Thou thyself declarest it to me.’

Nor are such problems only about proper names. Take 3.9, where I translate, ‘All action other than that for sacrifices shackles people to the bondage of action. Therefore, do action for that purpose, without attachment.’ Prabhupada has, ‘Work done as a sacrifice for Visnu has to be performed, otherwise work binds one to this material world. Therefore, O son of Kunti, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain unattached and free from bondage.’ I read this and wondered, where did Prabhupada get Vishnu? There is no Vishnu in the *shloka*. Nikhilananda’s translation also has Vishnu in it. Therefore, my translation has this note. ‘This translation is problematic. Traditionally, *yajna* means a sacrifice, but the *Gita* is against such rituals. The word *yajna* has also been equated with God in the sense of Vishnu, but that is not terribly convincing either. It is also possible that these sections may have been interpolated into the *Gita* later. They do not quite fit. However, later, the *Gita* uses the word *yajna* in a broader sense.’ In many popular translations, the problem is sometimes glossed over. Jayaram has, Works in this world can cause bondage unless done with a sense of sacrifice. Therefore, O son of Kunti, perform your actions for the sake of sacrifice only, free from attachment.’ Telang gives us, ‘This world is fettered by all action other than action for the purpose of the sacrifice. Therefore, O son of Kunti! do you, casting off attachment, perform action for that purpose.’ But adds the note, ‘Probably the “sacrifices” spoken of in that passage must be taken to be the same as those referred to in the Creator’s injunction mentioned in this passage.’

All said and done, translating the *Gita* into English is not easy. Words like *dharma*, *sankhya*, *arya*, *vikara*, *brahman*, *atman*, *yoga*, *guna*, *shruti*, *samadhi*, *prakriti*, *yajna*, *vijnana*, *maya*, *dvanda*, *purusha*, *Vedas* have no ready English equivalents and the meaning sometimes varies from context to context. That is, the meaning is different in different places within the *Gita*. This becomes particularly relevant in translations by Westerners. Since they are often targeted at purely Western audiences, there is a tendency to oversimplify and avoid usage of all Sanskrit words. This may make the English smoother, but the translation does not quite ring true. Here is Barbara Miller, on 2.48: ‘Perform actions, firm in discipline, relinquishing attachment; be impartial to failure and success—this equanimity is called discipline.’ This sounds excellent. But here is my rendering of 2.48: ‘O Dhananjaya! Perform action by resorting to *yoga*. Give up attachment. Look upon success and failure equally. This equal attitude is known as *yoga*.’ *Yoga* is not discipline. In contrast, most Indian translators tend to prefer to retain some Sanskrit words, as these are untranslatable. At least, they are retained in the Sanskrit the first time they occur. As a generalization, the English in Western translations is impeccable. The content falls short of being entirely accurate. In Indian translations, the content is more correct. But the English is often less than smooth.

As mentioned earlier, this translation is not meant to compete with, or be a substitute for, the academic translations. Nor is it meant to be a substitute for the verse translations. The *Gita* is in verse. Therefore, translations should also be in verse. While that is an entirely legitimate point of view, one must remember that poetry can never be satisfactorily translated. At best, it can be trans-created and one has to be a poet oneself to be able to perform that task at all well. Almost by definition, verse translations can never be authentic, because the translator has to take liberties with the text.

Consider 3.25-26 and, ignoring the notes, this has been translated as, ‘O descendant of Bharata! Ignorant people perform action by being attached to that action. But the wise perform similar action unattached, for the

welfare and preservation of the worlds. The wise will not befuddle the minds of the ignorant, who are attached to action. Being knowledgeable, they will themselves perform all action and keep them engaged.' This is what Woodham does to these two verses: 'Foolish people, seeking gain, work hard all day and night. Sages also work quite hard to set the people right. Sages never stop the work of those who seek reward; they instruct them how to work in service to the Lord.' You may have rhyming couplets, but this is hardly a translation worth reading. In contrast, this is what Barbara Miller has: 'As the ignorant act with attachment to actions, Arjuna, so wise men should act with detachment to preserve the world. No wise man disturbs the understanding of ignorant men attached to action; he should inspire them, performing all actions with discipline.'

Consider 11.15-16. The translation here: 'O Lord! In your body I see all the gods and all the different types of beings, the divine sages and all the serpents and the creator Brahma, seated on a lotus. O Lord of the Universe! O Universal Form! I see you, with many arms, many stomachs, many faces and many eyes, everywhere. And I don't see an end, a middle or a beginning to you.' Barbara Miller gives us, 'I see the gods in your body, O God, and hordes of varied creatures: Brahma, the cosmic creator, on his lotus throne, all the seers and celestial serpents. I see your boundless form everywhere, the countless arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes; Lord of All, I see no end, or middle or beginning to your totality.' Stephen Mitchell has, 'I see all gods in your body and multitudes of beings, Lord, and Brahma on his lotus throne, and the seers, and the shining angels. I see you everywhere, with billions of arms, eyes, bellies, faces, without end, middle, or beginning, your body, the whole universe, Lord.' Prabhavananda and Isherwood render this as, 'Ah, my God, I see all gods within your body; Each in his degree, the multitude of creatures; See Lord Brahma throned upon the lotus; See all the sages, and the holy serpents. Universal Form, I see you without limit, Infinite of arms, eyes, mouths and bellies – See, and find no end, midst, or beginning.' The Edwin Arnold rendering is, 'Yea! I have seen! I see! Lord! All is wrapped in Thee! The gods are in Thy glorious frame! The creatures / Of earth, and heaven, and

hell / In Thy Divine form dwell, And in Thy countenance shine all the features / Of Brahma, sitting lone / Upon His lotus-throne; Of saints and sages, and the serpent races Ananta, Vasuki; Yea! Mightiest Lord! I see / Thy thousand arms and breasts, and faces, And eyes, on every side / Perfect, diversified; And nowhere end of Thee, nowhere beginning, Nowhere a centre!’

There is some subjectivity in assessment. But if one is interested in a verse translation, one might as well stick to Edwin Arnold (although the language has now become archaic), Prabhavananda and Isherwood or Barbara Miller. The poetry is better in these cases. However, one must also recognize that verse translations perforce have to take some liberties with the text. This is especially important because verse translations usually have no notes, although notes may be smuggled into the text. Barbara Miller has this on 1.15: ‘Krishna blew Pancajanya (or Panchajanya), won from a demon; Arjuna blew Devadatta, a gift of the gods; fierce wolf-bellied Bhima blew Paundra, his great conch of the east.’ This is what 1.15 actually has: ‘Hrishikesha blew the conch shell named Panchajanya and Dhananjaya blew the conch shell named Devadatta. Vrikodara, whose deeds give rise to fear, blew the giant conch shell named Poundra.’ Explanations about Panchajanya, Devadatta and Vrikodara really belong in notes.

This leads to another point. Is it intended for the reader to match the translation with the Sanskrit, that is, should the Sanskrit text also be included in any translation of the *Gita*? Many Western translations tend to presume that the Sanskrit will not be included. They translate the entire chapter at one go, instead of translating verse by verse, as in Sanderson Beck, Edwin Arnold and Prabhavananda and Isherwood. In such instances, it becomes extremely difficult to match the translation with the Sanskrit. Most modern translations are, of course, verse by verse and that is the intention here too. However, there are two minor differences between this effort and many existing ones. First, the critical edition of the *Mahabharata* has been followed in this translation—although the *Gita* is more or less standardized, and there are few variations across texts, there

are some variations and not every translation follows the critical edition. The second difference is a more significant one and may very well be a minor USP. There are *shlokas* where the sentence flows over from one *shloka* into the next, for example 1.26–29, 1.38-39, 6.24-25, 8.12-13, 10.4-5, 11.26-27, 11.41-42, 12.3-4, 12.6-7, 12.13-14, 12.18-19, 13.5-6, 13.7-11, 15.3-4, 16.1-3, 16.11-12, 16.13-16, 18.36-37, 18.51-53. In such cases, does one have a combined translation across all the *shlokas*? That certainly makes the translator's task easier. But it makes the task of the reader, who is trying to match the translation with the Sanskrit, more difficult. This translation is invariably verse by verse, in contrast to almost every other English translation. This may make the English sound incomplete, or even forced. But it certainly makes the reader's task easier.

While it is possible to translate the *Gita* without notes—and many translators choose to do so—such translations will not necessarily make sense to the reader. For example, who is Yuyudhana? Who is Kuntibhoja? Who is Asita-Devala? Who is a *maharatha*? These questions have been discussed earlier. To add to the list, who is a criminal (1.36)? What are the five organs of action (3.6)? What are the five senses (3.6)? Who is Janaka (3.20)? What is the difference between *jnana* and *vijnana* (3.41)? Who are Vivasvat, Manu and Ikshaku (4.1)? Who is a *rajarshi* (4.2)? What is a *yuga* (4.8)? What are *prana* and *apana* (4.27)? What are the nine gates of the body (5.13)? What is the difference between *kratu*, *yajna* and *svadha* (9.16)? Who are the seven great sages, the four who came before them and the Manus (10.6)? Who are the *adityas* and the *maruts* (10.21)? Who are the *rudras* and the *vasus* (10.23)? What is the difference between *sarpas* and *nagas* (10.28-29)? Why is Margashirsha the foremost month (10.35)? Who is Ushana (10.37)? Who are the *saddhyas*, the *vishvadevas*, the *ashvintis* and the *siddhas* (11.22)? What are the four types of food (15.14)?

If these are not explained, the reader will be at sea and one should be sceptical of translations that wish to avoid notes altogether. One must certainly draw a careful balance. Too many notes and the translation borders on the academic and ceases to be popular. Or if there are no notes at all, parts of the translation will remain incomprehensible. In 10 per cent

of the text, there are indeed variations between translations. But in 90 per cent of the *shlokas*, one finds little difference between words chosen in different translations that are in prose and are purportedly popular. There will be permutations and combinations of the same words. The difference lies in the notes and their quality. There are notes and notes. The questions just given above are at the level of the relatively mundane. Every translation that has notes invariably addresses the more serious religious questions. In comparison, little attention is paid to the relatively mundane. But these are just as important as the more serious religious questions. Unless one is steeped in Indian myths and sacred texts, the average reader will not know the answers to the questions given above. That is why this translation pays attention to the relatively mundane too. The following examples show how this translation holds up vis-à-vis some other popular translations.

To go to 1.36 first. Who is a criminal? The present work translates 1.36 as, ‘O Janardana! What pleasure will we derive from killing the sons of Dhritarashtra? Although they are criminals, sin alone will be our lot if we kill them.’ The note on criminals reads thus: ‘According to the *shastras*, there are six types of criminals—arsonists, poisoners, those who bear arms to kill you, those who steal wealth, those who steal land and those who steal other people’s wives. The *shastras* sanction the killing of these types of criminals. Hence, killing of the Kauravas is sanctioned by law. However, Arjuna faces a conflict between law and morality.’ Let us compare this with Prabhavananda and Isherwood, who generally tend to avoid notes. ‘Krishna, hearing / The prayers of all men, Tell me how can / We hope to be happy / Slaying the sons / Of Dhritarashtra? Evil they may be, Worst of the wicked, Yet if we kill them, Our sin is greater.’ The technique is simple. Avoid the ‘criminal’ nuance. Simply call them evil. But the translation has become less than accurate.

Move on to 3.20: ‘Janaka and others attained liberation through action. One should perform action with an eye to preserving the worlds.’ As an explanation to Janaka, this translation adds, ‘Righteous king. However, there was more than one king named Janaka and this reference is to the

first Janaka, the son of Mithi, from whom Mithila obtained its name. This Janaka, also mentioned in the *Ramayana*, is different from the Janaka who was Sita's father.' Chinmayananda's note on this states, 'Thus, the wise Kings of yore, such as Janaka and Aswapati had tried to attain Perfection.' The reader is probably not much the wiser.

How about 4.1 on Vivasvat, Manu and Ikshvaku? The translation of 4.1 in this book is, 'I instructed this eternal *yoga* to Vivasvat and Vivasvat told it to Manu. Manu told it to Ikshvaku.' As explanation of Vivasvat, this note has been added: 'One of the twelve *adityas* born to the sage Kashyap and Aditi. Vivasvat is thus a manifestation of the sun god and his dynasty is the solar dynasty (*surya vansha*). Vivasvat's son is Manu, known as Vaivasvata Manu. Manu is actually a title and there are fourteen Manus. Vaivasvata Manu, or the present Manu, is the seventh in this line of fourteen and the reference is to the beginning of *treta yuga* in the present *manvantara* (cycle of creation and destruction). Vaivasvata Manu's son was Ikshvaku and Rama was born into this dynasty much later.' How does Prabhupada handle this? The quote will have to be extremely long. 'Herein we find the history of the *Bhagavad Gita* traced from a remote time when it was delivered to the royal order, the kings of all planets. This science is especially meant for the protection of the inhabitants, and therefore the royal order should understand it in order to be able to rule the citizens and protect them from the material bondage to lust. Human life is meant for cultivation of spiritual knowledge, in eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the executive heads of all states and all planets are obliged to impart this lesson to the citizens by education, culture and devotion. In other words, the executive heads of all states are intended to spread the science of Krsna consciousness so that the people may take advantage of this great science and pursue a successful path, utilizing the opportunity of the human form of life. In this millennium, the sun god is known as Vivasvan, the king of the sun, which is the origin of all planets within the solar system... The sun is the king of the planets, and the sun god (at present of the name Vivasvan) rules the sun planet, which is controlling all other planets by supplying heat and light. He is rotating

under the order of Krsna, and Lord Krsna originally made Vivasvan His first disciple to understand the science of *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Gita* is not, therefore, a speculative treatise for the insignificant mundane scholar, but is a standard book of knowledge coming down from time immemorial... It was spoken to the sun god Vivasvan because he is also a *kshatriya* and is the father of all *kshatriyas* who are descendants of the sun god, or the *surya-vamsa kshatriyas*. Because *Bhagavad Gita* is as good as the *Vedas*, being spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, this knowledge is *apauruseya*, superhuman. Since the Vedic instructions are accepted as they are, without human interpretation, the *Gita* must therefore be accepted without mundane interpretation. The mundane wranglers may speculate on the *Gita* in their own ways, but that is not *Bhagavad Gita* as it is.

Therefore, *Bhagavad Gita* has to be accepted as it is, from the disciplic succession, and it is described herein that the Lord spoke to the sun god, the sun god spoke to his son Manu, and Manu spoke to his son Iksvaku.' The information is all there and it is for the reader to judge which note is better.

Let us move on to 9.16. The relevant translation is, 'I am *kratu*, I am *yajna*, I am *svadha*, I am the herbs, I am the *mantra*, I indeed am the clarified butter, I am the fire, I am the offering.' The note reads, '*Kratu*, *yajna* and *svadha* are all words for sacrifices, but they have been listed separately in the *shloka*. *Svadha* is a sacrifice performed specifically for dead ancestors, like *shraaddha* ceremonies. *Kratu* is a ritualistic *yajna*, with prescribed rites. The word *yajna* can be used in the broader and non-ritualistic sense.' The site [www.bhagavad-gita.org](http://www.bhagavad-gita.org) has the translation, 'I am the seven Vedic fire rituals (*kratu*), I am the five daily acts of sacrifice (*yajna*), I am the oblations offered to the departed ancestors (*svadha*), I am the healing herb, I am the transcendental incantation, I am clarified cow ghee, I am the fire and I am the act of offering.' There is absolutely nothing wrong with this. But the present translation attempts to be pithier, without losing either the flavour or the meaning of the *shloka*.

Take 10.6. It has been translated here as, 'The seven great sages, the four who came before them and the Manus owe their origin to me and

were created from my resolution. In this world, everything is descended from them.' For the seven great sages, this note has been added, 'There are two listings of the seven great sages (*saptarishis*), with a large degree of overlap. The first list is Marichi, Angirasa, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vashishtha. The second list is Bhrigu, Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulaha, Pulastya and Kratu.' For the four who came before them, this note has been added: 'Who are the four who came before the seven great sages? This causes problems of interpretation. Usually, commentators take this to mean the four great sages Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatana and Sanatkumara, who preceded the *saptarishis*. However, these sages never married and talk of their descendants does not quite make sense. Therefore, this is sometimes interpreted in a metaphorical sense. That is, these four are the four manifestations (*murti* or *vyuha*) of Vasudeva—Vasudeva as the soul, Sankarshana as living being, Pradyumna as the mind and Aniruddha as the ego.' For Manus, the note reads, 'As was mentioned earlier, there are fourteen Manus in a *kalpa*. The list of names varies. But the most common list of the present fourteen Manus is Svayambhuva, Svarochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Chakshusha, Vaivasvata or Satyavrata, Savarni, Dakshasavarni, Brahmasavarni, Dharmasavarni, Rudrasavarni, Devasavarni and Indrasavarni. The present Manu is Vaivasvata.'

Ramananda Prasad's translation is, 'The seven great sages and four ancient Manus, from whom all these creatures of the world were born, originated from My potential energy.' Not only is there no explanation of the seven great sages, Prasad has mistranslated and has avoided the problem of the four by clubbing them with the Manus.

What are *sarpas* and *nagas* (10.28-29)? The relevant part of the translation is, 'And among serpents I am Vasuki. Among snakes I am Ananta.' The first note states, 'Vasuki is the king of serpents.' The second one adds, 'We have translated the *sarpa* of *shloka* 28 as serpent and the *naga* of *shloka* 29 as snake. This is unsatisfactory. Ananta is the king of *nagas* and Vasuki is the king of *sarpas*. What is the difference between *sarpas* and *nagas*? Some people translate *sarpa* as a poisonous snake and *naga* as a non-poisonous snake. But that is not quite true. Ananta and

Vasuki are brothers—they are the sons of Kadru. However, here, they are quite clearly mentioned as distinct species. *Sarpas* and *nagas* seem to be differentiated in two ways. First, unlike *sarpas*, *nagas* can assume human form. Second, unlike *sarpas*, *nagas* have separate geographical areas of habitation. *Sarpas* live on earth.' Sanderson Beck renders this as, 'Of snakes, I am Vasuki, and I am Ananta of the cobras.' Thus the quality and range of the notes in the present translation set them apart from other translations.

That still leaves the remaining 10 per cent. As stated earlier, 90 per cent of the *Gita* is clear. However, there are sections where explanations and notes are needed. For example, the meanings are not immediately obvious in the following *shlokas*: 2.16, 2.17, 2.28, 2.42, 2.46, 2.52, 3.8, 3.9, 3.15, 3.28, 3.33, 3.35, 3.43, 4.13, 4.16, 4.18, 4.19, 4.29, 4.32, 4.38, 5.14, 5.19, 6.44, 7.5, 7.14, 8.3, 8.23, 9.16, 9.19, 10.6, 10.32, 10.35, 11.39, 12.4, 12.8, 13.4, 13.24, 13.28, 13.34, 14.14, 15.1, 16.1, 16.8, 16.24, 18.14, 18.66.

Take 2.17 as an example. The translation of 2.17 is, 'But know that which pervades all of this is never destroyed. No one can destroy that which is without change.' This is an absolutely literal translation and the problem is obvious. What pervades? What is 'all this'? What is without change? Let us see how a few other translators have handled this translation. Gandhi has, 'Know that to be imperishable whereby all this is pervaded. No one can destroy that immutable being.' Ramananda Prasad gives, 'Know That, by which all this (universe) is pervaded, to be indestructible. No one can destroy the indestructible (*Atma*).' Care has been taken. 'This' is the universe, placed inside brackets. And the indestructible is the *atman*, also placed inside brackets. Prabhupada has, 'That which pervades the entire body you should know to be indestructible. No one is able to destroy that imperishable soul.' Not enough care has been taken to distinguish a translation from an interpretation. The Sanskrit does not tell us that this is the entire body, or that the imperishable is the soul. Radhakrishnan renders this as, 'Know thou that that by which all this is pervaded is indestructible. Of this immutable being, no one can bring about the destruction.' Gambhirananda

offers, ‘But know That to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. None can bring about the destruction of this Immutable.’ Nikhilananda has, ‘Know that which pervades the entire body is indestructible. None is able to destroy the imperishable soul.’ Again, a problem as in the case of Prabhupada. The Sanskrit has no reference to the body, or to the soul. Mahadeva Sastri gives us, ‘But know that to be imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of That, the Inexhaustible.’ Telang renders this as, ‘Know that to be indestructible which pervades all this; the destruction of that inexhaustible principle none can bring about.’ Sanderson Beck has, ‘Know that indestructible essence by which all this is pervaded. No one is able to cause the destruction of the imperishable.’ Edwin Arnold gives us, ‘Indestructible, Learn thou! the Life is, spreading life through all; It cannot anywhere, by any means, Be anywise diminished, stayed, or changed.’ Not quite literal, is it? Where did Life come from? Taylor and Stanley have, ‘Know that which permeates all this world to be indestructible. The destruction of that which is immutable cannot be accomplished by anyone.’ The Sanskrit does not have the word ‘world’. Anand Aadhar Prabhu produces, ‘Know that, that by which the whole body is pervaded is imperishable and that no one is able to destroy it.’ Where did the word ‘body’ surface? Finally, the Sivananda translation: ‘Know *That* to be indestructible, by whom all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of *That*, the Imperishable.’

*Shloka* 2.17 is relatively easy. Without an explanation or note, the meaning will not be obvious to the reader. But there is no great disagreement about what the *shloka* means. For instance, Sivananda’s note states, ‘The Self pervades all objects like ether. Even if the pot is broken, the ether that is within and without it cannot be destroyed. Similarly, if the bodies and all other objects perish, the eternal Self that pervades them cannot be destroyed; it is the living Truth.’ The note in this translation does not disagree with this, but has a more elaborate explanation. ‘This *shloka* also gets into complicated issues of interpretation. “That” means the *brahman*, *paramatman* or God. This is eternal and pervades everything. The body and the world are transitory. But the human soul (*jivatman*) is

also eternal. Are the body and the world illusions, or are they real? What is the relationship between the *parmatman* and the *jivatman*? Such questions have led to intense philosophical speculation. The *Gita* uses the word *atman* for both the *parmatman* and the *jivatman*.<sup>7</sup> To repeat the point, since a note is needed, one must be careful to separate the explanation from the translation. An explanation or interpretation should not masquerade as translation. As the above examples illustrate, in an attempt to avoid notes, or in a desire to impose one's own meaning on the text, several translations do not always take this care. Which is part of the reason a new translation should be welcomed.

But not all of the 10 per cent that is difficult to translate is like 2.17. In 2.17, the meaning is more or less clear. However, that is not always the case. Take 2.42. The translation here is, 'Those who are ignorant say these flowery words, praising the *Vedas* and claiming there is nothing else.' Ramananda Prasad offers, 'The unwise who delight in flowery words (or the chanting of the *Vedas* without understanding the real meaning) stress *karma-kaanda*, the ritualistic aspect of the *Vedas*, O Arjuna, and say that there is nothing else (except material enjoyment).' As before, explanations partly inside brackets, but also partly including words that do not exist in the Sanskrit. Prabhupada combines the translation of 2.42 with 2.43, 'Men of small knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the *Vedas*, which recommend various fruitive activities for elevation to heavenly planets, resultant good birth, power, and so forth.'

Radhakrishnan also combines 2.42 and 2.43. 'The undiscerning who rejoice in the letter of the *Veda*, who contend that there is nothing else, whose nature is desire and who are intent on heaven, proclaim these flowery words that result in rebirth as the fruit of actions and (lay down) various specialized rites for the attainment of enjoyment and power.' Is the letter of the *Veda* an adequate explanation, ignoring the point that there is no such qualification in the Sanskrit? Gambhirananda gives us, again combining 2.42 and 2.43, 'O son of Partha, those undiscerning people who utter this flowery talk—which promises birth as a result of rites and duties, and full of various special rites meant for the attainment of

enjoyment and affluence—they remain engrossed in the utterances of the *Vedas* and declare that nothing else exists; their minds are full of desires and they have heaven as the goal.’ A deviation from the literal translation again. Mahadeva Sastri combines 2.42, 2.43 and 2.44. ‘No conviction of a resolute nature is formed in the mind of those who are attached to pleasure and power, and whose minds are drawn away by that flowery speech which the unwise—enamoured of Vedic utterances, declaring there is nothing else, full of desire, having *svarga* as their goal—utter, (a speech) which promises birth as the reward of actions and which abounds in specific acts for the attainment of pleasure and power, O son of Pritha.’ Jagannatha Prakasha has, ‘Flowery words are spoken in the *Vedas* for the unwise, who delight in study and debate, O son of Partha; they say there is nothing else.’ Jayaram offers, ‘Men of superficial knowledge who take delight in the debate of the *Vedas* using flowery words, say that there is nothing else besides.’ And in Telang, ‘That flowery talk which those unwise ones utter, who are enamoured of Vedic words, who say there is nothing else.’

There is a corresponding note in Telang which says, ‘The *Vedas* are the ancient sacred writings of Hinduism.’ Is this adequate? Is *shloka* 2.42 anti-*Vedas*? Or is it against the ritualistic elements in the *Vedas*? While everyone will agree that 2.42 is against the ritualistic elements, that is not always clear from the translations or the notes. And, as in earlier instances, some translations ascribe to the text elements that do not exist in the Sanskrit. Sivananda’s translation is, ‘Flowery speech is uttered by the unwise, who take pleasure in the eulogising words of the *Vedas*, O Arjuna, saying: “There is nothing else!”’ Sivananda adds the note, ‘Unwise people, who lack discrimination, place great stress upon the *karmakaanda* or ritualistic portion of the *Vedas*, which lays down specific rules for specific actions for the attainment of specific fruit. They extol these actions and rewards unduly.’ Compare this with the annotation here: ‘That is, rites and rituals of the *Vedas*, without the knowledge. The *Vedas* have four parts: *Samhita*, *Brahmana*, *Aranyaka* and *Upanisbad*. The *Samhita* and *Brahmana* sections are known as *karmakaanda*; they

prescribe rites and rituals. The *Aranyaka* and *Upanishad* sections are known as *jnana kaanda*; they are the paths of knowledge.'

But at least in the case of 2.17 and 2.42, there is no great disagreement about what the *shloka* means. That is not always the case and *shloka* 4.32 is an example. It has been translated here as, 'Many *yajnas* of this type are prescribed in the *brahman*'s mouth. Know them all to be the outcome of action. Knowing this, you will attain liberation.' The *brahman*'s mouth has been annotated as, 'The Sanskrit states *brahman*. This is important because most translations and interpretations interpret this *brahman* as the *Vedas* and therefore suggest sacrifices prescribed by the *Vedas*. Not only is this interpretation forced, the *Gita* does not generally assign such supremacy to the *Vedas*. Most ritual *yajnas* involve offerings made to the fire and Agni is therefore thought of as the mouth of the gods. In this broader definition of *yajnas*, probably no more than that extended metaphor is meant, when thinking of the *brahman*'s mouth.' Contrast this with Ramananda Prasad's translation: 'Many types of spiritual disciplines are described in the *Vedas*. Know that all of them are the action of body, mind, and senses prompted by the forces of Nature. Understanding this, one shall attain Nirvana or salvation.' Again, not quite a literal translation. Prabhupada has, 'All these different types of sacrifice are approved by the *Vedas*, and all of them are born of different types of work. Knowing them as such, you will become liberated.' Radhakrishnan says, 'Thus many forms of sacrifice are spread out in the face of *Brahman* (i.e. set forth as the means of reaching the Absolute). Know thou that all these are born of work, and so knowing thou shalt be freed.' And Gambhirananda gives us, 'Thus, various kinds of sacrifices lie spread at the mouth of the *Vedas*. Know them all to be born of action. Knowing thus, you will become liberated.' Chinmayananda has, 'Thus innumerable sacrifices lie spread out before *brahman* (literally at the mouth or face of *brahman*) Know them all as born of action, and thus knowing, you shall be liberated.'

Vireswarananda gives us, 'Thus various sacrifices are prescribed by the *Vedas*. Know all these to be born of action: knowing thus, you will be

free.' The *Vedas* appear from nowhere. Nor is there any attempt to indicate that this is interpretation and not translation.

That, therefore, is the motivation behind this translation. To be as objective as one can, with interpretations pushed into the notes. And with sufficient notes to make the text clear to the reader, without becoming overbearing and academic. Finally, the Sanskrit is given, so that the readers can read the Sanskrit for themselves and check the veracity of what we have translated. And when there are question marks about what has been done here, as there are bound to be, that is the point when you should produce your translation. As a reader dissatisfied with what already exists. That was also the trigger here.

## Invocation<sup>4</sup>

*Om! O Bhagavad Gita*, which Bhagavan (Lord) Narayana (Krishna's name) himself used to enlighten Partha (Arjuna) and which was incorporated into the *Mahabharata* by the ancient sage Vyasa (Vyasadeva or Vedavyasa)!

O you, of eighteen chapters, who showers down the immortal knowledge of *advaita*! O divine mother! I meditate on you, O *Bhagavad Gita*, that frees me from worldly existence!

I bow before you, Vyasa, with the great intellect and eyes that are as large as the petals of a lotus in bloom! You lit the lamp of knowledge in which the *Mahabharata* provides the oil!

O you, who made the *parijata* (a divine flower) bloom and who holds the rod for driving cows! I bow before Krishna the giver of knowledge, who milked the ambrosia of the *Gita*!

All the *Upanishads* are like cows, Partha is the calf and the learned drink the milk that is the great ambrosia of the *Gita*.

I bow before Krishna, the Lord of the Universe! God, the son of Vasudeva (Krishna's father), the destroyer of Kansa (Krishna's evil uncle) and Chanura (a wrestler sent by Kansa), the supreme bliss of Devaki (Krishna's mother)!

Bhishma and Drona were the banks (this is a description of the Kurukshetra war), Jayadratha was the water, the king of Gandhara was the blue lotus, Shalya was the shark (or crocodile), Kripa was the current and Karna was the waves on the banks.

Ashvatthama and Vikarna were the terrible crocodiles and Duryodhana was the whirlpool. With Keshava (Krishna) as the boatman, the Pandavas indeed crossed the river that was the war.

The words of Parashara's son (Vyasa) are the immortal lotus, its stamens are the different stories therein, bloomed by Hari's (Krishna) discourse, and its powerful fragrance the essence of the *Gita*.

The good and pure bees of this world drink this, every day and every night. May this produce great good in him who wishes to destroy the taint of *kali yuga*!

I bow before Madhava (Krishna), provider of supreme bliss! His compassion provides the dumb with speech and enables the crippled to traverse mountains.

Brahma, Varuna, Indra, Rudra and the Maruts praise him through divine hymns and the singers of the *Sama Veda* sing to him with their hymns and the consecutive parts of the *Upanishads*.

When established in meditation, the *yogis* see him, whose limits are unknown to even the gods and the demons, in their minds. I bow before that great God!

# **The Bhagavad Gita**

श्री भगवद्गीता

॥ प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥  
अर्जुनविषादयोगः

## Chapter 1

### Arjuna's Dejection

This chapter has forty-seven *shlokas* or verses.<sup>1</sup> It sets out the background to the war and begins with Arjuna asking Krishna, his charioteer, to place his chariot between the two armies so that he can see the various warriors who are assembled. The sight of his friends and relatives leads to Arjuna's dejection and his refusal to fight. Although there is no teaching, this is one of the most poetic chapters of the *Gita*.

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच —  
धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।  
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत संजय ॥१॥

संजय उवाच —  
दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुयोधनस्तदा।  
आचार्य-मुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥२॥

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।  
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥३॥

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।  
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥४॥

धृष्टकेतुश्येकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।  
पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैव्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥५॥

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान्  
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथः ॥६॥

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तानिवोध द्विजोत्तम ।  
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान् ब्रवीमि ते ॥७॥

(1)

Dhritarashtra<sup>2</sup> said:

O Sanjaya!<sup>3</sup> Having gathered on the holy plains of Kurukshetra,<sup>4</sup> wanting to fight, what did my sons and the sons of Pandu<sup>5</sup> do?

(2)

Sanjaya said:

At that time, on seeing the Pandava soldiers assembled in army formation, King Duryodhana went to the Teacher<sup>6</sup> and uttered the following words.

(3)

‘O Teacher! Look at this great army of the Pandavas, assembled in army formation by the son of Drupada,<sup>7</sup> your talented student.’

(4)

‘Here there are courageous warriors with mighty bows, the equals of Bhima and Arjuna in battle—Yuyudhana,<sup>8</sup> Virata, Drupada and other great warriors.’<sup>9</sup>

(5)

‘Dhristaketu<sup>10</sup> and Chekitana,<sup>11</sup> the valiant king of Kashi, Purujit from the Kuntibhoja clan and Shaibya, greatest among men.’

(6)

‘The powerful Yudhamanyu,<sup>12</sup> the brave Uttamoujas,<sup>13</sup> the son of Subhadra,<sup>14</sup> the sons of Draupadi—all of them are *maharathas*.’

(7)

‘O best among *brahmanas*! Now you should know the main warriors and leaders in my army. For your knowledge, I am naming them.’

भवान् भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिंजयः ।  
अश्वतथामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥8॥

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदथेऽत्यक्तजीविताः ।  
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥9॥

अपयांपं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।  
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ॥10॥

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।  
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्वं एव हि ॥11॥

तस्य संजनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।  
सिंहनादं विनश्योच्चैः शङ्खे दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥12॥

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।  
सहसैवाभ्यन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥13॥

ततः शवेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।  
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शंखौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥14॥

(8)

‘You yourself,<sup>15</sup> and Bhishma, and Karna, and Kripa,<sup>16</sup> who wins battles. Ashvatthama, and Vikarna<sup>17</sup> and the son of Somadatta.’<sup>18</sup>

(9)

‘There are many other brave warriors, ready to give up their lives for my sake. All of them are skilled in battle and they are armed with various weapons of attack.’<sup>19</sup>

(10)

‘That army of ours, protected by Bhishma, is unlimited. But this army of theirs, protected by Bhima, is limited.’<sup>20</sup>

(11)

‘All of you occupy your respective positions at all the entry points to the army formations. It is Bhishma who must be protected.’

(12)

Creating happiness in his<sup>21</sup> heart, the powerful eldest of the Kuru clan and the grandfather<sup>22</sup> roared loudly like a lion and blew his conch shell.

(13)

Then, suddenly, conch shells and kettledrums, *mridangas*, *dholas* and trumpets began to blare. That sound became tremendous.

(14)

Then, seated in a great chariot to which white horses were harnessed, Madhava<sup>23</sup> and Pandava<sup>24</sup> blew their divine conch shells.

पांचजन्यं हषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनंजयः ।  
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्कं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥१५॥

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।  
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥१६॥

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।  
धृष्टद्वाम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥१७॥

दुषदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।  
सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शंखान् दध्मुः पृथक् पृथक् ॥१८॥

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।  
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥१९॥

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।  
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्धम्य पाण्डवः ॥२०॥

हषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

अर्जुन उवाच –  
सेनयोरुभयोर्भये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥२१॥

(15)

Hrishikesh<sup>25</sup> blew the conch shell named Panchajanya and Dhananjaya<sup>26</sup> blew the conch shell named Devadatta. Vrikodara,<sup>27</sup> whose deeds give rise to fear, blew the giant conch shell named Poundra.

(16)

King Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew the conch shell named Anantavijaya. Nakula blew the conch shell named Sughosha and Sahadeva blew the conch shell named Manipushpaka.

(17)

The King of Kashi with the great bow and the great warrior Shikhandi, Dhristadyumna, Virata and Satyaki, who is never defeated...

(18)

...Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, and the mighty-armed son of Subhadra, all of them blew their separate conch shells, O ruler of the earth!<sup>28</sup>

(19)

That tremendous sound echoed in the sky and on earth and pierced the hearts of those who were on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra.

(20)

Then, the son of Pandu,<sup>29</sup> with the monkey on his banner, saw the friends of Dhritarashtra thus arranged in battle formation and got ready to use his weapons. O ruler of the earth,<sup>30</sup> he raised his bow.

(21)

And told Hrishikesha<sup>31</sup> the following words. ‘O Achyuta!<sup>32</sup> Place my chariot in between the two armies.’

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।  
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्धमे ॥22॥

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।  
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥23॥

संजय उवाच —  
एवमुक्तो हपीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।  
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥24॥

भीष्मद्वोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।  
उवाच पार्थं पश्यैतान् समवेतान् कुरुनिति ॥25॥

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्यार्थः पितृनथं पितामहान् ।  
आचार्यान् मातुलान् भ्रातृन् पुत्रान् पौत्रान् सखांस्तथा ॥26॥

श्वशुरान् सुहृदश्चैव सेनयो रुभयोरपि ।  
तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान् बन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥27॥

कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

अर्जुन उवाच —  
दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्णं युयुत्सुं समवस्थितान् ॥28॥

(22)

‘While I look at those who are desirous of battle and are assembled here. Let me see with whom I will have to fight in this war-related business.’

(23)

‘In a desire to do good to the evil-hearted son of Dhritarashtra, they have gathered here, desirous of fighting. I want to see them.’

(24)

Sanjaya said:

O, descendant of Bharata!<sup>33</sup> Thus spoken to by Gudakesha,<sup>34</sup> Hrishikesha placed that magnificent chariot between the two armies.

(25)

In front of Bhishma, Drona and all the other rulers of the earth and said, ‘O Partha!<sup>35</sup> Look at those of the Kuru clan who are assembled here.’

(26)

There, Partha saw fathers and grandfathers, teachers and maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and friends...<sup>36</sup>

(27)

...Fathers-in-law and well-wishers in those two assembled armies. Seeing them, all the friends and relatives assembled there, the son of Kunti...

(28)

...Was overcome with great pity<sup>37</sup> and in sadness, uttered the following words. ‘O Krishna! Having seen these relatives here, assembled with a

desire to fight...'

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुद्ध्यति ।  
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥२९॥

गाण्डीवं स्त्रसते हस्तात्वक्वैव परिदहयते ।  
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥३०॥

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव।  
न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥३१॥

न कांङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।  
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जावितेन वा ॥३२॥

येषामर्थे कांङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।  
त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥३३॥

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।  
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः स्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥३४॥

एतान् हनुमिच्छामि ऋतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।  
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥३५॥

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रनः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।  
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥३६॥

(29)

‘...My body is going numb and my mouth is going dry. My body is quivering and my body-hair is standing up.’

(30)

‘My skin is burning and the Gandiva<sup>38</sup> is slipping from my hands. O Keshava!<sup>39</sup> I cannot stand and my mind is in a whirl.’

(31)

‘The omens that I see are ill ones. I don’t see any good that can come from killing one’s relatives in a war.’

(32)

‘O Krishna! I don’t want victory. Nor do I want the kingdom or happiness. O Govinda!<sup>40</sup> What will we do with the kingdom or with pleasures or with life itself?’

(33)

‘Those for whose sake we want the kingdom and pleasures and happiness, they are gathered here in war, ready to give up their lives and their riches.’

(34)

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

(35)

‘O Madhusudana!<sup>41</sup> I don’t want to kill them, even if they kill me, even for the kingdoms of the three worlds, forget this earth.’

(36)

‘O Janardana!<sup>42</sup> What pleasure will we derive from killing the sons of Dhritarashtra? Although they are criminals,<sup>43</sup> sin alone will be our lot if we kill them.’

तस्मान्नाहा॒र्व वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् स्वबान्धवान् ।  
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥३७॥

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतकुचेतसः।  
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥३८॥

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम्।  
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥३९॥

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।  
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्त्रमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥४०॥

अधर्माभिभवात् कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।  
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्ण्यं जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥४१॥

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलधानां कुलस्य च ।  
पतन्ति पितरो द्येयां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥४२॥

दोषैरतैः कुलधानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।  
उत्साधनो जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥४३॥

(37)

‘Therefore, we cannot kill the sons of Dhritarashtra, with their friends. O Madhava! How can we be happy after killing our relatives?’

(38)

‘Although their minds are befuddled with greed and they do not see the sin that comes from opposing friends or from destroying the family line...’

(39)

‘...O Janardana! We can see the sin that comes from destroying the family line. Why should we not have the knowledge to refrain from committing this sin?’

(40)

‘When the family line is destroyed, the traditional family *dharma* is also destroyed. When *dharma* is destroyed, evil overwhelms the entire family line.’

(41)

‘O Krishna! When evil arises, the women of the family become corrupted. O descendant of the Vrishnis!<sup>44</sup> When the women are corrupted, hybrid castes are born.<sup>45</sup>

(42)

‘Hybrid castes ensure that the family line and those who destroyed the family line, both go to hell. Because their ancestors fall<sup>46</sup> and are deprived of offerings of funereal cakes and drink.’

(43)

‘From the sins of those who destroy the family line and from hybrid castes being generated, the ancient *dharma* of the castes and the *dharma* of the family are both destroyed.’

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणं मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।  
नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥44॥

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।  
यद्राज्ञसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥45॥

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणायः ।  
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥46॥

संजय उवाच —

एवमुक्त्वाऽर्जुनः सङ्कुचे रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।  
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसर्वान्मानसः ॥47॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादऽर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥

(44)

‘O Janardana!<sup>47</sup> If the family *dharma* is destroyed, those men are doomed to spend an eternity in hell. Se we have heard.’

(45)

‘Alas! Because of our greed for the kingdom and for happiness, we have got ready to kill our relatives. We were certain to commit a great sin.’

(46)

‘With me unarmed and unresisting, if the sons of Dhritarashtra, with weapons in their hands, should kill me in battle, that will be better for me.’

(47)

Sanjaya said:

Saying this, in that battlefield, Arjuna sat down in his chariot. He threw away his bow and arrows, his mind overwhelmed with grief.

॥ द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥

सांख्ययोगः

## Chapter 2

# The Knowledge of the Self<sup>1</sup>

This chapter has seventy-two *shlokas* or verses and is thus one of the two longest chapters, the other one being the eighteenth. The first nine *shlokas* repeat Arjuna's sense of despondency. Then, beginning with *shloka* 11, the teaching begins and what follows is like a summary of the entire *Gita*. However, the emphasis is on *karma yoga* and *jnana yoga*, there being little of *bhakti yoga*.

संजय उवाच —

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णकुलेक्षणम् ।  
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥१॥

श्रीभगावानुवाच —

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुषस्थितम् ।  
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वार्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥२॥

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।  
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥३॥

अर्जुन उवाच —

कथं भीष्ममहं सहृद्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।  
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥४॥

गुरुनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्  
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।  
हत्वाऽर्थकामांस्तु गुरुनिहैव  
भुंजीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥५॥

(1)

Sanjaya said:

Seeing him<sup>2</sup> thus overcome with pity,<sup>3</sup> his eyes filled with tears and struck thus with grief, Madhusudana<sup>4</sup> said the following words.

(2)

Krishna said:

‘O Arjuna! From where, when we have this crisis, has this kind of weakness overcome you? This does not lead to heaven or fame, and characterizes those who are not *aryas*.’

(3)

‘O Partha!<sup>5</sup> Give up this weakness, this is not deserving of you. You who scorch your foes, give up this petty weakness of heart.’

(4)

Arjuna said:

‘O Madhusudana! How will I use arrows to fight in this war against Bhishma and Drona? O slayer of enemies!<sup>6</sup> They are deserving of worship.’

(5)

‘In this world, it is better to beg for alms than to kill one’s respected teachers. If I kill my elders, the wealth and other objects of desire that I enjoy will be drenched in their blood.’

न चैतद्विदः कतरनो गरीयो  
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा ना जयेयुः ।  
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविपाम-  
स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥६॥

कार्पण्यदोषोपहत स्वभावः  
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसमूढचेताः ।  
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तम्हे  
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥७॥

न हि प्रपश्यामि भमापनुद्याद्  
यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।  
अवाप्य भूमावसपलमृद्धं  
राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥८॥

संजय उवाच —

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तप ।  
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूर्णा वभूव ह ॥९॥

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।  
सेनयो रुभयो मंध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥१०॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादाश्च भाषसे ।  
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥११॥

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।  
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥१२॥

(6)

‘I don’t know which is better for us, their defeating us or our defeating them. The sons of Dhritarashtra are in front of me. We don’t want to kill them in order to live.’

(7)

‘My normal nature has been overtaken by a sense of helplessness.<sup>7</sup> Confused about what is *dharma*, I am asking you. Tell me that which is best for me. I am your disciple. I have sought refuge in you. Instruct me.’

(8)

‘This grief is exploiting my senses and I don’t see what will remedy that, even if I win lordship over the gods, or this earth, and am without any enemies and prosperous.’

(9)

Sanjaya said:

Having said this to Hrishikesha,<sup>8</sup> Gudakesha,<sup>9</sup> the scorcher of foes, told Govinda, ‘I will not fight’ and fell silent.

(10)

O descendant of Bharata!<sup>10</sup> As if smiling, Hrishikesha said the following to the griefstricken person between the two armies.

(11)

‘You speak as if you are wise, but you are grieving over those that one should not sorrow over. The wise don’t sorrow over those who are dead or those who are alive.’

(12)

‘It is not that I, or you, or these kings, did not exist before this. Nor is it that we won’t exist in the future, all of us will be there.’

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा।  
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धारस्तत्र न मुहयति ॥३॥

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णासुखदुःखदा:  
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तास्तिक्षस्व भारत ॥४॥

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषवंभ ।  
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥५॥

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।  
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥६॥

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।  
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥७॥

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।  
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युद्यस्व भारत ॥८॥

(13)

‘The soul passes through childhood, youth and age in this body, and likewise, attains another body.<sup>11</sup> The wise don’t get bewildered by this.’

(14)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>12</sup> Because of contact between senses and objects, feelings of warmth and cold, pleasure and pain result. But these are temporary and are created and disappear. O descendant of Bharata!<sup>13</sup> Therefore, tolerate these.’

(15)

‘O best among men!<sup>14</sup> The wise person who is not affected by these, and who looks upon happiness and unhappiness equally, attains the right to immortality.’

(16)

‘That which is untrue does not have an existence. That which is true cannot be destroyed. But those who know the truth realize the ends of both these.’<sup>15</sup>

(17)

‘But know that which pervades all of this is never destroyed. No one can destroy that which is without change.’<sup>16</sup>

(18)

‘It has been said that all these bodies inhabited by the soul are capable of destruction. But the soul is eternal, incapable of being destroyed and

incapable of being established through proof. Therefore, O descendant of Bharata!<sup>17</sup> Fight.'

य एनं वेति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।  
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥19॥

न जायते प्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।  
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥20॥

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।  
कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥21॥

वासींस जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृहणाति नरोऽपराणि ।  
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥22॥

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।  
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥23॥

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाहयोऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।  
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥24॥

(19)

‘He who knows this<sup>18</sup> as a slayer and he who thinks of this as something that is slain, both of them do not know. This is not a slayer, nor can it be slain.’

(20)

‘This is never born, nor does it ever die. This does not come into existence because it has been born. This has no birth, it is eternal and without destruction. It has no end. When the body is killed, this is not killed.’<sup>19</sup>

(21)

‘O Partha!<sup>20</sup> He who knows this to be without destruction, eternal, without birth and incapable of change, how can that person cause anyone to be slain? Or how can he slay anyone?’

(22)

‘Like a person discards worn-out clothes and accepts others that are new, like that, the soul discards worn-out bodies and attains others that are new.’

(23)

‘Weapons cannot cut this.<sup>21</sup> Fire cannot burn this. Nor can water wet this. And the wind cannot dry this.’

(24)

‘This cannot be cut. This cannot be burnt. This cannot be wetted. And this cannot be dried. This is eternal and is everywhere. This is stable and does not move. This has no beginning.’

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।  
तस्मादेवं विदितैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥२५॥

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।  
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥२६॥

जातस्य हि भ्रूवो मृत्युर्मृत्युं जन्म मृतस्य च ।  
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥२७॥

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।  
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥२८॥

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेनं आश्चर्यवद्गुदति तथैव चान्यः ।  
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः श्रूणोति श्रुत्वाप्येन वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥२९॥

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।  
तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥३०॥

(25)

‘It has been said that this has no manifestation, that this cannot be thought of and that this has no transformation.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, knowing this to be like that, you should not grieve.’

(26)

‘But if you think this to be subject to continual birth and continual death, even then, O mighty-armed warrior, you should not grieve for this.’

(27)

‘Death is inevitable for one who is born and birth is inevitable for one who dies. Therefore, because this is inevitable, you should not grieve.’

(28)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>23</sup> Beings are not manifest in the beginning. They are manifest in the middle and are not manifest again after death. What is there to sorrow over?’<sup>24</sup>

(29)

‘Some people see this<sup>25</sup> as a wonder. Likewise, some others speak of this as a wonder. And some others hear of this as a wonder. But having heard, they are unable to understand this.’<sup>26</sup>

(30)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>27</sup> In everyone’s body, the *atman* is indestructible. Therefore, you should not mourn about any being.’

स्वधर्मपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमहसि ।  
धर्माद्विद्युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥३१॥

यदृच्छया चोपपनं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।  
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥३२॥

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्मं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।  
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्यसि ॥३३॥

अकीर्तिंचापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽन्याम् ।  
संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥३४॥

भयाद्रणादुपरं तं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।  
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥३५॥

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।  
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥३६॥

हतो वा प्राप्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।  
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥३७॥

(31)<sup>28</sup>

‘Also considering your natural *dharma*, you should not waver. Because there is nothing better for a *kshatriya* than a war fought for the sake of *dharma*.’

(32)

‘O Partha!<sup>29</sup> This war has arrived on its own, like an open door to heaven. Happy are the *kshatriyas* who obtain a war like this.’

(33)

‘But if you do not take part in this war in the cause of *dharma*, then you will forsake your natural *dharma* and fame, and sin will accrue to you.’

(34)

‘And all people will forever talk about your ill-fame. For someone who is honoured, dishonour is worse than death.’

(35)

‘These great warriors will think that you have withdrawn from the war because of your fear. And those who have so far respected you will lessen their opinion of you.’

(36)

‘Your enemies will say many things that should not be said and will criticize your prowess. Is anything more painful than that?’

(37)

‘If you are slain, you will attain heaven. If you win, you will enjoy the earth. O son of Kunti!<sup>30</sup> Therefore, arise, resolve determinedly to fight.’

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।  
ततो युद्धाय युन्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्यसि ॥38॥

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धियोगे त्विमां श्रृणु ।  
बुद्धया युक्तो यथा पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥39॥

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।  
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥40॥

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।  
बहुशाखा हयनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥41॥

यामिमां पुण्यितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।  
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीतिवादिनः ॥42॥

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।  
क्रियाविशेषबहुलं भोगैश्वर्यर्गतिं प्रति ॥43॥

(38)

‘Therefore, get ready to fight, looking upon happiness and unhappiness, gain and loss and victory and defeat equally. And sin will not touch you.’

(39)

‘O Partha!<sup>31</sup> You have just been told the wisdom that comes from knowledge of the self.<sup>32</sup> Now listen to the knowledge about *yoga*.<sup>33</sup> When united with this knowledge, you will be able to discard the bonds of action.’

(40)

‘In this,<sup>34</sup> the possibility of effort coming to waste does not exist. Nor is there the chance of committing a sin. Even a little bit of this *dharma* protects from great fear.’

(41)

‘O descendant of Kuru!<sup>35</sup> This certain knowledge is unwavering.<sup>36</sup> But for those who cannot focus, their wisdom is many-branched and like the infinite.’

(42)

‘O Partha!<sup>37</sup> Those who are ignorant say these flowery words, praising the *Vedas*<sup>38</sup> and claiming there is nothing else.’

(43)

‘They are addicted to desire, think of heaven as the supreme objective and are enamoured of the fruits of birth and action.<sup>39</sup> They praise many rites and rituals that lead to pleasure and wealth.’

भौगेश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।  
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥44॥

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।  
निद्रन्दो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो नियोगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥45॥

यावानर्थं उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।  
तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ग्राहणस्य विजानतः ॥46॥

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥47॥

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय ।  
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥48॥

दूरेण हयवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनंजय ।  
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥49॥

(44)

‘They are addicted to pleasure and wealth and, because of those words, their minds are deluded. They cannot focus on one object—they do not have the intellect that allows one to discriminate.’

(45)

‘The *Vedas* deal with the three *gunas*.<sup>40</sup> O Arjuna! Rise above the three *gunas*. Without doubt,<sup>41</sup> always resort to *sattva*. Do not be bothered about that which is yet to be attained<sup>42</sup> or preserving what has already been attained.<sup>43</sup> Realize the *atman*.’

(46)

‘Whatever purpose is achieved by many small bodies of water is also achieved by one large body of water. Like that, whatever all the *Vedas* achieve is achieved by a person who knows the *brahman*.’<sup>44</sup>

(47)

‘You have the right to action alone. You never have the right to the fruit. Do not be motivated to act because of the fruit. But don’t be motivated to not acting either.’

(48)

‘O Dhananjaya!<sup>45</sup> Perform action by resorting to *yoga*.<sup>46</sup> Give up attachment. Look upon success, and failure equally. This equal attitude is known as *yoga*.’

(49)

‘O Dhananjaya!<sup>47</sup> Action is far inferior to the *yoga* of wisdom.<sup>48</sup> Seek refuge in this wisdom. Pitiable are those who crave after the fruit.’

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।  
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥५०॥

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।  
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥५१॥

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।  
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥५२॥

श्रुति-विप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।  
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्त्यसि ॥५३॥

अर्जुन उवाच —  
स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।  
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम् ॥५४॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —  
प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।  
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥५५॥

(50)

‘He who has this wisdom discards good action and evil action in this life itself. Therefore, use *yoga* in what you do. *Yoga* is the skill of action.’

(51)

‘The learned, who have this wisdom, abandon the fruit of action and are freed from the fetters of birth. They certainly attain that place which is bereft of all blemishes.’

(52)

‘When your intellect transcends this maze of delusion, then you will attain indifference between that which has already been heard and that which is yet to be heard.’<sup>49</sup>

(53)

‘Your mind is distracted at what you have heard. But when your intellect is unwavering and focused on *samadhi*, then you will attain *yoga*.’<sup>50</sup>

(54)

Arjuna said:

‘O Keshava!<sup>51</sup> What are the signs of a person who has attained *samadhi* and whose intellect doesn’t waver? How does he speak, how does he sit and how does he walk?’

(55)

Krishna said:

‘O Partha!<sup>52</sup> A person is said to be unwavering in intellect when he banishes all desires from his mind. He is content within his own *atman*.’

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्यृहः ।  
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥५६॥

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।  
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५७॥

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।  
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५८॥

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।  
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥५९॥

यततो हयपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।  
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाधीनि हरन्ति प्रसंभं मनः ॥६०॥

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।  
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥६१॥

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।  
सङ्गात् संजायते कामः कामात् ऋधोऽभिजायते ॥६२॥

(56)

‘He is not disturbed by unhappiness and he is beyond desiring happiness. He has overcome attachment, fear and anger and he is known as a sage who is unwavering in his intellect.’

(57)

‘In everything, he has no emotion, regardless of whether something pleasant or something unpleasant has been attained. He is not pleased, nor is he dissatisfied, and in him wisdom is established.’

(58)

‘Like a tortoise withdraws its limbs, such a person withdraws his senses, in every way, from sensual objects. In him is wisdom established.’

(59)

‘He who starves himself may withdraw from sensual objects, but not from desire.<sup>53</sup> In him,<sup>54</sup> who has seen the *paramatman*, even desire is restrained.’

(60)

‘O, son of Kunti!<sup>55</sup> Even if a learned man takes care, the turbulent senses violently steal his mind.’

(61)

‘He who is devoted to me controls all those<sup>56</sup> and focuses his mind on me. If a person can so control his senses, in him is wisdom established.’

(62)

‘If a man thinks about sensual objects, this gives birth to attachment for them.<sup>57</sup> From attachment is created desire and desire gives birth to anger.’

क्रोधाद् भवति संमोहः संमोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।  
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥63॥

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रैश्चरन् ।  
आत्मवश्यैविर्धेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥64॥

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखनां हानिरस्योपजायते ।  
प्रसन्नचेतसो हाशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥65॥

नास्ति बुद्धिरुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।  
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥66॥

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।  
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नवमिवाम्भसि ॥67॥

तस्माद्यस्य महावाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।  
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥68॥

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।  
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥69॥

(63)

‘Anger gives birth to delusion and delusion leads to confusion of memory.<sup>58</sup> From confusion of memory comes loss of intellect and loss of intellect results in destruction.’

(64)

‘But he who has controlled his mind is freed from attachment and hatred.<sup>59</sup> Having used himself to control his senses, he uses these to enjoy objects and satisfy himself.’

(65)

‘When there is such serenity, in him is eliminated all unhappiness. Because in the mind of someone at peace, wisdom is quickly established.’

(66)

‘He who has no control has no intellect. He who has no control has no thought.<sup>60</sup> Without thought, there is no peace. How can there be happiness for someone who has no peace?’

(67)

‘The wind rocks a boat on the water. Like that, the mind follows a sense<sup>61</sup> devoted to objects and even a single sense robs him of wisdom.’

(68)

‘O, mighty-armed!<sup>62</sup> Therefore, he whose senses have been withdrawn from objects in every way, in him has wisdom been steadily established.’

(69)

‘When it is night to ordinary beings, the controlled person is awake then.  
When ordinary beings are awake, the sage perceives that as night.’<sup>63</sup>

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठंसमुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्गत् ।  
तदुत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमानोति न कामकामी ॥70॥

विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निस्पृहः ।  
निर्भयो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥71॥

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुहयति ।  
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥72॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषद्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे सांख्ययोगो नाम द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥

(70)

‘Just as the waters enter an ocean and leave the full ocean undisturbed, similarly, all sensual objects enter that person, but leave him at peace, unlike those attached to desire.’

(71)

‘A man who gives up all desire and exists without longing, without ego and without a sense of ownership, he attains peace.’

(72)

‘O Partha!<sup>64</sup> This is the state of being established in the *brahman*. If one attains this, one is not deluded. Even at the end,<sup>65</sup> established in this state, one attains union with the *brahman*.’

॥ तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥

कर्म योगः

## Chapter 3

# The Path of Action

This chapter has forty-three *shlokas* or verses. In the second chapter, two paths are mentioned: *jnana yoga* and *karma yoga*. Arjuna infers a suggestion that *jnana yoga* or the path of knowledge is superior to *karma yoga* or the path of action. This chapter explains that this suggestion is incorrect and that avoidance of action is not the answer. Instead, detached action is the key.

अर्जुन उवाच —

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।  
तत्क कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशब ॥१॥

व्यामिश्रेणोव वाक्येन बुद्धि मोहयसीव मे ।  
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥२॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।  
ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥३॥

न कर्मणामनारम्भानैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽशनुते ।  
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥४॥

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।  
कार्यते हयवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥५॥

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।  
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥६॥

यस्त्वन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेर्जुन ।  
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥७॥

(1)

Arjuna said:

‘O Janardana!<sup>1</sup> If, in your opinion, knowledge is superior to action, then why are you engaging me in this terrible action?’

(2)

‘These mixed words seem to be confounding my intellect. Tell me definitely that one thing that is best for me.’<sup>2</sup>

(3)

Bhagavan<sup>3</sup> said:

‘O pure of heart!<sup>4</sup> I have said it before<sup>5</sup> that in this world, there are two paths. There is *jnana yoga* for those who follow *sankhya* and there is *karma yoga* for *yogis*.<sup>6</sup>’

(4)

‘Without performing action, man is not freed from the bondage of action. And resorting to *sannyasa*<sup>7</sup> does not result in liberation.’

(5)

‘No one can ever exist, even for a short while, without performing action. Because the qualities of nature<sup>8</sup> force everyone to perform action.’

(6)

‘The ignorant person who exists by controlling his organs of action,<sup>9</sup> while his mind remembers the senses, is said to be deluded and is a hypocrite.’<sup>10</sup>

(7)

‘O Arjuna! But he who restrains the senses through his mind and starts the *yoga* of action with the organs of action, while remaining unattached, he is superior.’

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो हयकर्मणः ।  
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्धयेदकर्मणः ॥8॥

यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मवन्धनः ।  
तदर्थै कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥9॥

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।  
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्वप्तकामधुक ॥10॥

देवान् भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।  
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्यथ ॥11॥

इष्टान् भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।  
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुड़के स्तेन एव सः ॥12॥

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बैः ।  
भुंजते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥13॥

अन्नाद् भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।  
यज्ञाद् भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥14॥

(8)

‘Therefore, do the prescribed action.<sup>11</sup> Because action is superior to not performing action. And without action, even survival of the body is not possible.’

(9)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>12</sup> All action other than that for sacrifices shackles people to the bondage of action.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, do action for that purpose, without attachment.’

(10)

‘Earlier,<sup>14</sup> Prajapati<sup>15</sup> created beings, accompanied by a sacrifice<sup>16</sup> and said, with this,<sup>17</sup> may you increase, and may this grant you all objects you desire.’

(11)

‘Through this,<sup>18</sup> cherish the gods and those gods will cherish you. By cherishing each other, you will obtain that which is most desired.’

(12)

‘Because, cherished by the sacrifice, the gods will give you all desired objects. He who enjoys these without giving them<sup>19</sup> their share is certainly a thief.’

(13)

‘Righteous people who enjoy the leftovers<sup>20</sup> of sacrifices are freed from all sins. But those sinners who cook only for themselves live on sin.’

(14)

‘Beings are created from food and food is created from rain clouds. Rain clouds are created from sacrifices and sacrifices are created from action.’

कर्म ब्रह्मोदभवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।  
तस्मात् सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥१५॥

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।  
अघायुरिद्रियारामो मोघं पार्थं स जीविति ॥१६॥

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतुप्तश्च मानवः ।  
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥१७॥

नैव तस्य कृतेनाथो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।  
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥१८॥

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।  
असक्तो हयाचरन् कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुष ॥१९॥

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।  
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन् कर्तुमर्हसि ॥२०॥

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।  
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥२१॥

(15)

‘Know that action is created from the *Vedas* and the *Vedas* are created from the *brahman*. Therefore, the omnipresent *brahman* is always present in sacrifices.’<sup>21</sup>

(16)

‘In this way, the cycle goes on and he who does not follow this is addicted to his senses and lives a sinner’s life. O Partha!<sup>22</sup> He lives in vain.’

(17)

‘But the man who takes pleasure in the *atman*, is content with the *atman* and is satiated with the *atman* has no duties.’

(18)

‘In this world, he has no need for action, nor anything to lose from inaction. He doesn’t need the refuge of any being for anything.’

(19)

‘Therefore, be unattached and always perform prescribed action. Because a man who performs action when unattached attains the highest liberation.’

(20)

‘Janaka<sup>23</sup> and others attained liberation through action. One should perform action with an eye to preserving the worlds.’<sup>24</sup>

(21)

‘Whatever a great man does, ordinary people also do that. Whatever he accepts as duty, others also follow that.’

न मे पार्थस्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन ।  
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥२२॥

यदि हयहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्दितः ।  
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वतः ॥२३॥

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।  
सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥२४॥

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।  
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तशिचकीर्षुलोकसंग्रहम् ॥२५॥

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्ग्नाम् ।  
जोषयेत् सर्वकर्मणि विद्वान् युक्तः समाचरन् ॥२६॥

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।  
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥२७॥

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।  
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सञ्जते ॥२८॥

(22)

‘O Partha!<sup>25</sup> In the three worlds, I have no duties. There is nothing I haven’t attained, there is nothing yet to be attained. Yet, I am engaged in action.’

(23)

‘O Partha!<sup>26</sup> If I ever relax and stop performing action, then men will follow my path in every way.’

(24)

‘If I don’t perform action, then all these worlds will be destroyed. I will be the lord of hybrids<sup>27</sup> and responsible for the destruction of these beings.’

(25)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>28</sup> Ignorant people perform action by being attached to that action. But the wise perform similar action unattached, for the welfare and preservation of the worlds.’

(26)

‘The wise will not befuddle the minds of the ignorant who are attached to action. Being knowledgeable, they will themselves perform all action and keep them<sup>29</sup> engaged.’

(27)

‘All action is completed, in every way, through the qualities of nature.<sup>30</sup> He who is deluded by the ego thinks that he is the doer.’

(28)

‘O mighty-armed! <sup>31</sup> But he who truly knows the division of the qualities, <sup>32</sup> and different types of action, <sup>33</sup> knows that qualities manifest themselves in the senses and does not get attached.’ <sup>34</sup>

प्रकृते गुणसंमूढाः सञ्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।  
तानकृत्सनविदो मन्दान् कृत्सनविन विचालयेत् ॥२९॥

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।  
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥३०॥

ये मे मतभिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।  
श्रद्धावनोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मधिः ॥३१॥

यत्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।  
सर्वज्ञानविभूदांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥३२॥

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेज्ञानवानपि ।  
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निश्चाहः किं करिष्यति ॥३३॥

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्याथ रागद्वृष्टौ व्यवस्थितौ ।  
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ हयस्य परिपन्थनौ ॥३४॥

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।  
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥३५॥

(29)

‘Those who are deluded by nature’s qualities are attached to action by senses and organs. The omniscient should not disturb<sup>35</sup> those ignorant and misguided people.’

(30)

‘Focusing your mind on the Supreme Being,<sup>36</sup> vest all action in me. Be without desire, without ownership and without fever<sup>37</sup> and fight.’

(31)

‘People who, faithfully and without finding fault, always follow this view of mine, they too are freed from the bondage of action.’<sup>38</sup>

(32)

‘But know that those who, in an attempt to find fault, don’t follow this view of mine, they have no sense and all their knowledge will be deluded and destroyed.’

(33)

‘Even a wise person acts according to his own nature. Nature drives all beings. Why should one use restraint?’<sup>39</sup>

(34)

‘For each sense, in its respective area, attachment and aversion are certain.<sup>40</sup> But don’t be overcome by those. They are obstacles.’

(35)

‘One’s own *dharma*, even if followed imperfectly, is superior to someone else’s *dharma*, even if followed perfectly. It is better to be slain while following one’s own *dharma*. Someone else’s *dharma* is tinged with fear.’

अर्जुन उवाच —

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।  
अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥३६॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

काम एष क्रोध एष रजागुणसमुद्भवः ।  
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥३७॥

धूमेनाक्रियते वहिनर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।  
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥३८॥

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।  
कामरूपेण कौन्तैय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥३९॥

इन्द्रियाणि मनोबुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठान-मुच्यते ।  
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥४०॥

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्पभ ।  
पाप्मानं प्रजहि हयेनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥४१॥

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।  
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥४२॥

(36)

Arjuna said:

‘O descendant of the Vrishnis!<sup>41</sup> By whom are these men compelled? Despite being unwilling, it is almost as if they are forced into evil action.’<sup>42</sup>

(37)

Bhagavan<sup>43</sup> said:

‘This is desire. This is anger. These are born from the *rajas* quality. These are insatiable and great sins.<sup>44</sup> Here,<sup>45</sup> know them to be enemies.’

(38)

‘Like smoke covers the fire, like dust covers the mirror, like the womb covers the foetus, in that way, this<sup>46</sup> is covered by that.’<sup>47</sup>

(39)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>48</sup> This is the perennial enemy of the wise. Knowledge is covered by this desire that is insatiable like the fire.’

(40)

‘All senses, the mind and intellect, are its<sup>49</sup> seat. This<sup>50</sup> uses these<sup>51</sup> to veil knowledge and delude beings.’

(41)

‘O best among the descendants of Bharata!<sup>52</sup> Therefore, you should first control your senses. Destroy this<sup>53</sup> that is like sin and is the destroyer of knowledge.’<sup>54</sup>

(42)

‘It is said the senses are superior.<sup>55</sup> The mind is superior to the senses. Intellect is superior to the mind. That<sup>56</sup> is superior to intellect.’

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।  
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥43॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मयोगो नाम तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥

(43)

‘O mighty-armed!<sup>57</sup> In this way, use intellect to realize that which is superior to the intellect. Use your inner strength to calm the *atman*<sup>58</sup> and destroy the enemy, in the form of desire, that is difficult to defeat.’

॥ चतुर्थोऽिद्यायः ॥  
ज्ञानकर्मसन्यासयोगः

## Chapter 4

# The Path of Knowledge, Action and Renunciation

This chapter has forty-two *shlokas* or verses and elaborates on what has already been stated in Chapter 3. The splicing of *jnana yoga* and *karma yoga* is noticeable, as is the discussion of different types of *yajnas*. There is also a direct reference to *varnashrama dharma* and the question of *avatars* (incarnations).

श्रीभगवानुवाच –

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।  
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवे ऽब्रवीत् ॥१॥

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्थयो विदुः ।  
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥२॥

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।  
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं हयेतदुत्तमम् ॥३॥

अर्जुन उवाच –

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।  
कथमेतद्बुजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥४॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच –

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।  
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥५॥

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।  
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥६॥

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।  
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥७॥

(1)

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said:

‘I instructed this eternal *yoga*<sup>2</sup> to Vivasvat<sup>1</sup> and Vivasvat told it to Manu. Manu told it to Ikshaku.’

(2)

‘In this way, handed down by tradition, the royal sages<sup>4</sup> knew this.<sup>5</sup> O scorcher of foes!<sup>6</sup> In this world, because of the long passage of time, this *yoga* has been destroyed.<sup>7</sup>

(3)

‘You are my follower and friend.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, today, I will tell you that old *yoga*, because this is excellent and secret knowledge.’

(4)

Arjuna said:

‘Your birth was later and Vivasvat’s birth was earlier. How will I understand that you instructed this earlier?’

(5)

Bhagavan<sup>9</sup> said:

‘O Arjuna! Many are the births that you and I have been through. I know them all. O scorcher of foes!<sup>10</sup> You know not.’

(6)

‘I have no birth. I am indestructible. I am the lord of all beings. But even then, through existing in my own nature, I come into existence through my own resolution.’<sup>11</sup>

(7)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>12</sup> Whenever *dharma*<sup>13</sup> goes into a decline and *adharma*<sup>14</sup> is on the ascendance, then I create myself.’

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।  
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥8॥

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।  
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥9॥

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।  
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥10॥

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।  
मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥11॥

कांक्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।  
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥12॥

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।  
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्युक्तर्तारमव्ययम् ॥13॥

न मां कर्माणि लिप्मन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।  
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥14॥

(8)

‘To protect the righteous and to destroy the sinners and to establish *dharma*, I manifest myself from *yuga* to *yuga*.’<sup>15</sup>

(9)

‘O Arjuna! He who thus knows the nature of my divine<sup>16</sup> birth and action, he is not born again when he dies, but attains me.’

(10)

‘Many, purified through the meditation of knowledge, have immersed themselves in me and sought refuge in me, discarding attachment, fear and anger.’

(11)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>17</sup> Whoever worships me, in whatever way, I entertain them in that way. Everywhere, men follow along my path.’

(12)

‘In this world, people, who desire success in their action, worship gods. Because in the world of men, success through action occurs quickly.’<sup>18</sup>

(13)

‘In accordance with *gunas* and action, the four *varnas* were created by me.<sup>19</sup> But despite being the creator of these, know me to be constant<sup>20</sup> and not the agent.’<sup>21</sup>

(14)

‘Actions do not touch me, nor do I desire the fruits of action. He who knows me in this fashion is not tied down by action.’

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वोपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।  
कुरु कर्मेव तस्मात्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥15॥

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।  
तते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ञात्वा मोक्षसेऽशुभात् ॥16॥

कर्मणो हयपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।  
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥17॥

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।  
स बुद्धिमान् नुष्टेषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥18॥

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिताः ।  
ज्ञानादिनग्रथकर्मणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥19॥

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्कृतं नित्यतुप्तो निराश्रयः ।  
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽति नैव किञ्चित् करोति सः ॥20॥

निराशीर्यतचित्रात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।  
शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥21॥

(15)

‘Knowing this, those, who sought liberation in the past, performed action. Therefore, you perform action alone, the path followed by predecessors in earlier times.’

(16)

‘Even the wise are confused about what is action and what is inaction.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, I will tell you what action<sup>23</sup> is. Knowing this, you will be freed from evil.’

(17)

‘Action itself has to be understood and prohibited action must also be understood. Inaction must also be understood. Because the path of action is difficult to comprehend.’

(18)

‘He who perceives inaction in action and perceives action in inaction, he is wise among men, has *yoga* and has the right to all action.’<sup>24</sup>

(19)

‘He whose efforts are always devoid of desire for fruit and ego,<sup>25</sup> he whose actions have been burnt by the fire of knowledge, the learned call him wise.’

(20)

‘He who has given up attachment to action and its fruit is always content and without refuge.<sup>26</sup> Even when he is immersed in action, he does nothing.’

(21)

‘Without attachment, controlled in mind and senses, having discarded all ownership<sup>27</sup> and performing action only through the body,<sup>28</sup> he does not attain the bondage of sin.’

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।  
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥22॥

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।  
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥23॥

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।  
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥24॥

दैत्यमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।  
ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुहुति ॥25॥

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुहुति ।  
शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुहुति ॥26॥

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।  
आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुहुति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥27॥

द्रव्यज्ञास्तपोगजा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।  
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः सर्वशित्रताः ॥28॥

(22)

‘Satisfied with unsought gains,<sup>29</sup> beyond opposites,<sup>30</sup> bereft of envy and regarding success and failure equally, even if he performs action, he is not bound.’

(23)

‘Beyond attachment, free<sup>31</sup> and with a mind established in knowledge, when he performs action for a *yajna* alone,<sup>32</sup> everything is destroyed.’<sup>33</sup>

(24)

‘The receptacles used for offerings<sup>34</sup> are the *brahman*. The oblations are the *brahman*. In the fire that is the *brahman*, the offerer, who is the *brahman*, performs the sacrifice. He who sees thus and is immersed in the *brahman* in all action, attains the *brahman* alone as a destination.’

(25)

‘Other *yogis* perform divine *yajnas*.<sup>35</sup> Others use the *yajna* as an offering to the fire that is the *brahman*.’<sup>36</sup>

(26)

‘Others offer senses like hearing as offerings to the fire that is self-control.<sup>37</sup> Others offer sounds and other objects to the fire that is the senses.’<sup>38</sup>

(27)

‘Others offer all action of the senses<sup>39</sup> and action of the breath of life<sup>40</sup> as offerings to the fire of self-control,<sup>41</sup> lit up through knowledge.’

(28)

‘Some use the *yajna* of offering gifts; others use the *yajna* of penance. Some use the *yajna* of *yoga* and still others, firm in their resolve and careful, use the *yajna* of knowledge.’<sup>42</sup>

अपाने जुहूति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।  
प्राणापानगती रुद्धवा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥२९॥

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुहूति ।  
सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकलमयाः ॥३०॥

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।  
नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुलोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तमः ॥३१॥

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।  
कर्मजान्विद्धि तान् सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥३२॥

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।  
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थं ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥३३॥

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।  
उपदेश्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥३४॥

यज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।  
येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रश्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥३५॥

(29)

‘Others offer the *prana* breath in the *apana* breath<sup>43</sup> and the *apana* breath in the *prana* breath.<sup>44</sup> Others restrain the flow of the *prana* and *apana* breath and practice *pranayama*.’<sup>45</sup>

(30)

‘Others control their food and offer the senses to the breath of life.<sup>46</sup> All these, learned in the *yajnas*, become sinless through *yajnas*.’

(31)

‘The leftovers<sup>47</sup> of sacrifices are like ambrosia<sup>48</sup> and those who partake of these attain the eternal *brahman*. O best of the Kurus!<sup>49</sup> Those who don’t perform *yajnas* have no existence in this world, forget other worlds.’

(32)

‘Many *yajnas* of this type are prescribed in the *brahman*’s mouth.<sup>50</sup> Know them all to be the outcome of action. Knowing this, you will attain liberation.’

(33)

‘O scorcher of foes!<sup>51</sup> A *yajna* performed with knowledge is superior to a *yajna* full of objects.<sup>52</sup> O son of Pritha!<sup>53</sup> All actions and their fruit end in knowledge.’

(34)

‘Attain that knowledge by prostrating, questioning and serving. The wise, those who are versed with the truth, will instruct you in wisdom.’

(35)

‘O Pandava!<sup>54</sup> Knowing that, you will never fall prey to this kind of delusion again. Through this, you will see all the beings in your *atman* and then in me.’

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।  
सर्वे ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥३६॥

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात् कुरुते ॐ जुन ।  
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्मणि भस्मसात् कुरुते तथा ॥३७॥

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।  
तत्स्वयं योगसांसद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥३८॥

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।  
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमच्चरेणाधिगच्छति ॥३९॥

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।  
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥४०॥

योगसंन्यस्तकर्मणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।  
आत्मवन्तं न कर्मणि निबध्नन्ति धनंजय ॥४१॥

तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।  
छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥४२॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु बह्यविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानकर्मसन्यासयोगो नाम चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥

(36)

‘Even if you are a greater sinner than all the other sinners, you will cross all oceans of sin with the boat of knowledge alone.’

(37)

‘O Arjuna! Like a raging fire burns to ashes pieces of wood, like that, the fire of knowledge burns all action to ashes.’

(38)

‘In this world, there is nothing as pure as knowledge.<sup>55</sup> With the passage of time, he who is accomplished in *yoga*,<sup>56</sup> himself attains that<sup>57</sup> within his heart.’

(39)

‘Knowledge is attained by the faithful, the unwavering and those who control their senses. Having attained knowledge, they quickly achieve supreme peace.’

(40)

‘The ignorant, the faithless and the doubting are destroyed. For the doubting person, this world, other worlds and happiness don’t exist.’

(41)

‘O Dhananjaya!<sup>58</sup> He who has offered up all action through *yoga* and he who has used knowledge to slice away doubt, actions cannot bind such a person, who is focused on the *atman*.’

(42)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>59</sup> Therefore, use the sword of knowledge to slice away this doubt in your heart, resulting from your own ignorance. Follow *yoga!*<sup>60</sup> Arise!’

॥ पंचमोऽध्यायः ॥

संन्यासयोगः

## Chapter 5

### The Path of Renunciation

This chapter has twenty-nine *shlokas* or verses. It is also sometimes titled *Karma-Sannyasa Yoga* or the path of action and renunciation. *Sannyasa* is sometimes interpreted as renunciation or the giving up of action and *jnana yoga*, or the path of knowledge, is therefore interpreted as this path of inaction. This chapter compares *sannyasa yoga* and *karma yoga* and argues against such a narrow interpretation of *sannyasa* and *jnana*.

अर्जुन उवाच —  
संन्यासं कर्मणा॒ कृष्ण पुनयोगं च शंससि ।  
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चतम् ॥१॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —  
संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुपौ ।  
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥२॥

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।  
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात् प्रमुच्यते ॥३॥

साहृदययोगौ पृथग्वालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।  
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्युभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥४॥

यत्साहृदयैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।  
एकं साहृदयं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥५॥

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्नुमयोगतः ।  
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥६॥

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।  
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥७॥

(1)

Arjuna said:

‘O Krishna! You are asking me to give up all action and you are also asking me to practise *yoga*.<sup>1</sup> Between these two, tell me decidedly which one is better.’<sup>2</sup>

(2)

Bhagavan<sup>3</sup> said:

‘Renunciation and action both lead to liberation. But of these two, *karma yoga* is superior to renunciation of action.’

(3)

‘O mighty-armed!<sup>4</sup> He who does not desire and he who does not hate, know him to be a perpetual *sannyasi*.<sup>5</sup> Freed from opposites,<sup>6</sup> he is happily freed from bondage.’

(4)

‘The ignorant,<sup>7</sup> not the wise, speak of renunciation and action as distinct.<sup>8</sup> If one of these is followed properly, the fruits of both result.’

(5)

‘Whatever place is attained by the followers of knowledge is also attained by those who practise action. He truly sees who sees renunciation and action as identical.’

(6)

‘O mighty-armed!<sup>9</sup> Without action, renunciation is only the cause of unhappiness.<sup>10</sup> The sage who uses *yoga* attains the *brahman* quickly.’

(7)

‘He who practises *yoga*, he who is pure of heart, he who has controlled his body, he who has controlled his senses, he who sees his own *atman* in the *atman* of all beings, he is not tied down, even if he performs action.’

नैव किंचित् करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।  
पश्यंश्रृण्वन् स्पृशञ्जिग्रन्नशननगच्छन् स्वपंश्वसन् ॥8॥

प्रलपन्विसृजन् गृहनुभिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।  
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥9॥

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।  
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥10॥

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।  
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥11॥

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।  
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥12॥

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।  
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्ति कारयन् ॥13॥

न कर्तुत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य मुजति प्रभुः ।  
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥14॥

(8)

‘The wise who follow *yoga* know that they are not doing anything even when they see, hear, touch, smell, eat, go, dream<sup>11</sup> or breathe...’

(9)

‘...Speak, discard, accept, open and close.<sup>12</sup> They think of the senses circulating among the senses.’<sup>13</sup>

(10)

‘He who establishes himself in the *brahman*,<sup>14</sup> and giving up attachment, performs action, is not touched by sin, like water on the leaf of a lotus.’

(11)

‘To purify their hearts, *yogis* give up attachment<sup>15</sup> and perform action only with their bodies, minds, intellect and senses.’

(12)

‘Attached to *yoga* and discarding attachment to fruits of action, they attain perpetual peace.<sup>16</sup> Those who do not follow *yoga* and are attached to fruits because of desire remain in bondage.’

(13)

‘Discarding all action through his mind,<sup>17</sup> the person who controls his body, the city with the nine gates,<sup>18</sup> remains in happiness. He doesn’t do anything himself. Nor does he cause anyone to do anything.’

(14)

‘The *atman*<sup>19</sup> doesn’t create ownership in the body, nor action. Nor does it create a relation with the fruits of action. Nature<sup>20</sup> acts.’

नादते कस्यचित् पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।  
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुहयन्ति जन्तवः ॥१५॥

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।  
तेषामादित्यवज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥१६॥

तद्बुद्ध्यस्तदात्मानस्तनिष्ठास्तपरायणाः ।  
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृतिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्पणाः ॥१७॥

विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।  
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥१८॥

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।  
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥१९॥

न प्रहर्षेत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत् प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।  
स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥२०॥

ब्राह्मयस्यशेषवसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।  
स ब्रह्मयोग युक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमशनुते ॥२१॥

(15)

‘The omnipresent lord doesn’t accept the sins or the good deeds of anybody. Knowledge is shrouded in ignorance. That is why beings are deluded.’

(16)

‘But in those in whom that ignorance has been destroyed by the knowledge of the *atman*, in them that knowledge expresses the great truth,<sup>21</sup> like the sun.’

(17)

‘Those whose intellect is focused on that,<sup>22</sup> egos are focused on that, devotion is focused on that and adherence is focused on that, those in whom sins have been destroyed through knowledge, those beings are not reborn.’<sup>23</sup>

(18)

‘The wise look equally upon a *brahmana*, who is learned and humble, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste.’<sup>24</sup>

(19)

‘Those whose minds are established in equality overcome the earth in this world.<sup>25</sup> Because the *brahman* is equal and without fault, therefore, they<sup>26</sup> remain established in the *brahman*.’

(20)

‘Established in the *brahman*, such a person learned in the *brahman*, is poised in intellect and without delusion, not delighted at receiving

something pleasant, or agitated at receiving something unpleasant.'

(21)

'Unattached to external objects, his mind focused on the *brahman*, he obtains the happiness that vests in the *atman*. He enjoys eternal bliss.'

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।  
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥२२॥

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोहुं प्राक्षारीरविमोक्षणात् ।  
कामक्रोधोदभवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥२३॥

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।  
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥२४॥

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकलमषाः ।  
छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥२५॥

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।  
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥२६॥

स्पर्शान् कृत्वा बहिर्बाहयांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।  
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥२७॥

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।  
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥२८॥

(22)

‘Pleasures from touch<sup>27</sup> have a beginning and an end and are the reason for unhappiness. O, son of Kunti!<sup>28</sup> The wise person does not obtain pleasure from these.’

(23)

‘In this,<sup>29</sup> before giving up the body, he who can tolerate the forces of desire and anger is a *yogi* and such a man is happy.’

(24)

‘He whose happiness is inside,<sup>30</sup> he whose pleasure is inside and he whose light is inside, that *yogi* alone has realized the *brahman* and obtains liberation in the *brahman*.’

(25)

‘Those who are without sin, without doubt, controlled in mind and engaged in the welfare of all beings, such sages<sup>31</sup> attain liberation in the *brahman*.’

(26)

‘Freed from desire and anger, controlled in mind and knowing the *atman*, such sages attain liberation in the *brahman* all around them.’<sup>32</sup>

(27)

‘Banishing external objects of touch from the mind, focusing the eyes between the two eyebrows, controlling the *prana* and the *apana* breath equally within the nose...’<sup>33</sup>

(28)

‘...Poised in the senses, mind and intellect, beyond desire, fear and anger, wishing liberation, such a sage<sup>34</sup> is always free.’

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।  
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वां मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥२९॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे संन्यासयोगो नाम पञ्चमोऽध्यायः ॥

(29)

‘Knowing<sup>35</sup> me to be the enjoyer of all *yajnas* and penance, the lord of all the worlds and the well-wisher of all beings, attains peace.’

॥ षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥

ध्यानयोगः

## Chapter 6

### The Path of Meditation

This chapter has forty-seven *shlokas* or verses. Towards the end of the fifth chapter, there is a reference to *dhyana* or meditation. This chapter takes the discussion on meditation forward.

श्रीभगवानुवाच –

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।  
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥१॥

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुयोगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।  
न ह्यसंन्यस्तसङ्गल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥२॥

आरुक्षोर्मुनेयोगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।  
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥३॥

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुष्ठजते ।  
सर्वसङ्गल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥४॥

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।  
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥५॥

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।  
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्त्ततात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥६॥

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।  
शीतोष्णासुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥७॥

(1)

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said:

‘An ascetic<sup>2</sup> and a *yogi* is he who performs prescribed action without attachment to the fruits of the action, not someone who gives up sacrifices<sup>3</sup> and action.’

(2)

‘O descendant of Pandu!<sup>4</sup> What is known as asceticism, know that to be *yoga*. Because without giving up desire, no one can become a *yogi*.’

(3)

‘For a sage<sup>5</sup> desirous of ascending to *yoga*, action is said to be the means. For a person who has ascended to *yoga*, tranquillity<sup>6</sup> is said to be the means.’

(4)

‘When a person, who gives up desire, loses addiction to sensual outcomes and is also not attached to action, then he is said to have ascended to *yoga*.’

(5)

‘Use the *atman* to raise the *atman*. Do not lower the *atman*. The *atman* is the *atman*’s friend and the *atman* is the *atman*’s enemy.’<sup>7</sup>

(6)

‘The *atman*, which has been used to conquer the *atman*, is the *atman*’s friend. For someone who has failed to control the *atman*, the *atman* harms like an enemy.’

(7)

‘Someone who has controlled the *atman*<sup>8</sup> and is tranquil,<sup>9</sup> he has attained the *paramatman*.<sup>10</sup> He is undisturbed by cold, warmth, happiness, unhappiness and respect and disrespect.’

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।  
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोप्ताशमकांचनः ॥8॥

सुहन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वयवन्धुषु ।  
साधुच्यति च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥9॥

योगी युंजीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।  
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥10॥

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।  
नात्युच्छृतं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥11॥

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।  
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥12॥

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।  
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥13॥

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।  
मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥14॥

(8)

‘He whose *atman* is satiated with knowledge,<sup>11</sup> who is undisturbed and has conquered his senses, and he who looks upon a lump of earth, stone and gold equally, is said to be a *yogi* who has achieved union.’

(9)

‘Equal in treatment towards well-wisher, colleague,<sup>12</sup> enemy, neutral,<sup>13</sup> arbiter, a hateful person, friend<sup>14</sup> and a righteous person or a sinner, he<sup>15</sup> is superior.’

(10)

‘Seated in a secluded place, alone, controlled in mind and body, without desire, without receiving and giving,<sup>16</sup> a *yogi* should always try to pacify his *atman*.’

(11)

‘In a pure<sup>17</sup> place that is not too high and not too low, unmoving, he will<sup>18</sup> place his seat,<sup>19</sup> cloth and hide on *kusha* grass.<sup>20</sup>

(12)

‘There, focusing the intellect, controlling the action of the mind and the senses, seated on that seat, will practise *yoga* to purify the *atman*.’

(13)

‘Still, body, head and neck erect and unmoving, gazing at the tip of the nose<sup>21</sup> and not looking in any other direction.’

(14)

‘Tranquil in *atman*, without fear, established in the rite of *brahmacharya*,<sup>22</sup> controlling the mind and uniting the intellect with me, immerse yourself in me.’

युंजन्नेवं सदात्मान योगी नियतमानसः ।  
शान्ति निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥१५॥

नात्यशनतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनशनतः ।  
न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥१६॥

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्त-चेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।  
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगी भवति दुःखहा ॥१७॥

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।  
निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥१८॥

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गुंते सोपमा स्मृता ।  
योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युंजतो योगमात्मनः ॥१९॥

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।  
यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥२०॥

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यतद्बुद्धिग्राहयमतीन्द्रियम् ।  
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥२१॥

(15)

‘In this way, the *yogi* will always pacify the *atman* and be unwavering in his mind, and established in me, will attain supreme and peaceful liberation.’

(16)

‘O Arjuna! He who eats too much cannot achieve *yoga*. Nor he who doesn’t eat at all. Nor he who sleeps too much,<sup>23</sup> or stays awake too much.’

(17)

‘He who is measured in food and movement, measured in effort towards action, measured in sleep and awakening. For him, *yoga* destroys unhappiness.’

(18)

‘When the intellect is specially controlled and established in the *atman*, in that situation, indifferent towards all desire, *yoga* is said to have been achieved.’

(19)

‘For a *yogi* whose intellect is controlled and the *atman* is united, know the simile to be a lamp that doesn’t flicker in a place where there is no wind.’

(20)

‘When the mind is controlled and rendered inactive through the practise of *yoga*, when the *atman* sees the *atman* in the *atman* and is satiated.’<sup>24</sup>

(21)

‘When he<sup>25</sup> feels the extreme bliss that is beyond the senses and realized through the intellect, undisturbed from truth.’<sup>26</sup>

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।  
यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥२२॥

तं विद्याददुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसर्वज्ञतम् ।  
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्बिणचेतसा ॥२३॥

सङ्कल्पप्रभवान् कामास्त्वयक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।  
मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥२४॥

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्धया धृतिगृहीतया ।  
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥२५॥

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चंचलमस्थिरम् ।  
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥२६॥

प्रशान्तमनसं हयेन योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।  
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकलमषम् ॥२७॥

युंजन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्पः ।  
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमशनुते ॥२८॥

(22)

‘Obtaining that, not<sup>27</sup> thinking other gains to be superior to this.  
Established in that, not disturbed even by great unhappiness.’

(23)

‘Know this, without any contact with unhappiness, to be *yoga*. Without  
hopelessness,<sup>28</sup> one must practise that *yoga* with perseverance.’

(24)

‘Forsaking in entirety all desire that results from wishes,<sup>29</sup> using the mind  
itself to restrain the senses from everything...’

(25)

‘...Using concentrated intellect to gradually withdraw, establishing the  
mind in the *atman* and thinking about nothing.’<sup>30</sup>

(26)

‘Towards whatever the fickle and restless mind veers, withdrawing it from  
that, bring it under the control of the *atman*.’

(27)

‘Tranquil in mind, having pacified the *rajas* quality, without sin,<sup>31</sup> having  
attained the *brahman*, the *yogi* achieves supreme happiness.’

(28)

‘Like that, always concentrating on the *atman*, the pure *yogi* easily obtains  
intense bliss from proximity to the *brahman*.’

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।  
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥२९॥

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।  
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥३०॥

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।  
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥३१॥

आत्मौमम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।  
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥३२॥

अर्जुन उवाच —  
योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।  
एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चंचलत्वात् स्थिरं स्थिराम् ॥३३॥

चंचलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद् दृढम् ।  
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥३४॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —  
असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्मिग्रहं चलम् ।  
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृहयते ॥३५॥

(29)

‘The person immersed in *yoga* looks on everything equally and sees the *atman* in all beings and all beings in the *atman*.’

(30)

‘He sees me everywhere and everything in me. I am never invisible to him. Nor is he invisible to me.’

(31)

‘He is based in equality and worships me, who is present in everything. Wherever that *yogi* is, he is established in me.’

(32)

‘O Arjuna! He who compares<sup>32</sup> with his own self and regards happiness and unhappiness in everything<sup>33</sup> equally, that *yogi* is supreme, according to me.’

(33)

Arjuna said:

‘O Madhusudana!<sup>34</sup> Because of restlessness,<sup>35</sup> I don’t see the *yoga* based on equality that you have propounded as permanent.’

(34)

‘O Krishna! The mind is restless and the senses strong and firm. Therefore, I think restraining it is as difficult as the wind.’<sup>36</sup>

(35)

Bhagavan<sup>37</sup> said:

‘O mighty-armed! <sup>38</sup> There is no doubt that the mind is restless and difficult to control. But, O son of Kunti, <sup>39</sup> through practice and detachment, it can be restrained.’

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।  
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्नुमुपायतः ॥३६॥

अर्जुन उवाच —  
अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।  
अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गति कृष्ण गच्छति ॥३७॥

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छन्नाप्रमिव नश्यति ।  
अप्रतिष्ठो महावाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥३८॥

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।  
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न हुयपपद्यते ॥३९॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —  
पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।  
न हि कल्याणकृत् कश्चिददुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥४०॥

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।  
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥४१॥

(36)

‘My view is that *yoga* is difficult for someone whose mind is uncontrolled. But it is possible to achieve for someone whose mind is controlled and who makes special effort.’

(37)

Arjuna said:

‘O Krishna! A person who has faithfully practised *yoga*, but later becomes careless and his mind deviates from *yoga*, cannot achieve liberation through *yoga*. What happens to him?’

(38)

‘O mighty-armed!<sup>40</sup> Distracted from the path of attaining the *brahman*, such a wavering person is dislodged from both,<sup>41</sup> like a torn cloud. Doesn’t he perish?’

(39)

‘O Krishna! I have this doubt that only you can completely eliminate. Because there is no one other than you who can remove this doubt.’

(40)

Bhagavan<sup>42</sup> said:

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>43</sup> In this world, nor in the other world, is there any destruction. Because, O son,<sup>44</sup> a person who acts well<sup>45</sup> never comes to grief.’

(41)

‘He who has deviated from the path of *yoga* attains the worlds of the righteous<sup>46</sup> and dwells there for many years. Thereafter, he is born in a righteous and wealthy household.’

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।  
एतद्दि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥42॥

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।  
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥43॥

पूर्वाभ्यासे न तेनैव ह्रियते हयवशोऽपि सः ।  
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥44॥

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।  
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति पराङ्गतिम् ॥45॥

तपस्त्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।  
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगीभवार्जुन ॥46॥

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मदऽग्नेनान्तरात्मना ।  
श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥47॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ध्यानयोगो नाम अष्टोऽध्यायः ॥

(42)

‘Or he is born in the family of wise *yogis*. But such birth is very rare in this world.’

(43)

‘O descendant of Kuru!<sup>47</sup> In that birth obtains<sup>48</sup> that intelligence<sup>49</sup> about liberation from an earlier birth and thereafter, strives again for liberation.’

(44)

‘Because of that earlier practice, is almost involuntarily, attracted.<sup>50</sup> A person who seeks *yoga* transcends the *Vedas*.<sup>51</sup>

(45)

‘Striving harder than on that earlier occasion, pure in heart, the *yogi* obtains liberation after many lives and, later, achieves the supreme objective.’

(46)

‘The *yogi* is superior to those who practise austerities, superior to the learned<sup>52</sup> and superior to those who perform action.<sup>53</sup> That is my view. O Arjuna! Therefore, become a *yogi*.’

(47)

‘My view is that he who is devoted and worships me, with his self immersed in me, is the most accomplished among all *yogis*.’

॥ सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥

ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगः

## Chapter 7

### The Path of Knowledge

This chapter has thirty *shlokas* or verses. The first six chapters constitute almost a distinct sub-component of the *Gita*. Although this first sub-component also has a mix of *jnana yoga* and even *bhakti yoga*, the emphasis is on *karma yoga*. With the seventh chapter, we move to the second sub-component and there is a Switch in emphasis to *bhakti yoga*. As has been mentioned earlier, *jnana* is knowledge acquired through instruction (from teachers or from sacred texts), while *vijnana* is knowledge acquired through self-realization.

श्रीभगवानुवाच –

मव्यासक्तमना: पार्थ योगं युंजन् मदाश्रयः ।  
असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥१॥

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशोषतः ।  
यज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥२॥

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यति सिद्धये ।  
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिचन्मा वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥३॥

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।  
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिं रष्टधा ॥४॥

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।  
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥५॥

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।  
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥६॥

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत् किञ्चिदस्ति धनंजय ।  
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥७॥

(1)

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said:

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>2</sup> Listen to how you will know, without any doubt, the complete truth about me—mind attached to me, seeking refuge in me and immersed in *yoga*.’

(2)

‘I will completely tell you about the knowledge with self-realization.<sup>3</sup> Knowing that, there is nothing more remaining to know.’

(3)

‘Among thousands of men, rarely one tries for liberation. Among those who try for liberation, perhaps one<sup>4</sup> gets to know my true nature.’

(4)

‘Earth, water, fire,<sup>5</sup> air, sky, mind, intellect and ego—these are the eight parts of my nature.’

(5)

‘These are inferior nature.<sup>6</sup> O mighty-armed!<sup>7</sup> Besides this, know my superior and other nature<sup>8</sup> that is the essence of living beings. The universe is held up by this.’

(6)

‘Know all matter<sup>9</sup> to be born from these.<sup>10</sup> I am the reason for the creation of the entire universe and its destruction.’

(7)

‘O Dhananjaya!<sup>11</sup> There is nothing superior to me. Like jewels on a string, all this is threaded in me.’

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।  
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥8॥

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।  
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्त्वयु ॥9॥

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थं सनातनम् ।  
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्त्विनामहम् ॥10॥

बलं बलवतामस्मि कामरागविवर्जितम् ।  
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्पम् ॥11॥

ये चैव सत्त्विकाभावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।  
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥12॥

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भवैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।  
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्यम् ॥13॥

दैवी हयेषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।  
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥14॥

(8)

‘O son of Kunti! <sup>12</sup> In the water, I am the sap. In the sun and the moon, I am the radiance. In all the *Vedas*, I am the *Om* syllable. <sup>13</sup> In the sky, I am the sound. In humans, I am manifest as prowess.’ <sup>14</sup>

(9)

‘And pure fragrance in the earth. I become energy in the fire, life in all living beings. I become austerity in ascetics.’

(10)

‘O son of Pritha! <sup>15</sup> Know me to be the eternal seed of all beings. I am intellect in the intelligent. I become energy in those who are energetic.’

(11)

‘O best of the Bharatas! <sup>16</sup> I am strength, without desire and without attachment, <sup>17</sup> in those who are strong. In all living beings, I become desire that is sanctioned by *dharma*.’ <sup>18</sup>

(12)

‘And know all the three conditions, with *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* predominating, <sup>19</sup> to be derived from me. I am not in them. They are in me.’

(13)

‘This entire universe is deluded by these three *gunas* and the resultant conditions. And is not able to know me, who is above these and without change.’

(14)

‘It is indeed difficult to overcome this divine aspect<sup>20</sup> of mine, immersed in *gunas*. Those who seek refuge in me alone, they are able to overcome this *maya*.’

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढ़ाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।  
माययापहतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥15॥

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।  
आतो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्थम् ॥16॥

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।  
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥17॥

उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानीत्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।  
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥18॥

वहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपश्यते ।  
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥19॥

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्ते अन्यदेवताः ।  
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥20॥

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।  
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥21॥

(15)

‘The evil-doers, ignorant and worst among men, lose their knowledge because of *maya* and resort to demonic states. They do not worship me.’

(16)

‘O best of the Bharatas!<sup>21</sup> O Arjuna! There are four types of people, pure of heart, who worship me—those who are suffering, those who want satisfaction,<sup>22</sup> those who want self-knowledge and those who know.’

(17)

‘Of these, those who know, always united and worshipping only one,<sup>23</sup> are the best. I am extremely beloved by one who knows. And he is also my beloved.’

(18)

‘All these<sup>24</sup> are righteous. But the man who knows is like my *atman*. That is my view. Therefore, the united man who knows seeks refuge in me, the supreme of objectives.’

(19)

‘After many births are over, he attains the knowledge that Vasudeva<sup>25</sup> is everything and attains me. Such great souls are extremely rare.’

(20)

‘Those whose knowledge has been robbed by those desires, according to their own nature, follow prescribed rites to worship other gods.’

(21)

‘Whatever form a devotee wishes to worship faithfully, in whatever way,  
in that<sup>26</sup> and that,<sup>27</sup> I make the faith firm and unwavering.’

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।  
लभते च ततः कामान् मर्यैव विहितान् हि तान् ॥२२॥

अन्तवन्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।  
देवान् देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥२३॥

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापनं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।  
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥२४॥

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।  
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥२५॥

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।  
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥२६॥

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्मोहेन भारत ।  
सर्वभूतानि सम्मोहं सर्गं यान्ति परंतप ॥२७॥

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।  
ते द्वन्द्मोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढ़द्रत्ताः ॥२८॥

(22)

‘With that faith, whatever form is worshipped and whatever fruits are obtained as a result are actually bestowed by me alone.’

(23)

‘The fruits of those<sup>28</sup> who have little intellect come to an end.<sup>29</sup> Worshippers of gods attain the gods. My devotees attain me.’

(24)

‘Those who are ignorant don’t realize my supreme and unchanging nature and think of me, the one who is unmanifest, as manifest.’

(25)

‘Shrouded in my powers of *yoga* and *maya*, I am not evident to everyone. I am not born and am without change. But the ignorant world does not know me.’

(26)

‘O Arjuna! I know all beings in the past, the present and the future. But no one knows me.’

(27)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>30</sup> O scorcher of foes!<sup>31</sup> All beings are deluded at birth from opposite sensations,<sup>32</sup> resulting from desire and aversion.’

(28)

‘But those whose sins have been overcome and those who are virtuous in action, they are freed from the delusion of opposite sensations and worship

me, firm in their vows.'

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।  
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥२९॥

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः ।  
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥३०॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगो नाम सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥

(29)

‘Those who want to free themselves from decay and death and seek refuge in me, they know about the *brahman*, about the individual *atman*<sup>33</sup> and about action in its entirety.’

(30)

‘Those who know me as the one who underlies all beings, all gods and all *yajnas*, right till the time of death, their mind is fixed on me and they know me.’

॥ अष्टमोऽध्यायः ॥

अक्षरब्रह्मयोगः

## Chapter 8

# The Path to the Supreme Spirit

This chapter has twenty-eight *shlokas* or verses. It takes off from the last *shloka* of the seventh chapter, where there is a reference to the one who underlies all beings (*adhibhuta*), underlies all gods (*adhidaiva*) and underlies all *yajnas* (*adhiyajna*). This chapter is an answer to Arjuna's questions about these and reiterates the road to unification with the supreme spirit.

अर्जुन उवाच —

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यातमं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।  
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥१॥

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन् मधुसूदन ।  
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥२॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।  
भूतभावोदभवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसञ्जितः ॥३॥

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।  
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभूतां वर ॥४॥

अन्ताकाले च मामेव स्मरन् मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।  
यः प्रयाति स मदभावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥५॥

यं यं वापि स्मरन् भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।  
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तदभावभावितः ॥६॥

(1)

Arjuna said:

‘O best among men!<sup>1</sup> What is that *brahman*, what is the individual *atman*<sup>2</sup> and what is action? What is said to underlie all beings and what is said to underlie all gods?’<sup>3</sup>

(2)

‘O Madhusudana!<sup>4</sup> Who underlies all *yajnas*<sup>5</sup> in this body and how? By those who can control their *atmans*, how are you known at the time of death?’

(3)

Bhagavan<sup>6</sup> said:

‘The indestructible *brahman* is the supreme spirit and its inhabitation of individual beings is called *adhyatma*. Action is the offering<sup>7</sup> that leads to the creation and sustenance of all beings.’

(4)

‘O best among those who have bodies!<sup>8</sup> Perishable elements are *adhibhuta* and the *purusha* is *adhidaiva*. In this body, I myself am *adhiyajna*.’

(5)

‘At the time of death, he who remembers me, gives up his body and leaves, he attains my essence. There is no doubt about this.’

(6)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>9</sup> Whatever essence is remembered at the time of death and giving up the body by a person immersed in that essence, that is the

essence that he attains.'

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।  
मव्यपिंतमनोबुद्धिर्ममेवैष्यस्यसंशयः ॥7॥

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।  
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥8॥

कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।  
सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः प्रस्तात् ॥9॥

प्रयाणकाले मनसाचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।  
भुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुत्तैति दिव्यम् ॥10॥

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।  
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥11॥

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।  
मूर्ध्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥12॥

(7)

‘Therefore, always think of me. And fight. With mind and intellect offered to me, you will without doubt attain me alone.’

(8)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>10</sup> United in the practice that is like *yoga*, without following anyone else, thinking of the divine supreme spirit with the mind, attains that.’<sup>11</sup>

(9)

‘He who thinks of the omniscient, without beginning, the controller of everything, finer than the minutest, the upholder of everything, with a form that is beyond thought, self-resplendent like the sun and beyond darkness...’<sup>12</sup>

(10)

‘...At the time of death,<sup>13</sup> with devotion, with the mind fixed, with the strength of *yoga* used to hold the breath of life between the brows, he attains the resplendent supreme spirit.’

(11)

‘Who those who know the *Vedas* speak of as indestructible, into whom unattached *yogis* enter, to attain whom *brahmacharya* is practised, I will briefly tell you about that goal of supreme liberation.’

(12)

‘Using all the senses and organs<sup>14</sup> to control the mind and restrain it in the heart, bearing the breath of life between the brows, establishing one’s

*atman in yoga...'*

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मामनुस्मरन् ।  
यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥१३॥

अनन्यचेता: सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।  
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थं नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥१४॥

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।  
नापुवन्ति महात्मानः सर्वसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥१५॥

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।  
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥१६॥

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।  
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्ता तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥१७॥

अव्यक्तादव्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।  
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयेन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तासंज्ञके ॥१८॥

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।  
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थं प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥१९॥

(13)

‘...Uttering the single syllable *Om* that is the *brahman* and remembering me, he who gives up his body and leaves, he attains the goal of supreme liberation.’

(14)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>15</sup> He who does not think of other things and remembers me every day and all the time, I am easily attainable to that *yogi* who is always focused.’<sup>16</sup>

(15)

‘Great souls who attain me, because they have achieved supreme liberation, are freed from rebirth, which is transient and the abode of sorrow.’

(16)

‘O Arjuna! From all the worlds up to *brahmaloka*, beings have to return.<sup>17</sup> But O son of Kunti!<sup>18</sup> There is no rebirth for those who have attained me.’<sup>19</sup>

(17)

‘Those who know that a thousand *yugas* are Brahma’s day and a thousand *yugas* are Brahma’s night, know the truth about day and night.’<sup>20</sup>

(18)

‘When Brahma’s day arrives, every manifest object is created from the unmanifest. When Brahma’s night arrives, like that, everything dissolves into the unmanifest.’

(19)

‘These<sup>21</sup> are the beings who are born again and again and destroyed when night arrives. O son of Pritha!<sup>22</sup> When day arrives, they are involuntarily created again.’

परस्तस्मात् भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात् सनातनः ।  
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥20॥

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।  
यं प्राप्य न निर्वर्तन्ते तद्गाम परमं मम ॥21॥

पुरुषः स परः पाथ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया।  
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥22॥

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।  
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥23॥

अग्निं ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।  
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥24॥

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।  
तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निर्वर्तते ॥25॥

(20)

‘But superior to that unmanifest is the other supreme and eternal unmanifest being that is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed.’<sup>23</sup>

(21)

‘What is spoken of as the unmanifest and indestructible, what is said to be the supreme liberation, attaining which beings do not have to return, that is my supreme abode.’

(22)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>24</sup> All beings are established in that. And by that is everything pervaded. That supreme *purusha* can only be attained through unwavering devotion.’

(23)

‘O best of the Bharatas!<sup>25</sup> I will now tell you about the road<sup>26</sup> which, if traversed, doesn’t lead to *yogis* being reborn and about the road which, if traversed, leads to rebirth.’

(24)

‘The resplendence of the fire, the day, the bright half of the lunar month,<sup>27</sup> the six months when the sun heads north,<sup>28</sup> along that path those who worship the *brahman* attain the *brahman*.’<sup>29</sup>

(25)

‘Smoke, night, the dark half of the lunar month<sup>30</sup> and the six months when the sun heads south,<sup>31</sup> along that path, the *yogi* attains the energy of the moon and returns again.’<sup>32, 33</sup>,

शुक्लकृष्णे गती हयेते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।  
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययाऽवर्तते पुनः ॥२६॥

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन् योगी मुहयति कश्चन ।  
तस्मात् सवेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥२७॥

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपस्सु चैव दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।  
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥२८॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अक्षरब्रह्मयोगो नाम अष्टोऽध्यायः ॥

(26)

‘In this world, these two paths of light and darkness are said to be eternal. One leads to non-return and the other leads to return.’

(27)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>34</sup> Knowing these two paths, a *yogi* is never deluded. O Arjuna! Therefore, at all times, resort to *yoga*.’

(28)

‘Knowing the prescribed good fruit that accrues from knowledge of the *Vedas*, *yajnas*, practice of austerities and donation of alms, the *yogi* transcends all these and attains the supreme and original abode.’

॥ नवमोऽध्यायः ॥  
राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः

## Chapter 9

# The Path of Royal Knowledge and Royal Secrets

This chapter has thirty-four *shlokas* or verses. The nature of the *paramatman* has been discussed in Chapter 8 and that chapter also explained *bhakti yoga*. This chapter extends those arguments and it is argued that compared to *jnana yoga*, the path of *bhakti yoga* is easier. In addition, the path of *bhakti yoga* is one that is available to everyone.

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

इदं तु ते गुहयतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।  
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽगुभात् ॥१॥

राजविद्या राजगुहायं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।  
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्मं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥२॥

अश्रहधानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।  
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्तमनि ॥३॥

मया तत्भिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।  
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥४॥

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।  
भूतभून्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥५॥

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।  
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥६॥

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।  
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसुजाम्यहम् ॥७॥

(1)

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said:

‘You are not a detractor.<sup>2</sup> I will tell you this extremely secret knowledge of self-realization.<sup>3</sup> Knowing this, you will be freed from all evil.’

(2)

‘This is extremely secret and the king of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> It is the best, pure, leads to direct and eternal results, is sanctioned by *dharma* and is easy to practise.’

(3)

‘O scorcher of foes!<sup>5</sup> People who show disrespect to this *dharma* don’t attain me and traverse the path of death and this world.’

(4)

‘This entire universe is pervaded by me in my unmanifest form. All beings are established in me. But I am not established in them.’

(5)

‘Witness my divine *yoga*. Again, the beings are not established in me.<sup>6</sup> My *atman* holds up the beings and sustains the beings, but I am not established in the beings.’

(6)

‘Know that like the great wind, which goes everywhere, and is always established in the sky, all beings are established in me.’

(7)

‘O son of Kunti! <sup>7</sup> At the time of destruction, <sup>8</sup> all beings are dissolved in my nature and at the time of creation, I create them.’

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।  
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेवशात् ॥8॥

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनंजय ।  
उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥9॥

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम् ।  
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥10॥

अवजानन्ति मां मृढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।  
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥11॥

मोघाशा मोघकर्मणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।  
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥12॥

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।  
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥13॥

सतंतं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।  
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥14॥

(8)

‘I keep my nature under control and repeatedly create these many beings, helpless according to their own nature.’<sup>9</sup>

(9)

‘O Dhananjaya!<sup>10</sup> But I am unattached to those acts and am established in indifference. Those acts cannot tie me down.’

(10)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>11</sup> Because of my lordship, nature gives birth to this universe with its moveable and immovable objects. Because of this, the universe is repeatedly created.’<sup>12</sup>

(11)

‘The ignorant do not know my supreme nature as the great lord of all beings. They show disrespect to me as someone who has adopted a human form.’

(12)

‘Their desire is fruitless, their action is fruitless, their knowledge is fruitless, their minds waver and their deluded nature is ruled by demonic qualities.’<sup>13</sup>

(13)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>14</sup> But those great souls who seek refuge in divine qualities are unwavering in their minds and worship me, knowing me to be the indestructible origin of all beings.’

(14)

‘Careful and firm in their rites, they<sup>15</sup> faithfully offer obeisance and always sing my praise, always focused on worshipping me.’

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।  
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतो मुखम् ॥15॥

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।  
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥16॥

पिताहमस्य जगते माता धाता पितामहः ।  
वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक् साम यजुरेव च ॥17॥

गतिर्भाता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहत् ।  
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं वीजमव्ययम् ॥18॥

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षे निगृहणाम्युत्सुजामि च ।  
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥19॥

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपा: पूतपापा यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गार्तिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।  
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोकमशनन्ति दिव्यन् दिवि देवभोगान् ॥20॥

(15)

‘Some worship me through the *yajna* that is the path of knowledge. Some worship me as one, others as separate.<sup>16</sup> I, who pervade the universe, am worshipped in many forms.’

(16)

‘I am *kratu*, I am *yajna*, I am *svadha*,<sup>17</sup> I am the herbs, I am the *mantra*, I indeed am the clarified butter, I am the fire, I am the offering.’

(17)

‘I am the father, mother, grandfather and sustainer of this universe. I am all that is pure<sup>18</sup> and is to be known. I am the *Om* syllable. I am also the *Rik*, *Saman* and *Yajus*.’<sup>19</sup>

(18)

‘I am the goal, the sustainer, the controller, the witness, the abode, the sanctuary, the well-doer, the creator, the destroyer, the preserver, the repository and the indestructible seed.’<sup>20</sup>

(19)

‘O Arjuna! I provide heat. I attract the water and rain it down again. I am immortality and death. I am the eternal and the transient.’<sup>21</sup>

(20)

‘Those who know the three arts<sup>22</sup> worship me through *yajnas*, drink the *soma* juice and, purified of sins, wish to attain heaven. They attain sanctified heaven<sup>23</sup> and, in heaven, enjoy the celestial objects enjoyed by the gods.’

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं क्षीणे पुण्येमर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।  
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥२१॥

अनन्याशिच्चन्तयन्ते मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।  
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥२२॥

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।  
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥२३॥

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।  
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥२४॥

यान्ति देवद्रता देवान् पितृन् यान्ति पितृद्रताः ।  
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेन्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥२५॥

पत्रं पुष्टं भलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।  
तदहं भक्त्युपहतमशनामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥२६॥

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यञ्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।  
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥२७॥

(21)

‘Having enjoyed the greatness of heaven, when their good deeds are exhausted, they enter the mortal earth. In this way, the practitioners of the three *dharma*s,<sup>24</sup> followers of desire, go back and forth.’

(22)

‘Those who worship me, minds focused on me alone and always immersed in me, I preserve for them what has been attained and what is yet to be attained.’<sup>25</sup>

(23)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>26</sup> Those with devotion who faithfully worship other gods, they too, worship me alone. But not in the indicated way.’

(24)

‘Because I alone am the receiver of offerings and the granter of fruits at all *yajnas*. But they do not know my true nature and, therefore, are cast down.’<sup>27</sup>

(25)

‘Those who worship the gods attain the gods. Those who worship the ancestors attain the ancestors.<sup>28</sup> Those who worship the elements<sup>29</sup> attain the elements. And mine<sup>30</sup> attain me.’

(26)

‘He who faithfully worships me with a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, from that pure-hearted person, I gladly accept those faithful offerings.’

(27)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>31</sup> Whatever you do, whatever you partake, whatever you offer, whatever you donate, whatever you meditate, offer that to me.’

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मवन्धनैः ।  
संन्यासयोगमुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥२८॥

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेषोऽस्ति न प्रियः ।  
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥२९॥

अपि चेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।  
साधुरेव स मनत्व्यः सम्यग्ब्यवसितो हि सः ॥३०॥

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्ति निगच्छति ।  
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥३१॥

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि म्युः पापयोनयः ।  
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परं गतिम् ॥३२॥

किं पुनब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्थ्य स्तथा ।  
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥३३॥

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।  
मामेवैष्यसि युक्तैवमात्मनं मत्परायणः ॥३४॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे राजविद्याराजगुहयोगो नाम नवमोऽध्यायः ॥

(28)

‘In this way, you will be freed from the bondage of the fruits of righteous and evil action. With your self in the *yoga* of *sannyasa*,<sup>32</sup> freed, you will attain me.’

(29)

‘I am the same to all beings. I have no one I hate, nor anyone I love. But those who worship me with devotion, they are established in me. And I am established in them.’

(30)

‘Even if the most evil of persons worships me single-mindedly, he should be thought of as a righteous person. Because his resolve is correct.’

(31)

‘Swiftly, he<sup>33</sup> becomes a righteous person and attains eternal peace. O son of Kunti!<sup>34</sup> My worshippers are never destroyed. This you can vouch for.’

(32)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>35</sup> Even those who are of evil birth, women, *vaisbyas* and *shudras*,<sup>36</sup> having sought refuge in me, they will certainly attain supreme liberation.’

(33)

‘There is no need to repeat<sup>37</sup> about pure *brabmanas* and devoted royal sages.<sup>38</sup> This earth is temporary and leads to unhappiness. Therefore, having attained,<sup>39</sup> worship me.’

(34)

‘With mind immersed in me, become my devotee, my worshipper and one who offers obeisance to me. In this way, with your *atman* united in me as the refuge, you will attain me alone.’

॥ दशमोऽध्यायः ॥

विभूतियोगः

## Chapter 10

### The Divine Glory

This chapter has forty-two *shlokas* or verses and is again a continuation of the topics covered in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. The nature of the *paramatman* is described. Thereafter, there is a listing of the *paramatman's vibhuti* (divinity or strength), as manifested in different objects and beings. That gives the chapter its title.

श्रीभगवानुवाच –

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।  
यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥१॥

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।  
अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥२॥

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।  
असंमूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥३॥

बुद्धिज्ञनमसम्मोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।  
सुखं दुखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥४॥

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।  
भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥५॥

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।  
मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥६॥

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।  
सोऽविकल्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥७॥

(1)

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said:

‘O mighty-armed!<sup>2</sup> Listen once more to my supreme words. These are pleasing you and for your welfare, I am saying this.’

(2)

‘The host of gods do not know of my origin.<sup>3</sup> Nor do the great sages.<sup>4</sup> Because, in every way, I am the original cause of the gods and the great sages.’

(3)

‘He who knows me as without origin and without birth and as the greatest lord of the worlds, he is freed from delusion among men<sup>5</sup> and freed from all sins.’

(4)

‘Intellect, knowledge, freedom from delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, control over the senses, control over thoughts, happiness, unhappiness, creation, destruction, fear and freedom from fear...’

(5)

‘...Non-violence, equality,<sup>6</sup> satisfaction, austerity, donations, fame and lack of fame: all these states of beings indeed owe their origin to me.’

(6)

‘The seven great sages,<sup>7</sup> the four who came before them<sup>8</sup> and the Manus<sup>9</sup> owe their origin to me and were created from my resolution. In this world, everything is descended from them.’

(7)

‘There is no doubt that he who truly knows my divine *yoga*<sup>10</sup> is united with unwavering *yoga*.’<sup>11</sup>

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मतः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।  
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥८॥

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।  
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥९॥

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।  
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥१०॥

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।  
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्यता ॥११॥

अर्जुन उवाच —  
परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।  
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥१२॥

आहुस्त्वामृथयः सर्वे देवर्घिनरदस्तथा ।  
असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥१३॥

सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।  
न हि ते भगवन् व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥१४॥

(8)

‘I am the origin of everything. From me is everything instituted. Knowing this, the wise, immersed in devotion, worship me.’

(9)

‘Mind on me, live in me, explaining my nature to each other and always conversing,<sup>12</sup> they<sup>13</sup> attain satisfaction and happiness.’

(10)

‘I provide that kind of *yoga* of intellect to those who are always immersed in me and lovingly worship me. Using that, they attain me.’

(11)

‘With compassion towards them, I am always established inside them as the bright lamp of knowledge, destroying the darkness born out of ignorance.’

(12)

Arjuna said:

‘You are the supreme *brahman*, the supreme abode and supreme sacredness. You are the eternal *purusha*, self-resplendent, the predecessor of the gods, without birth and omnipresent.’

(13)

‘All the sages and Devarshi Narada<sup>14</sup> and Asita-Devala<sup>15</sup> and Vyasa<sup>16</sup> describe you thus. You have yourself also told me this.’

(14)

‘O Keshava! <sup>17</sup> I accept all that you are telling me as true. Because, O Lord, even the gods and the demons do not know your manifestations.’ <sup>18</sup>

स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।  
भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥15॥

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या हयात्मविभूतयः ।  
याभिर्विभूतिभिलौकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥16॥

कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।  
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन् मया ॥17॥

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन ।  
भूयः कथय तुप्तिर्हि श्रृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥18॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच –  
हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या हयात्मविभूतयः ।  
प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥19॥

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।  
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥20॥

आदित्यानामहं विद्युन्योतिषां रविरंशुमान् ।  
मरीचिर्मरुतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥21॥

(15)

‘O Supreme Being! O creator of beings! O lord of beings!  
O lord of the gods! O lord of the universe! You alone know your own self  
through your own self.’

(16)

‘Whatever divine powers you use to pervade these worlds, you alone are  
capable of relating to me in detail those self-resplendent divine powers.’

(17)

‘O yogi!<sup>19</sup> How can I always think of you and know you? O Bhagavan!<sup>20</sup>  
In what objects can you be thought of by me?’

(18)

‘O Janardana!<sup>21</sup> Tell me once again, in detail, about the power of your  
*yoga*. Because, hearing your immortal words, I am not satisfied.’

(19)

Bhagavan<sup>22</sup> said:

‘O best of the Kurus!<sup>23</sup> All right. I will tell you about my main divine  
manifestations. Because there is no end to the detail of my powers.’<sup>24</sup>

(20)

‘O Gudakesha!<sup>25</sup> I am the *atman* established in the heart of all beings. It is  
I who am the origin, the middle and also the end of all beings.’<sup>26</sup>

(21)

‘I am Vishnu among the *adityas*.<sup>27</sup> I am the radiant sun among the shining bodies. I am Marichi among the *maruts*,<sup>28</sup> I am the moon among the stars.’<sup>29</sup>

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः ।  
इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥२२॥

रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् ।  
वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥२३॥

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थं ब्रह्मस्पतिम् ।  
सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः ॥२४॥

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्येकं मक्षरम् ।  
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥२५॥

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।  
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥२६॥

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोदध्वम् ।  
ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥२७॥

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक् ।  
प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥२८॥

(22)

‘I am the *Sama Veda* among the *Vedas*.<sup>30</sup> Among the gods, I am Indra.<sup>31</sup> I am the mind among the senses. And in beings, I am the consciousness.’

(23)

‘I am Shankara among the *rudras*.<sup>32</sup> I am Kubera among the *yakshas* and the *rakshas*,<sup>33</sup> I am fire among the *vasus*.<sup>34</sup> Among the mountains, I am Meru.’<sup>35</sup>

(24)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>36</sup> Know me to be Brihaspati,<sup>37</sup> foremost among the priests. Among generals, I am Skanda.<sup>38</sup> Among waterbodies, I am the ocean.’

(25)

‘Among great sages, I am Bhrigu.<sup>39</sup> Among words, I am the single syllable.<sup>40</sup> Among *yajnas*, I am *japa yajna*.<sup>41</sup> Among immovable objects, I am the Himalayas.’

(26)

‘Among all trees, I am the fig tree.<sup>42</sup> And among divine sages, I am Narada. Among *gandharvas* I am Chitraratha.<sup>43</sup> And among those who have attained liberation, I am the sage Kapila.’<sup>44</sup>

(27)

‘Among horses, know me to be Ucchaishrava, arising from the immortal nectar.<sup>45</sup> Among great elephants Airavata and among men, the king.’

(28)

‘Among weapons I am *vajra*.<sup>46</sup> Among cows I become *kamadhenu*.<sup>47</sup> I become Kandarpa for procreation.<sup>48</sup> And among serpents I am Vasuki.’<sup>49</sup>

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।  
पितृणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः सयमतामहम् ॥२९॥

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।  
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥३०॥

पवनः पवतामर्स्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।  
झाणाणां मकरश्चास्मि रुतसामस्मि जाहनवी ॥३१॥

सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।  
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥३२॥

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।  
अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥३३॥

मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।  
कीर्तिः श्रीवर्वाक्च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥३४॥

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।  
मासानां मार्गशीर्णोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥३५॥

(29)

‘Among snakes I am Ananta.<sup>50</sup> Among those who inhabit the water, I am Varuna.<sup>51</sup> Among the ancestors I am Aryama.<sup>52</sup> Among those who control,<sup>53</sup> I am Yama.’

(30)

‘Among demons I am Prahlada.<sup>54</sup> Among those who devour,<sup>55</sup> I am time. And I am the lion<sup>56</sup> among animals. Among birds, I am the son of Vinata.’<sup>57</sup>

(31)

‘Among those that purify, I am the wind. Among those who bear weapons, I am Rama. Among fish, I am the crocodile.<sup>58</sup> And among rivers, I am Jahnavi.’<sup>59</sup>

(32)

‘O Arjuna! I alone am the beginning, the end and the middle of all created objects. Among all forms of knowledge, I am knowledge of the self. Among debaters, *vada*.’<sup>60</sup>

(33)

‘Among letters, I am the letter “A”. Among different forms of *samsa*, I am *dvanda*.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, I am indestructible time. My face is in every direction. I am the controller of destiny.’

(34)

‘I am death that robs everything. And I am the origin of the future. Among women, I am fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intellect, fortitude and

forgiveness.'

(35)

'In the *Sama Veda*, I am *brihat sama*<sup>62</sup> Among metres, I am *gayatri*.  
Among months, I am Margashirsha.<sup>63</sup> Among seasons, I am  
*kusumakara*.'<sup>64</sup>

द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।  
जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥३६॥

वृथीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनंजयः ।  
मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥३७॥

दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम् ।  
मौनं चैवास्मि गुहयानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥३८॥

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां वीजं तदहमर्जुन ।  
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥३९॥

नान्तोऽस्मि मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।  
एष तूदेशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥४०॥

यद्यद्विभूतिमत् सत्त्वं श्रीमद्भूर्जितमेव वा ।  
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंश सम्भवम् ॥४१॥

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।  
विष्टम्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥४२॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विभूतियोगो नाम दशमोऽध्यायः ॥

(36)

‘I am gambling among those who wish to cheat.<sup>65</sup> I am energy in the energetic. I am victory, perseverance, I am the *sattva* quality in the righteous.’

(37)

‘I am Vasudeva<sup>66</sup> among the Vrishnis. I am Dhananjaya<sup>67</sup> among those of the Pandu clan. I am Vyasa among the sages. Among the wise, I am the wise Ushanasa.’<sup>68</sup>

(38)

‘I am *danda* among those who rule.<sup>69</sup> I am strategy for those who wish to win. Among secret subjects, I am silence. I am knowledge among the wise.’

(39)

‘O Arjuna! Whatever is the seed of origin of every being, that is me alone. There is nothing moveable or immovable that can come into being without me.’

(40)

‘O scorcher of foes!<sup>70</sup> There is no end to my divine glory. Whatever I have stated of this expanse of glory is only a brief indication.’

(41)

‘Know that whatever object is glorious, prosperous or indeed extremely powerful, that has originated from a part of my energy.’

(42)

‘O Arjuna! But what is the need to know all these details? I am established, holding up this entire universe with only a part of me.’

॥ एकादशोऽध्यायः ॥  
विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगः

## Chapter 11

### Vision of the Universal Form

This chapter has fifty-five *shlokas* or verses. Chapter 10 describes manifestations of the divine glory. And in response, Arjuna wants to see the Universal Form in its entirety. That vision of the Universal Form is the subject matter of Chapter 11 and Arjuna is able to see this because of divine sight granted to him by Krishna.

अर्जुन उवाच —

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुहयमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।  
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥१॥

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया ।  
त्वतः कमलपत्राक्षं माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम् ॥२॥

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।  
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥३॥

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।  
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥४॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

पश्य मैं पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।  
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥५॥

पश्यादित्यान् वसून् रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा ।  
बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत ॥६॥

इहैकस्यं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।  
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥७॥

(1)

Arjuna said:

‘Out of compassion for me, the extremely secret *adhyatma* knowledge that you have stated has destroyed this delusion of mine.’

(2)

‘O one with eyes like lotus-leaves!<sup>1</sup> From you I have heard in detail about the creation and destruction of all beings. And also your eternal greatness.’

(3)

‘O Supreme Lord!<sup>2</sup> What you have said about yourself is indeed like that. O Supreme Being!<sup>3</sup> I wish to see your divine form.’

(4)

‘O Lord!<sup>4</sup> If you think that I am worthy of seeing that,<sup>5</sup> then, O lord of *yoga*<sup>6</sup> show me your indestructible self.’

(5)

Bhagavan<sup>7</sup> said:

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>8</sup> Behold my divine multi-dimensioned, multi-hued, multi-shaped hundreds and thousands of forms.’

(6)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>9</sup> See the *adityas*, the *vasus*, the *rudras*, the *ashivinis* and the *maruts*.<sup>10</sup> See the many wonderful things you have never seen before.’

(7)

‘O Gudakesha!<sup>11</sup> In my body, in one place, see the entire universe, with all that is moveable and immovable. Also see today, whatever else you want to see.’

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुणा ।  
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥8॥

संजय उवाच —  
एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन् महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।  
दर्शयामास पार्थ्यं परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥9॥

अनेक वक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् ।  
अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् ॥10॥

दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।  
सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देव मनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम् ॥11॥

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।  
यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥12॥

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्त-मनेकधा ।  
अपश्यदेवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥13॥

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनंजयः ।  
प्राणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत ॥14॥

(8)

‘You will not be able to see me with your own eyes. Therefore, I am giving you divine sight. Witness my divine glory.’

(9)

Sanjaya said:

O King!<sup>12</sup> Having said this, Hari,<sup>13</sup> the great lord of *yoga*, then showed Partha<sup>14</sup> the divine and supreme form.

(10)

With many mouths and eyes, with many miraculous things to see, adorned in many resplendent ornaments, with many divine weapons raised.

(11)

With divine garlands and clothing, anointed with divine fragrances, extremely wonderful everywhere, resplendent, infinite, with faces in every direction.

(12)

If the brilliance of a thousand suns simultaneously rises in the sky, then that brilliance can rival the brilliance of that great soul.

(13)

Then Pandava<sup>15</sup> saw the entire universe in one place, divided into many parts, in that great god of god’s body.

(14)

Then, amazed and with his body-hair standing up, Dhananjaya<sup>16</sup> bowed down before the god with his head lowered and with joined palms, said...

अर्जुन उवाच –  
पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे  
सर्वास्तथा भूतविशेषसहृदान् ।  
आहाणमीशं कमलासनस्थ-  
मृषीश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥15॥

अनेकब्रह्मदरवक्तव्यनेत्रं  
पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।  
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादि  
पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥16॥

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च  
तेजोराशि सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।  
पश्यामि त्वां दुर्विरीश्यं समन्ता-  
हीपानलाकं द्युतिमप्रमेयम् ॥17॥

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं  
त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।  
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता  
सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥18॥

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्य-  
मनन्तवाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।  
पश्यामि त्वां दीपाहुताशवक्त्रं  
स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् । ॥19॥

द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि  
व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।  
दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमिदं तवोग्रं  
लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥20॥

(15)

Arjuna said:

‘O Lord! In your body I see all the gods and all the different types of beings, the divine sages and all the serpents and the creator Brahma, seated on a lotus.’

(16)

‘O Lord of the Universe! O Universal Form! I see you, with many arms, many stomachs, many faces and many eyes, everywhere. And I don’t see an end, a middle or a beginning to you.’

(17)

‘With a crown, with a mace, with the *chakra*, resplendent everywhere, like a mass of energy, impossible to see,<sup>17</sup> brilliant like the burning fire and the sun, impossible to measure, I see you in every direction.’

(18)

‘I have no doubt that you are eternal and supreme and the only thing worth knowing. You are the supreme refuge of this universe. You are the indestructible and original being, the upholder of ancient *dharma*.’

(19)

‘I behold you without beginning, middle and end, infinite in strength, with uncountable arms, the sun and moon your eyes, face like ignited fire, scorching this universe with your energy.’

(20)

‘O great soul!<sup>18</sup> This space between the sky and the earth is pervaded only by you. The directions are also pervaded. Witnessing this miraculous and terrible form, the three worlds are suffering.’<sup>19</sup>

अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति  
केचिदभीताः प्राज्जलयो गृणन्ति ।  
स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः  
स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ॥२१॥

रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या  
विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोम्पाश्च ।  
गन्धर्वव्यक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्घाः  
वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे ॥२२॥

रूपं महते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं  
महाबाहो बहुबाहूपादम् ।  
बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं  
दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम् ॥२३॥

नभःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं  
व्याताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् ।  
दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा  
धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो ॥२४॥

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि  
दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि ।  
दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म  
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥२५॥

(21)

‘Those array of gods are entering you alone. Some are frightened and, with joined palms, are craving protection. The array of great sages and pure souls are uttering words of pacification and are worshipping you, with pure and profound prayers.’

(22)

‘The *rudras*, the *adityas*, the *vasus* and the *saddhyas*,<sup>20</sup> the *vishvadevas*,<sup>21</sup> the *ashvinis* and the *maruts*, those who partake warm food,<sup>22</sup> the *gandharvas*, the *yakshas*, the *asuras*<sup>23</sup> and arrays of the *siddhas*<sup>24</sup> are all gazing at you with amazement.’

(23)

‘O mighty-armed!<sup>25</sup> The worlds are terrified, and so am I, at witnessing your great form, with many faces and eyes, many stomachs, many arms, thighs and feet, fearsome with many teeth.’

(24)

‘O Vishnu! Touching the sky, resplendent, multi-hued, mouths stretched out, eyes large and fiery—seeing you, I am frightened and I cannot maintain my fortitude and peace.’

(25)

‘Seeing your several faces, fearsome with teeth and blazing like the fire of destruction, I have lost my sense of direction. I cannot find happiness. O lord of the gods! O refuge of the universe! Have mercy.’

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः  
सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्कृतैः ।  
भीष्मो द्रोणः सुतपुत्रस्तथासौ  
सहास्मदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥२६॥

वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति  
दंष्ट्राकरालनि भयानकानि ।  
कोच्छिलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु  
संदृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥२७॥

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुदेगाः  
समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।  
तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा  
विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिक्ष्वलन्ति ॥२८॥

यथा प्रदीपं ज्वलनं पतङ्गं  
विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः ।  
तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोका-  
स्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥२९॥

लेलिहयसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता  
ल्लोकान् समग्रान् वदनैर्ज्वलदृभिः ।  
तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत् समग्रं  
भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥३०॥

आरब्धाहि मे को भवानुग्रहूपो  
नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद ।  
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं  
न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥३१॥

(26)

‘All those sons of Dhritarashtra, with the collected kings, and Bhishma, Drona and that son of a *suta*<sup>16</sup> and the chief warriors on our side...’

(27)

‘... Are dashing into your fearsome mouth with the terrible teeth. Some of them can be seen, heads smashed and attached to the joints of the teeth.’

(28)

‘Truly, like many currents in rivers head towards and enter the ocean, thus those warriors of this earth are entering your mouths, flaming in all directions.’

(29)

‘As moths driven to destruction speedily enter a blazing fire, like that, these people are also swiftly entering your mouths, for destruction.’

(30)

‘O Vishnu! In all directions, you are repeatedly licking, having swallowed all the worlds<sup>27</sup> with your flaming mouths. Your fierce resplendence is scorching, having filled the universe with energy.’

(31)

‘Who are you? Tell me, you of the fierce form! I bow down before you. O great god! Be merciful. I wish to know you, you who are the beginning. Because I do not understand your inclination.’

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत् प्रवृद्धो  
लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।  
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे  
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥३२॥

तस्मात् त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व  
जित्वा शत्रून् भुद्धक्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।  
मर्यैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव  
निमित्तमात्रं भव सत्यसाचिन् ॥३३॥

द्रोणं च भीमं च जयद्रथं च  
कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान् ।  
मया हतास्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा  
युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपल्नान् ॥३४॥

संजय उवाच —

एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य  
कृतांजलिवर्णपमानः किरीटी ।  
नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं  
सगदर्द भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ॥३५॥

अर्जुन उवाच —

स्थाने हधीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या  
जगत् प्रहृष्यत्यनुज्यते च ।  
रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति  
सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥३६॥

(32)

Bhagavan<sup>28</sup> said:

‘I am the terrible destroyer<sup>29</sup> of people. I am now about to destroy these people. Even without you,<sup>30</sup> all the warriors in the opposing army formations will not exist.’

(33)

‘O Savyasachi!! Therefore, arise! Attain fame. Triumph over enemies and enjoy the undisputed kingdom. These<sup>31</sup> have already been slain by me. You will only be the instrument.’

(34)

‘Kill Drona and Bhishma and Jayadratha and Kama and the other brave warriors also, already killed by me. Don’t be apprehensive. You will be able to triumph over enemies in battle. Fight.’

(35)

Sanjaya said:

Hearing these words of Keshava’s,<sup>32</sup> the trembling Arjuna<sup>33</sup> joined his palms and saluting Krishna, again said in a faltering tone, bowing down in fear.

(36)

Arjuna said:

‘O Hrishikesha!<sup>34</sup> It is natural that the universe is extremely delighted to hear of your glory and is attracted to you, the *rakshas*<sup>35</sup> are scared and flee in all directions and all the arrays of *siddhas*<sup>36</sup> bow down.’

कस्माच्च ते न नमेन् महात्मन्  
गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकत्रे ।  
अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास  
त्वमक्षरं सदसत्त्वरं यत् ॥३७॥

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण  
स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।  
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम  
त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥३८॥

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः  
प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहरच ।  
नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः  
पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥३९॥

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते  
नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।  
अन्नतवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं  
सर्वे समाज्ञायि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥४०॥

सखेति भत्वा प्रसर्भ यदुक्तं  
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।  
अजानता महिमानं तवेंद  
भया प्रमादात् प्रणयेन वापि ॥४१॥

(37)

‘O great soul!<sup>37</sup> O infinite! O lord of the gods! O refuge of the universe! You are greater than Brahma and the original agent. Why should you not be saluted? The manifest and the unmanifest and the indestructible<sup>38</sup> that is beyond is also you.’

(38)

‘You come before the gods. You are the eternal being. You are the abode of the universe after destruction. You are the knower, that which is to be known and the supreme abode. By you is the universe pervaded and you are infinite in form.’

(39)

‘You are Vayu,<sup>39</sup> Yama,<sup>40</sup> Agni,<sup>41</sup> Varuna,<sup>42</sup> Shashanka,<sup>43</sup> Prajapati<sup>44</sup> and the great-grandfather.<sup>45</sup> I salute you a thousand times. And again salute you. And yet again salute you.’

(40)

‘I salute you in front and from the back. I salute you everywhere, in every direction. O possessor of infinite energy and unlimited strength! You pervade everything. Therefore, you are everything.’

(41)

‘Without knowing your glory and also this,<sup>46</sup> inadvertently and in affection, thinking of you as a friend, expressions like O Krishna, O Yadava, O friend, have been rudely used by me.’

यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि  
विहारशश्यासनभोजनेषु ।  
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं  
तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥42॥

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य  
त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गीयान् ।  
न तत्समोऽस्त्वयधिकः कुतोऽन्यो  
लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥43॥

तस्मात् प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं  
प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीढयम् ।  
पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः  
प्रियः प्रियायाहसि देव सोङ्गम् ॥44॥

अदृष्टपूर्वं हयितोऽस्मि दृष्टवा  
भयेन च प्रव्याधितं मनो मे ।  
तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं  
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥45॥

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्त  
मिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव ।  
तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन  
सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥46॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —  
मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं  
रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।  
तेजोगमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं  
यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥47॥

(42)

‘...O Achyuta!<sup>47</sup> At times of sport, sleeping, sitting or eating, alone or in front of other equals, in jest, you have faced irreverence and, for that, I crave forgiveness from you, whose power is beyond thought.’

(43)

‘O infinite power! You are the father, worshipped, teacher and also the greatest of all movable and immovable objects in the worlds. In the three worlds, there is no one equal to you. Where can there be someone greater than you?’

(44)

‘O god! For that reason, I prostrate my body and bow before this revered god, craving your blessings. Like a son’s by the father, a friend’s by a friend and a lover’s by the beloved, forgive.’<sup>48</sup>

(45)

‘O god! Having seen that which has not been witnessed before, I am delighted. But again, my mind is disturbed by fear. Therefore, show me your earlier form. O lord of the gods! O abode of the universe! Be merciful.’

(46)

‘I wish to see your earlier,<sup>49</sup> crowned, with a mace and *chakra*<sup>50</sup> in hand. O thousand-armed! O Universal Form! Become manifest in your four-armed form.’<sup>51</sup>

(47)

Bhagavan<sup>52</sup> said:

‘O Arjuna! Having been pleased, with my powers of *yoga*, I have shown this resplendent, infinite, primeval and supreme Universal Form. Apart from you, this has not been seen by anyone before.’

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानैर्न  
च क्रियाभिन्नं तपोभिरुपैः ।  
एवंरूपः शक्य अंह नृलोके  
द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥48॥

मा तो व्यथा मा च विमृहभावो  
दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृढ्ममेदम् ।  
व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं  
तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥49॥

संजय उवाच —  
इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा  
स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।  
आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं  
भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥50॥

अर्जुन उवाच —  
दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जर्नादन ।  
इदानीमस्ति संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥51॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —  
सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्ट्वानसि यन्मम ।  
देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षणः ॥52॥

(48)

‘O great hero of the Kuru clan!<sup>53</sup> Not through the *Vedas*, *yajnas*, study, nor through donations, nor even action or severe austerities, can this form of mine be witnessed by anyone other than you in this human world.’

(49)

‘Be not fearful at witnessing this fierce form of mine. Be not bewildered. Overcoming fear, with a happy mind, may you behold that, my earlier form.’

(50)

Sanjaya said:

Having said this, Vasudeva<sup>54</sup> again showed Arjuna his natural form. Having again assumed his peaceful form, the great soul<sup>55</sup> assured the scared Arjuna.

(51)

Arjuna said:

‘O Janardana!<sup>56</sup> Having seen your peaceful and human form, my mind is now calmed and I am in control of my senses. I have become normal.’

(52)

Bhagavan<sup>57</sup> said:

‘The form of mine that you have seen is difficult to witness. The gods themselves are always desirous of seeing this form.’

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया।  
शक्य एवं विधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥५३॥

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन  
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥५४॥

मल्कमकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।  
निवैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥५५॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगो नाम एकादशोऽध्यायः ॥

(53)

‘Not through the *Vedas*, nor austerities, nor donations, nor even *yajnas*, is it possible to see me in the form that you have seen me in.’

(54)

‘O scorcher of foes!<sup>58</sup> O Arjuna! It is only through single-minded devotion that this form of mine can be truly known or seen, or it becomes possible to get immersed in me.’

(55)

‘O Pandava!<sup>59</sup> He who undertakes action for my sake is attached to me, is devoted to me, is detached and without enmity towards all beings, he attains me.’

॥ द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥

भक्तियोगः

## Chapter 12

### The Path of Devotion

This chapter has twenty *shlokas* and concludes the *bhakti yoga* segment (Chapters 7 to 12) of the *Gita*. The issue is simple. Is it better to worship the *nirguna* form of the *paramatman* or the *saguna* form? The former is the path of knowledge (*jnana*) and the latter is the path of devotion (*bhakti*). For most people, the latter is easier.

अर्जुन उवाच —

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।  
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥१॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

मव्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।  
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते भे युक्ततमा मताः ॥२॥

ये त्वक्षरमनिदेश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।  
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं भ्रुवम् ॥३॥

सन्नियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्रः समबुद्धयः ।  
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥४॥

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।  
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥५॥

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्पराः ।  
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥६॥

(1)

Arjuna said:

‘In this way, there are devotees who are always immersed in you and worship you and there are those who think of the unmanifest and the indestructible.<sup>1</sup> Who among these is the best *yogi*?’<sup>2</sup>

(2)

Bhagavan<sup>3</sup> said:

‘Those who worship me with minds fixed on me and always united in me with supreme devotion, in my view, they are the best *yogis*.’

(3)

‘But those who worship the indestructible, indescribable, unmanifest, omnipresent, unthinkable, original,<sup>4</sup> immovable and constant...’

(4)

‘...Controlling properly the senses and looking upon everything equally, acting for the welfare of all beings, they attain only me.’

(5)

‘Those who wish to immerse their minds in the unmanifest find it more difficult. Because those who possess bodies<sup>5</sup> attain the goal of the unmanifest with great perseverance.’<sup>6</sup>

(6)

‘Those who offer all action to me, are devoted to me and with single-minded *yoga* meditate on me and worship me...’

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।  
भवाभि नचिरात् पार्थ मव्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥7॥

मव्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धि निवेशय ।  
निवसिष्यसि मव्येव अत कृच्छ्र न संशयः ॥8॥

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोयि मयि स्थिरम् ।  
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनंजय ॥9॥

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।  
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन् सिद्धिमवाप्यसि ॥10॥

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमात्रितः ।  
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥11॥

त्रेयो हि ज्ञानमध्यासाज्ञानाद्यानं विशिष्यते ।  
ध्यानात् कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥12॥

अद्वैष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।  
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥13॥

(7)

‘...With minds rendered unto me, O son of Pritha!<sup>7</sup> I become swiftly their rescuer from this mortal world that is like an ocean.’

(8)

‘Establish your mind in me alone.<sup>8</sup> Fix your intellect on me. After that,<sup>9</sup> there is no doubt that you will live with me alone.’

(9)

‘O Dhananjaya!<sup>10</sup> If you cannot steady your mind and fix it on me, then practise *yoga*<sup>11</sup> and wish to attain me.’

(10)

‘If you don’t succeed in the practice, then do only my deeds.<sup>12</sup> Even if you do acts for my pleasure, you attain liberation.’

(11)

‘If, however, you are unable to perform these deeds also, then control your mind, give up attachment to the fruits of all action and seek refuge in the *yoga* that is mine.’<sup>13</sup>

(12)

‘Knowledge is superior to practice. Meditation is superior to knowledge. Giving up attachment to the fruits of action is superior to meditation. After renunciation, tranquillity is attained.’<sup>14</sup>

(13)

‘He who has no hatred for all beings, is friendly and also displays compassion, is without sense of ego, without pride, regards happiness and unhappiness in the same way and is forgiving...’

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।  
मर्यपूर्वितमनोबुद्धयो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥१४॥

यस्मान्नोद्गिजते लोको लोकान्नोद्गिजते च यः ।  
हर्षामर्षभयोद्गैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥१५॥

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।  
सर्वारभपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥१६॥

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।  
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥१७॥

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।  
श्रीतोष्णासुख दुःखेषु समः सङ्घविवर्जितः ॥१८॥

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिमौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।  
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान् मे प्रियो नरः ॥१९॥

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।  
श्रद्धाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥२०॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासुपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे भक्तियोगो नाम द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥

(14)

‘...Is always satisfied, a *yogi* and controlled in mind, firm in resolution<sup>15</sup> and with mind and intellect immersed in me, such a devotee of mine is dear to me.’

(15)

‘He from whom other people are not disturbed and he who is not disturbed by other people and he who is free from delight, dissatisfaction,<sup>16</sup> fear and concern, is dear to me.’

(16)

‘Without desire,<sup>17</sup> pure, enterprising, neutral, without pain and one who has renounced all fruit,<sup>18</sup> such a devotee is dear to me.’

(17)

‘He who is not delighted, nor hates. He who does not sorrow, nor desire. He who has given up good and evil,<sup>19</sup> such a devotee is dear to me.’

(18)

‘Equal between friend and enemy, and respect and insult, equal between cold and warmth, happiness and unhappiness and without all attachment...’

(19)

‘...Alike between criticism and praise, restrained in speech,<sup>20</sup> satisfied with whatever is obtained, without habitation<sup>21</sup> and controlled in mind, such a devoted man is dear to me.’

(20)

‘Those who are devoted and look upon me as the supreme goal and worship according to this immortal *dharma* mentioned earlier, such devotees are extremely dear to me.’

॥ त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥  
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगः

## Chapter 13

# Discrimination between Nature and the Self

This chapter has thirty-four *shlokas* or verses and begins with a *shloka* where Krishna is speaking. However, in many popular versions of the *Gita*, an additional *shloka* is inserted at the beginning. In this, Arjuna is speaking and tells Krishna that he wishes to know the difference between *purusha* and *prakriti* and between *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*. But it is more or less agreed that this *sloka* at the beginning is an interpolation. Nor is any value addition imparted as a result of Arjuna's question. We have therefore skipped this *shloka*. With Chapter 13, there is a switch in emphasis to *jnana yoga*.

श्रीभगवानुवाच –

इदं शरीर कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।  
एतद्यो वेति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥१॥

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।  
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोज्ञानं यत्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥२॥

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत् ।  
स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे श्रृणु ॥३॥

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।  
ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥४॥

महाभूतान्यहङ्कारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।  
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥५॥

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं सह्यातश्चेतना धृतिः ।  
एतत् क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहतम् ॥६॥

अमानित्वमदभित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिराज्वरम् ।  
आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥७॥

(1)

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said:

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>2</sup> This body is known as the *kshetra*.<sup>3</sup> He who knows this is called the *kshetrajna* by those who have the knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

(2)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>5</sup> In every field, know me to be the *kshetrajna*. My view is that knowledge about *kshetra* and *kshetrajna* is knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

(3)

‘Briefly, hear from me what is that *kshetra*, its nature and its transformation, and cause and effect within it. Also that<sup>7</sup> and its power.’

(4)

‘The *rishis* have sung this<sup>8</sup> in different metres in several diverse ways. The definite logical arguments are also there in the *brahma-sutra* passages.<sup>9</sup>

(5)

‘The great elements,<sup>10</sup> the ego, the intellect and the unmanifest,<sup>11</sup> the ten organs of sense<sup>12</sup> and the single one<sup>13</sup> and the objects of the five senses...<sup>14</sup>

(6)

‘...Desire, hatred, happiness, unhappiness, combination,<sup>15</sup> consciousness, patience, these together are said to be the *kshetra* and its transformations.’

(7)

‘Lack of ego, lack of arrogance, lack of injury,<sup>16</sup> forgiveness, humility, servitude towards teachers, purity, single-mindedness<sup>17</sup> and control over the self...’

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च ।  
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥8॥

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।  
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥9॥

मयि चानन्दयोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारणी ।  
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥10॥

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।  
एतज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥11॥

ज्ञेयं यत्तत् प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।  
अनादिमृतं परं ब्रह्म न सत्तनासदुच्यते ॥12॥

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।  
सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥13॥

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।  
असक्तं सर्वभृच्छैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तु च ॥14॥

(8)

‘...Detachment towards gratification of the senses and lack of vanity, indifference towards unhappy travails like birth, death, ageing and disease...’

(9)

‘...Non-attachment,<sup>18</sup> no sense of belonging in wife, son and home, always equality in mind whether good or evil results...’

(10)

‘...Faithfulness in devotion to me, fixedness and non-deviation in *yoga*, habitation in secluded spots, aversion to crowds...’

(11)

‘...Devotion to knowledge about the *atman* and search for true knowledge —these are known as knowledge. Anything opposed is ignorance.’

(12)

‘I will state that which is to be known. Knowing that, attains immortality.<sup>19</sup> That *brahman*, without origin, is my form. It is said, both eternal and transient.’<sup>20</sup>

(13)

‘That<sup>21</sup> has hands and feet everywhere, eyes, heads and mouths everywhere and ears everywhere, is established in everything in this world.’<sup>22</sup>

(14)

‘Manifest in the qualities of all the senses, but without any senses, alone, like the abode of everything, without qualities and the preserver of all qualities.’<sup>23</sup>

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।  
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥15॥

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।  
भूतभर्तु च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥16॥

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्चते ।  
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विच्छितम् ॥17॥

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समाप्ततः ।  
मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥18॥

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ययनादी उभावपि ।  
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसंभवान् ॥19॥

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।  
पुरुषः सुखदःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुडक्ते प्रकृतिजानगुणान् ।  
कारणं गुणसङ्घोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥21॥

(15)

‘That<sup>24</sup> is outside all beings and yet inside them, moving and unmoving, beyond knowledge because of subtleness, far and yet near.’

(16)

‘That<sup>25</sup> is indivisible, but exists in every being in divided form. Know<sup>26</sup> as the preserver, destroyer and creator of all beings.’

(17)

‘That<sup>27</sup> is the light of all bright bodies. Said to be beyond darkness. Knowledge, that which is to be known and attainable through knowledge, is established in the heart of everything.’<sup>28</sup>

(18)

‘Briefly, *kshetra* and that which is knowledge and to be known have been stated. Knowing this, my devotee attains my nature.’<sup>29</sup>

(19)

‘Know both *prakriti* and *purusha* to be without origin. And know transformations and the qualities<sup>30</sup> to result from *prakriti*.’<sup>31</sup>

(20)

‘*Prakriti* is said to be the reason behind cause and effect.<sup>32</sup> *Purusha* said to be<sup>33</sup> for happiness and unhappiness in enjoyment.’

(21)

‘Because *purusha* is established in *prakriti* and enjoys *prakriti*’s qualities.<sup>34</sup> And its<sup>35</sup> good and evil birth is because of its association with

these qualities.'

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।  
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन् पुरुषः परः ॥२२॥

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।  
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥२३॥

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।  
अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥२४॥

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।  
तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥२५॥

यावत् संजायते किञ्चित् सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्घमम् ।  
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥२६॥

संम सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।  
विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥२७॥

संम पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।  
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥२८॥

(22)

‘The Supreme Being in this body is known as one who witnesses, one who allows, one who sustains, one who enjoys, the supreme lord and the *paramatman*.’

(23)

‘He who knows the nature of *purusha*, and of *prakriti*, with the qualities, whatever be the position he is in, will not be reborn.’

(24)

‘Some, through meditation, see the *atman* in the *atman* with the *atman*.<sup>36</sup> Others use *sankhya yoga*<sup>37</sup> and still others use *karma yoga*.’

(25)

‘And others, failing to know,<sup>38</sup> hear from others and worship. Even they, who are devoted to hearing, transcend death.’

(26)

‘O best of the Bharatas!<sup>39</sup> Whatever movable and immovable objects are created, know them to result from the link between *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*.’

(27)

‘He truly sees who beholds the indestructible supreme lord equally in all beings, while everything else is destructible.’

(28)

‘He who sees God equally established in everything, he doesn’t kill the *atman* with the *atman*,<sup>40</sup> and, therefore, attains supreme liberation.’

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।  
यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥२९॥

यदा भूतपृथगभावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।  
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥३०॥

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात् परमात्मायमव्ययः ।  
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥३१॥

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।  
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥३२॥

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।  
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥३३॥

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।  
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुयान्ति ते परम् ॥३४॥

इति श्रीमद्भगद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगो नाम त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥

(29)

‘He who perceives all action as being performed by *prakriti* and the *atman* as a non-agent, he truly beholds.’

(30)

‘When he<sup>41</sup> sees the different aspects of beings as established in one<sup>42</sup> and also everything manifested from there, he attains the *brahman*.’

(31)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>43</sup> Because it is without origin and without qualities, this *paramatman* is unchanging and although based in the body, does nothing. Is not attached.’<sup>44</sup>

(32)

‘As the sky that is everywhere is not attached because of its subtlety, like that, the *atman* is not attached, though it is in every body.’

(33)

‘O Bharata!<sup>45</sup> Just as a single sun lights up the entire world, like that, a single *kshetri* lights up all *kshetras*.’<sup>46</sup>

(34)

‘Those who, through their eyes of knowledge, know the difference between *kshetra* and *kshetrajna* in this way and freedom from beings and *prakriti*,<sup>47</sup> they attain the supreme goal.’

॥ चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः ॥  
गुणत्रयविभागयोगः

## Chapter 14

### Separation between the Three *Gunas*

This chapter has twenty-seven *shlokas* or verses. In Chapter 13, there is a discussion of *purusha* and *prakriti* and a reference to *prakriti* being subject to the three *gunas* (qualities) of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. But we do not yet know what these *gunas* are, nor do we know how to transcend them. There is thus a natural transition to Chapter 14's discussion of the three *gunas*.

श्रीभगवानुवाच –

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।  
यज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परं सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥१॥

इदं ज्ञानमुपाध्रित्य मम साधार्घ्यमागताः ।  
सर्वेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥२॥

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भं दधार्घ्यहम् ।  
सम्भवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥३॥

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ।  
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं दीजप्रदः पिता ॥४॥

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।  
निवधनन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥५॥

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात् प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।  
सुखसङ्गेन वध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानध ॥६॥

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।  
तनिवधनाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥७॥

(1)

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said:

‘I am again stating the excellent and supreme out of all types of knowledge. Knowing that, all the sages are freed from this<sup>2</sup> and attain supreme liberation.’

(2)

‘Seeking refuge in this knowledge and attaining my true nature, are not born at the time of creation, nor suffer at the time of destruction.’<sup>3</sup>

(3)

‘O Bharata!<sup>4</sup> The great *brahman*<sup>5</sup> is my womb. Into that, I place the seed.<sup>6</sup> And from that, all the beings are created.’

(4)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>7</sup> The different forms that are created in all wombs, the great *brahman*<sup>8</sup> is like their mother<sup>9</sup> and I am the father who provides the seed.’

(5)

‘O mighty-armed!<sup>10</sup> The qualities *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, generated from nature, bind the indestructible *atman* in the body.’

(6)

‘O sinless one!<sup>11</sup> Among these,<sup>12</sup> *sattva* is shining because it is pure and is without sin, but ties down the *atman* because of attachment to happiness and knowledge.’<sup>13</sup>

(7)

‘O son of Kunti! <sup>14</sup> Know *rajas* to be based on desire and the origin of thirst and attachment. <sup>15</sup> That <sup>16</sup> binds the *atman* <sup>17</sup> firmly because of attachment to action.’

तमस्त्वज्ञानं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।  
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निवध्नाति भारत ॥८॥

सत्त्वं सुखे संजयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।  
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे संजयत्युत ॥९॥

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।  
रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥१०॥

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन् प्रकाश उपजायते ।  
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥११॥

लोभः प्रवत्तिराम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।  
रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥१२॥

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।  
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥१३॥

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।  
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान् प्रतिपद्यते ॥१४॥

(8)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>18</sup> Know *tamas* to be born from ignorance and the source of delusion in every being. That<sup>19</sup> binds firmly through error,<sup>20</sup> sloth and sleep.’<sup>21</sup>

(9)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>22</sup> *Sattva* attaches to happiness and *rajas* attaches to action. *Tamas* veils knowledge and attaches to errors.’

(10)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>23</sup> *Sattva* overcomes *rajas* and *tamas* and becomes strong, *rajas sattva* and *tamas*, and *tamas sattva* and *rajas*.’<sup>24</sup>

(11)

‘Know that when the light of knowledge is ignited in all the gates of this body,<sup>25</sup> it is only then that *sattva* becomes strong.’

(12)

‘O best of the Bharatas!<sup>26</sup> Greed,<sup>27</sup> inclination,<sup>28</sup> beginnings of action,<sup>29</sup> restlessness and desire—these are created when *rajas* becomes strong.’

(13)

‘O son of Kuru!<sup>30</sup> Darkness, lack of enterprise, inadvertence and delusion—these are created when *tamas* becomes strong.’

(14)

‘If a being dies when *sattva* becomes strong, then he attains the shining<sup>31</sup> world reserved for those who have the supreme knowledge.’<sup>32</sup>

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्क्षु जायते ।  
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥१५॥

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।  
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥१६॥

सत्त्वात् संजायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।  
प्रमाद मोही तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥१७॥

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।  
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥१८॥

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।  
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥१९॥

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन् देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।  
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमशनुते ॥२०॥

अर्जुन उवाच —  
कैर्लिङ्गं-स्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।  
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन् गुणानतिवर्तते ॥२१॥

(15)

‘Death when *rajas* becomes strong leads to rebirth as someone addicted to action. And death when *tamas*,<sup>33</sup> leads to rebirth as sub-human species.’<sup>34</sup>

(16)

‘It has been said that *sattva*-type action has the fruit of pure happiness,<sup>35</sup> *rajas*-type has the fruit of unhappiness and *tamas-type* has the fruit of ignorance.’

(17)

‘From *sattva*, wisdom results. And from *rajas*, greed. And from *tamas*, only inadvertence, delusion and ignorance result.’

(18)

‘Those with a preponderance of *sattva* ascend above.<sup>36</sup> Those with *rajas* stay in the middle.<sup>37</sup> Those with despicable *tamas* qualities descend below.’<sup>38</sup>

(19)

‘When the seer doesn’t see any agent other than the qualities and knows that which is beyond the qualities, he attains my nature.’<sup>39</sup>

(20)

‘When the being transcends the three qualities that are the origin of the body, he attains immortality, free from birth, death, old age and unhappiness.’

(21)

Arjuna said:

‘O Lord! <sup>40</sup> From what signs does one know one who has transcended?  
What is his conduct? And how does he transcend these three qualities?’

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।  
न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तिनि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥२२॥

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यौ न विचाल्यते ।  
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥२३॥

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाशमकांचनः ।  
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥२४॥

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।  
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥२५॥

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।  
स गुणान् समतीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥२६॥

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।  
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥२७॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे गुणत्रयविभागयोगो नाम चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः ॥

(22)

Bhagavan<sup>41</sup> said:

‘O son of Pandu! <sup>42</sup> He who is engaged in knowledge and inclination and delusion and yet does not hate, nor desire if these are withdrawn.’<sup>43</sup>

(23)

‘He is established in indifference and the qualities don’t disturb him. Knowing the action of the qualities to be of this form, he is steady and doesn’t waver.’

(24)

‘Equal between happiness and unhappiness, established in himself,<sup>44</sup> equal between earth, stone and gold, similar in treatment of the loved and the hated, tranquil, similar between praise and censure.’

(25)

‘He who treats respect and insult alike, friend and enemy alike and discards all beginnings of action,<sup>45</sup> he is said to have transcended the qualities.’

(26)

‘He who worships me single-mindedly and with unwavering devotion, he transcends these qualities and is worthy of attaining the state of the *brahman*.’

(27)

‘Because I am the embodiment of the *brahman*—indestructible, immortal,<sup>46</sup> and also of eternal *dharma* and absolute bliss.’<sup>47</sup>

॥ पंचदशोऽध्यायः ॥

पुरुषोत्तमयोगः

## Chapter 15

# Union with the Supreme Being

This chapter has twenty *shlokas* or verses. The idea in Chapter 14 is to overcome the three qualities and become one with the *brahman*. That enables one to overcome worldly bondage. But what is the nature of the Supreme Being? That is the subject matter of Chapter 15.

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।  
छन्दोंसि यस्य पण्णिनि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥१॥

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा  
गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।  
अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि  
कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥२॥

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते  
नान्तो न चादिनं च संप्रतिष्ठा ।  
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरुद्धमूल  
मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दुडेन छित्त्वा ॥३॥

ततः पदं तत् परिमार्गितव्यं  
यस्मिन् गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।  
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये  
यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥४॥

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा  
अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।  
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंजै  
र्गच्छन्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥५॥

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।  
यदगत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्वाम परमं मम ॥६॥

(1)

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said:

‘They say the *asvattha* tree,<sup>2</sup> with a root above and branches below, is indestructible. He who knows that its leaves are the metres<sup>3</sup> knows the truth.’

(2)

‘Specially nurtured by the *gunas*,<sup>4</sup> with objects<sup>5</sup> as its shoots, its branches extend upwards and downwards. In the world of men, its rootlings<sup>6</sup> stretch downwards, the cause of action.’

(3)

‘In this,<sup>7</sup> this form<sup>8</sup> is not felt. Nor the end, nor the beginning. Nor even its establishment. Slicing the thick root of this *ashvattha* with the weapon of firm detachment...’

(4)

‘...Thereafter, one must seek that goal, the attainment of which means no return,<sup>9</sup> stating, “I seek refuge in that original being, from whom this eternal process is created.”’

(5)

‘Without pride and delusion, having conquered the fault of attachment, constant in the knowledge of the *atman*, having restrained desire, freed from the opposites of happiness and unhappiness, the wise go to that indestructible goal.’

(6)

‘Attaining that, there is no return. The sun cannot light that,<sup>10</sup> nor the moon, nor fire.<sup>11</sup> That is my supreme abode.’

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।  
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥7॥

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्कामतीश्वरः ।  
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुगन्धानिवाशयात् ॥8॥

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं ध्राणमेव च ।  
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥9॥

उत्कामनं स्थितं वाऽपि भुंजानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।  
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥10॥

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।  
यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥11॥

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।  
यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चान्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धु मामकम् ॥12॥

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।  
पुण्यामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥13॥

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।  
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यनं चतुर्विधम् ॥14॥

(7)

‘Indeed, part of my eternal form is established as beings in nature and attracts the mind and six<sup>12</sup> senses to the world of beings.’

(8)

‘Like the wind carries away fragrance from receptacles,<sup>13</sup> the lord,<sup>14</sup> when it discards one body and attains another one, takes these<sup>15</sup> with it and leaves.’

(9)

‘This<sup>16</sup> is established in the ears, the eyes, touch, the tongue, the nose and also the mind and enjoys objects.’

(10)

‘The deluded do not see the establishment and also the enjoyment and progress, with the qualities as attributes.<sup>17</sup> Those with eyes of wisdom, see this.’

(11)

‘Careful<sup>18</sup> yogis, established in the *atman*, see this. Despite care, those who are not established in the *atman* and are without consciousness don’t see this.’

(12)

‘The energy in the sun that lights up the entire world, that in the moon and that too in the fire, know that energy to be mine.’

(13)

‘I enter the earth and hold up the beings with my energy. As the watery moon, I nourish all the herbs.’<sup>19</sup>

(14)

‘I am established in the bodies of beings as the fire of digestion. I mingle with the *prana* and *apana* breath<sup>20</sup> and digest the four types of food.’<sup>21</sup>

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो  
मतः स्मृतिज्ञानमपोहनं च ।  
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो  
वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥15॥

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।  
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥16॥

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहतः ।  
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य विभृत्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥17॥

यस्मात् क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।  
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥18॥

यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।  
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥19॥

इति गुहयतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानग्न ।  
एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात् कृतकृत्पश्च भारत ॥20॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे पुरुषोत्तमयोगो नाम पंचदशोऽध्यायः ॥

(15)

‘I am established in the hearts of all beings. I result in memory and knowledge and their lack. Indeed, it is I who am the knowledge of the *Vedas* and the origin of *Vedanta*.<sup>22</sup> And I am the knower of the *Vedas*.’<sup>23</sup>

(16)

‘The destructible and the indestructible, these two *purushas* exist in the world. All these beings are destructible.<sup>24</sup> The fixed is known as the indestructible.<sup>25</sup>

(17)

‘That apart, there is a supreme *purusha* known as the *paramatman*, who enters the three worlds<sup>26</sup> and sustains them—the indestructible Lord.’

(18)

‘Because I am beyond destruction and superior even to the indestructible, therefore, I am known as the Supreme Being<sup>27</sup> in this world<sup>28</sup> and in the *Vedas*.’

(19)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>29</sup> Without delusion, he who knows me as the Supreme Being, he is omniscient and worships me in every way.’

(20)

‘O pure one!<sup>30</sup> O descendant of Bharata!<sup>31</sup> Thus, I have related this extremely secret knowledge. This understanding leads to knowledge and accomplishment.’<sup>32</sup>

॥ षोडशोऽध्यायः ॥  
दैवासुरसम्पद्विभागयोगः

## Chapter 16

### Distinction between the Divine and the Demonic

This chapter has twenty-four *shlokas* or verses. There have already been stray references (such as in Chapter 9) to the effect that demonic people do not get to know the true nature of the *paramatman*. On the other hand, those who are of the *sattva*-type attain this wisdom. This chapter explains the difference between divine and demonic tendencies.

श्रीभगवानुवाच –

अभ्यं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।  
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥१॥

अहिंसा सत्यमङ्गोधस्त्व्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।  
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ही रचापलम् ॥२॥

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।  
भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥३॥

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।  
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थं संपदमासुरीम् ॥४॥

दैवी संपद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायसुरी मता ।  
मां शुचः संपदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥५॥

द्वौ भूतसगौ लोकेऽस्मिन् दैव आसुर एव च ।  
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थं मे शृणु ॥६॥

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।  
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥७॥

(1)

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup> said:

‘Absence of fear, pureness of heart,<sup>2</sup> steadiness in *jnana yoga*<sup>3</sup> donation, and control,<sup>4</sup> *yajnas*, self-study,<sup>5</sup> practice of austerities and simplicity...’<sup>6</sup>

(2)

‘...Absence of injury to others, truthfulness, lack of anger, renunciation,<sup>7</sup> tranquillity, lack of criticism of others, compassion towards beings, lack of avarice, gentleness, sense of shame,<sup>8</sup> steadfastness...’

(3)

‘Energy, forgiveness, perseverance, cleanliness, absence of hatred, absence of ego. O descendant of Bharata!<sup>9</sup> These belong to the person born towards divine wealth.’<sup>10</sup>

(4)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>11</sup> Arrogance, insolence, egoism, anger, cruelty and ignorance, these belong to birth towards demonic wealth.’

(5)

‘Divine wealth is for liberation. Demonic wealth is for bondage. O descendant of Bharata!<sup>12</sup> Do not sorrow. You have been born towards divine wealth.’

(6)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>13</sup> In this world, two types of beings are created, divine and demonic. The divine has been stated in detail.<sup>14</sup> Hear from me about the demonic.’

(7)

‘Demonic people do not know about inclination and disinclination.<sup>15</sup> In them, there is no purity nor righteousness, nor even truthfulness.’

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।  
अपरस्परसंभूतं किमन्यत् कामहैतुकम् ॥१८॥

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।  
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्मणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥१९॥

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।  
मोहादृगृहीत्वाऽसद्ग्रहान् प्रवर्तन्ते शुचिक्रताः ॥१०॥

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।  
कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥११॥

आशापाशशैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।  
ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसचंयान् ॥१२॥

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्त्ये मनोरथम् ।  
इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥१३॥

असौ मया हतः शतुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।  
ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान् सुखी ॥१४॥

(8)

‘They say the world is full of falsehood,<sup>16</sup> without basis,<sup>17</sup> without God, created without continuity<sup>18</sup> and with no reason other than to satisfy desire.’

(9)

‘Resorting to such views, with distorted minds, little intelligence and cruel action, they perform evil deeds. They are born to destroy the world.’

(10)

‘Seeking refuge in insatiable desires, deluded with a sense of insolence, pride and arrogance,<sup>19</sup> accepting search of the untrue<sup>20</sup> and performing impure rites, they<sup>21</sup> act.’

(11)

‘Resorting to immeasurable thoughts till the time of destruction,<sup>22</sup> convinced certainly that the enjoyment of desire is supreme...’

(12)

‘...Tied down with the noose of a hundred hopes, prone to lust and anger and accepting evil means for the sake of desire gratification, they wish to accumulate wealth.’

(13)

‘Today I have gained this. I will get that desired object later. I have this and again that wealth will also be mine...’

(14)

‘This enemy has been killed by me, I will also kill the others. I am the lord, I am the enjoyer, I am the successful, strong and happy...’

आह्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।  
यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥१५॥

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।  
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥१६॥

आत्मसंभाविताः स्तव्या धनमानमदान्विताः ।  
यजन्ते नामयज्ञस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥१७॥

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।  
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विष्टाऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥१८॥

तानहं द्विष्टतः क्रूरान् संसारेषु नराधमान् ।  
क्षिपाम्यजस्तमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥१९॥

आसुरीं योनीमापन्ना मुढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।  
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥२०॥

त्रिविधं नरकस्त्वेदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।  
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥२१॥

(15)

‘...I am wealthy and of noble descent. Who is there equal to me? I will perform *yajnas*, I will donate, I will pleasure myself.<sup>23</sup> Deluded by ignorance in this way...’

(16)

‘...Minds distracted by many thoughts, caught in the net of delusion, addicted to gratification of desires, they are hurled into impure hell.’

(17)

‘Self-glorifying, haughty, proud because of wealth, they insolently perform unsanctioned rites that are *yajnas* only in name.’

(18)

‘Resorting to vanity, strength, insolence, desire and anger, they hate me in their own bodies and in the bodies of others and are disfavoured.’

(19)

‘In this world, I hurl those hateful, cruel, evil and worst among men into demonic births,<sup>24</sup> several times.’

(20)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>25</sup> From birth to birth, the deluded don’t attain me and, obtaining demonic births, go down even further.’<sup>26</sup>

(21)

‘Desire, anger and avarice—these are the three types of doors to hell and destroyers of the *atman*. Give up these three.’

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्भारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।  
आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥22॥

यः शास्त्रविधिमुल्लज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।  
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥23॥

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।  
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥24॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासुपानिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे दैवासुरसंपद्भागोयोगो नाम घोडशोऽध्यायः ॥

(22)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>27</sup> The man who is freed from these three dark doors and follows that which is good for the *atman*, thereafter attains the supreme goal.’

(23)

‘He who deviates from the prescription of the *shastras*<sup>28</sup> and acts as he desires like doing, that person doesn’t attain liberation or happiness or the supreme goal.’

(24)

‘Therefore, in deciding what should be done and what should not be done, the *shastras* are your test. In this,<sup>29</sup> get ready to perform action, knowing what the *shastras* prescribe.’

॥ सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥  
श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगः

## Chapter 17

# Distinction between the Three Types of Faith

This chapter has twenty-eight *shlokas* or verses. This chapter develops the argument that faith is of three types, characterized by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Accordingly, sacrifices, food, meditation and donation are also of three types.

अर्जुन उवाच -

ये शास्त्रविभिन्नमृत्युं यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।  
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥१॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच -

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।  
सत्त्विको राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां श्रृणु ॥२॥

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।  
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥३॥

यजन्ते सत्त्विका देवान् यक्षरक्षांसि राजसा: ।  
प्रेतान् भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥४॥

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।  
दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः ॥५॥

कर्शयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।  
मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्यासुरनिश्चयान् ॥६॥

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।  
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं श्रृणु ॥७॥

(1)

Arjuna said:

‘Those who discard<sup>1</sup> the prescriptions of the *shastras*, but worship<sup>2</sup> with recourse to faith, what is their devotion like? Is it *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*?’

(2)

Bhagavan<sup>3</sup> said:

‘According to their nature,<sup>4</sup> people show three kinds of faith—*sattva*-type, *rajas*-type and *tamas*-type. Listen to this.’

(3)

‘O descendant of Bharata!<sup>5</sup> Everyone’s faith follows his inner nature. This being<sup>6</sup> is full of faith. The kind of faith one has makes the person.’

(4)

‘Those of the *sattva*-type worship the gods.<sup>7</sup> Those of the *rajas*-type, *yakshas* and *rakshas*.<sup>8</sup> The others, of the *tamas*-type, worship<sup>9</sup> ghosts<sup>10</sup> and devils.’<sup>11</sup>

(5)

‘Those who perform terrible austerities, not sanctioned by the *shastras*, full of insolence and ego and deriving strength from desire and attachment...’<sup>12</sup>

(6)

‘...Devoid of consciousness, torture the elements in the body and also me, inside the body.<sup>13</sup> Know them to be driven by demonic<sup>14</sup> resolution.’

(7)

‘The favoured food of all<sup>15</sup> is of three types and so too, sacrifices, meditation and donations. Listen to the distinction between these.’

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।  
रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥८॥

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णातीक्षणरूक्षविदाहिनः ।  
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदा ॥९॥

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।  
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेघं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥१०॥

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इन्यते ।  
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥११॥

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्मार्थमपि चैव यत् ।  
इन्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥१२॥

विधिहीनमसृष्टानं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।  
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥१३॥

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।  
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥१४॥

(8)

‘The *sattva*-type favour food that increases life expectancy, vitality,<sup>16</sup> strength, freedom from disease, happiness and joy—tasty, oily, nourishing and pleasant.’

(9)

‘The *rajas*-type favour food that is extremely bitter,<sup>17</sup> acidic, salty, hot, pungent, dry and burning—increasing unhappiness, sorrow and disease.’

(10)

‘The *tamas*-type favour food cooked a long time ago,<sup>18</sup> no longer succulent<sup>19</sup> and with a bad smell, stale<sup>20</sup> and tasted by others<sup>21</sup>—impure.’

(11)

‘The sacrifices performed according to prescribed rites, pacifying the mind, without attachment to fruits and only because such sacrifices ought to be performed, are of the *sattva*-type.’

(12)

‘But, O best of the Bharatas!<sup>22</sup> Know sacrifices performed in search of fruits, or indeed because of insolence,<sup>23</sup> to be of the *rajas*-type.’

(13)

‘Sacrifices without following prescribed rites, without donating food, without *mantras*, without donations and without faith, are said to be of the *tamas*-type.’

(14)

‘Worship of gods, *brahmanas*,<sup>24</sup> teachers and the wise, purity, simplicity, *brahmacharya*<sup>25</sup> and non-violence<sup>26</sup>—these are known as physical austerities.’

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।  
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥१५॥

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।  
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्पो मानससमुच्यते ॥१६॥

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्त्रित्रिविधं नैः ।  
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥१७॥

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।  
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमधुवम् ॥१८॥

मूढग्राहणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।  
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहतम् ॥१९॥

दातव्यमिति यद्यानं दीयते ऽनुपकारिणे ।  
देशो काले च पात्रे च तद्यानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥२०॥

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।  
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्यानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥२१॥

(15)

‘Not uttering words that lead to anxiety, speaking the truth and that which is pleasant and leads to welfare,<sup>27</sup> and self-study<sup>28</sup>—these are known as verbal austerities.’

(16)

‘Tranquillity of mind, lack of cruelty,<sup>29</sup> reserve in speech, control of one’s self, purity in attitude<sup>30</sup>—all these are known as mental austerities.’

(17)

‘These three types of austerities performed single-mindedly by men, without attachment to fruits and with supreme faith, are said to be of the *sattva*-type.’

(18)

‘Austerities performed with the objective of obtaining praise, respect or worship, and based on insolence, are said to be of the *rajas*-type and in this,<sup>31</sup> are temporary and uncertain.’

(19)

‘Austerities performed on the basis of delusion, resulting in the oppression of one’s self or undertaken to destroy others, are said to be of the *tamas*-type.’

(20)

‘Alms donated for the sake of donation,<sup>32</sup> to those who have not benefited the donor,<sup>33</sup> and based on place, time and subject<sup>34</sup>—are said to be of the *sattva*-type.’

(21)

‘But donations for the sake of return favours or for the fruits or given unwillingly are said to be of the *rajas-* type.’

अदेशकाले यज्ञनमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।  
असत्कृतमवजातं तत्तामसमुदाहतम् ॥22॥

ओं तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मण-स्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।  
ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥23॥

तस्मादेभित्युदाहत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रिया ।  
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥24॥

तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।  
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते भोक्षकाङ्गिभिः ॥25॥

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत् प्रयुज्यते ।  
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥26॥

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।  
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥27॥

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।  
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥28॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासुपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे।  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगो नाम सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥

(22)

‘Donations in the wrong place, at the wrong time and to the wrong subject, given without respect and disdainfully— are said to be of the *tamas*-type.’

(23)

““*Om tat sat*”—in these three ways, the *brahman* has been described in the sacred texts.<sup>35</sup> From this, in the past, *brahmanas* and the *Vedas* and *yajnas* have been created.’

(24)

‘Therefore, according to prescribed rites, sacrifices, donations and austerities by those who are learned in the *brahman*,<sup>36</sup> are always undertaken after uttering “*Om*”.’

(25)

‘Those who desire liberation, give up desire for fruits and undertake sacrifices, donations and austerities after uttering “*Tat*”.’

(26)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>37</sup> “*Sat*” is used to signify existence and superiority. And the word “*Sat*” is also used for auspicious acts.’

(27)

‘Steadfastness in sacrifices, donations and austerities is known as “*Sat*” and action performed towards those ends is also indeed known as “*Sat*”.’

(28)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>38</sup> Sacrifices, donations and austerities and any other action, undertaken without faith, are known as the opposite of “*Sat*”, with nothing<sup>39</sup> in this world or in the afterworld.’

॥ अष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥

मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः

## Chapter 18

### The Path of Liberation and Renunciation

This chapter has seventy-eight *shlokas* or verses and is thus the longest chapter. *Sannyasa* (renunciation) and *tyaga* (relinquishing) have often been identified with the giving up of action. But that is not what the *Gita* advocates. The *Gita* advocates detached action and that forms part of this chapter. Beyond these *karma yoga* sections, there are *shlokas* on *bhakti yoga*, concluding with *shlokas* that extol the *Gita*'s virtues. Stated differently, one almost has a summary of all of the *Gita*'s teachings, designed to lead to *moksha* or liberation. Finally, as is but natural, we end with some remarks Sanjaya addresses to Dhritarashtra.

अर्जुन उवाच —

संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।  
त्यागस्य च हयीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥१॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।  
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥२॥

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।  
यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥३॥

निश्चयं श्रृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।  
त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याप्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तिः ॥४॥

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।  
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥५॥

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्तवा फलानि च ।  
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥६॥

(1)

Arjuna said:

‘O mighty-armed!<sup>1</sup> O Hrishikesha!<sup>2</sup> O slayer of Keshi!<sup>3</sup> I wish to separately understand the essence of renunciation and relinquishing.’<sup>4</sup>

(2)

Bhagavan<sup>5</sup> said:

‘The wise know the relinquishing of action that satisfies desires as *sannyasa*. The discriminating call the relinquishing of the fruits of all action *tyaga*.’

(3)

‘Some learned people say that all action is associated with evil and should be relinquished. Some others say that action like sacrifices, donations and austerities should not be relinquished.’

(4)

‘O supreme of the Bharatas!<sup>6</sup> Listen to my decided views about that relinquishing. O tiger among men!<sup>7</sup> It has been said that relinquishing is of three types.’

(5)

‘Sacrifices, donations and austerities are not to be relinquished. Those actions certainly have to be performed. Because sacrifices, donations and austerities purify the hearts of the learned.’

(6)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>8</sup> But even these actions should be performed through relinquishing attachment and fruits.<sup>9</sup> That is my decided and supreme view.’

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्धते ।  
मोहात् तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तिः ॥७॥

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात् त्यजेत् ।  
स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥८॥

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।  
सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥९॥

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषन्जते ।  
त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥१०॥

न हि देहभूता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्मण्यशेषतः ।  
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥११॥

अनिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।  
भवत्यत्यगिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥१२॥

पञ्चवैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निवोध मे ।  
सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥१३॥

(7)

‘It is not advisable to renounce indicated action.<sup>10</sup> Discarding this through delusion is known as *tamas-* type.’<sup>11</sup>

(8)

‘He who relinquishes action because action leads to discomfort and requires physical exertion performs *rajas-* type relinquishing. He doesn’t receive the fruits from relinquishing.’

(9)

‘O Arjuna! *Sattva*-type relinquishing is known as that where attachment and fruits are relinquished and action is performed only because it is indicated action.’

(10)

‘Immersed in the *sattva* quality, steady in learning and without doubt, the relinquisher doesn’t hate disagreeable action or become addicted to agreeable action.’

(11)

‘He who possesses a body cannot give up action in its entirety. Because he relinquishes fruits of action, he is known as a true relinquisher.’

(12)

‘Those who don’t relinquish face three types of fruits of their action in the afterworld—bad, good and mixed. But *sannyasis* don’t.’<sup>12</sup>

(13)

‘O mighty-armed! <sup>13</sup> In the sacred texts, <sup>14</sup> five reasons are described in support of performing all action. Hear these from me.’

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।  
विविधाश्च पृथक्क्वेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥४॥

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।  
न्यायं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥५॥

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।  
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान् स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥६॥

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।  
हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥७॥

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधाः कर्मचोदना ।  
करणं कर्म कर्तृति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥८॥

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।  
प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥९॥

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।  
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥१०॥

(14)

‘The abode and also the agent, different types of instruments and different and various types of endeavour—and the fifth is the divine.’<sup>15</sup>

(15)

‘Whatever action, appropriate or inappropriate, a man begins through the body, the mind and speech, is caused by these five.’

(16)

‘Although this is the state of affairs,<sup>16</sup> he who thinks of the absolute *atman* as the agent, his intelligence is unrefined and that ignorant person doesn’t see.’<sup>17</sup>

(17)

‘He who has no sense of ego and whose intelligence is unattached, even if he slays all these people, doesn’t really kill and is not tied down.’<sup>18</sup>

(18)

‘Knowledge, that which can be known, and the knower are the three impetuses behind action.<sup>19</sup> The action, the instrument and the agent form the base for action.’

(19)

‘According to qualities, three types of differences in knowledge and action and the agent are described in *sankhya*.<sup>20</sup> Listen properly to that too.’

(20)

‘That which in all beings, in differentiated form, sees the undifferentiated and indestructible substance,<sup>21</sup> know that to be *sattva*-type knowledge.’

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ञानं नानाभावान् पृथग्विधान् ।  
वेति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥21॥

यतु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम् ।  
अतत्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहतम् ॥22॥

नियं सङ्ग्रहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।  
अफलप्रेषुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥23॥

यतु कामेषुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः ।  
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहतम् ॥24॥

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनपेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ।  
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तामसमुच्यते ॥25॥

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।  
सिद्धयोसिद्धयोनिर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥26॥

रागी कर्मफलप्रेषुर्लुभ्यो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।  
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तिः ॥27॥

(21)

‘But the knowledge through which one sees in all beings, in differentiated form, differentiated and separate substances, know that to be *rajas*-type knowledge.’

(22)

‘But that which is attached to a single action,<sup>22</sup> is illogical, trivial and without true knowledge, that is known as *tamas*-type.’<sup>23</sup>

(23)

‘Action where fruits have been relinquished, without attachment, without love or hate, performed only because it is indicated, is known as *sattva*-type.’<sup>24</sup>

(24)

‘Again, action undertaken, with great difficulty, by those with desire for fruits or with a sense of ego, is known as *rajas*-type.’

(25)

‘Action begun under delusion, without consideration of consequences, destruction, injury<sup>25</sup> and one’s own capabilities, is known as *tamas*-type.’

(26)

‘An agent who is without attachment, without sense of ego, patient and enthusiastic, equal in attitude towards success and failure, is known as *sattva*-type.’

(27)

‘An agent who is attached, desirous of fruits of action, avaricious, injurious,<sup>26</sup> impure and swayed by joy and sorrow, is known as *rajas*-type.’

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तव्यः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।  
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥२८॥

बुद्धेभेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।  
प्रोच्यमानमशोषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनंजय ॥२९॥

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।  
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥३०॥

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।  
अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥३१॥

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।  
सर्वार्था न्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥३२॥

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।  
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥३३॥

यया तु धर्मकामाथन्धृत्या धारयते ऽर्जुन ।  
प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥३४॥

(28)

‘An agent who is not steady, vulgar,<sup>27</sup> insolent, fraudulent, disrespectful,<sup>28</sup> lazy, despondent and procrastinating is known as *tamas*-type.’

(29)

‘O Dhananjaya!<sup>29</sup> According to quality of intellect and perseverance, there are three types of differences. Listen to what is being said, separately and comprehensively.’

(30)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>30</sup> The intellect<sup>31</sup> that knows inclination and disinclination, right action and wrong, fear and freedom from fear, bondage and liberation, is *sattva*-type.’

(31)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>32</sup> The intellect through which one does not correctly understand *dharma* and *adharma* and right action and wrong, is *rajas*-type.’

(32)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>33</sup> The intellect through which one thinks evil action is righteous, and in every way thinks the opposite,<sup>34</sup> shrouded in ignorance, that is *tamas*-type.’

(33)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>35</sup> The perseverance through which one uses unwavering *yoga* to focus the functions of the mind, the breath of life and the senses, that perseverance is *sattva*-type.’

(34)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>36</sup> O Arjuna! The perseverance through which *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*<sup>37</sup> are sought and according to the area, fruits desired, is known as *rajas*-type.’

यथा स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।  
न विमुच्यति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तापसी ॥35॥

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्घभ ।  
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखानं च निगच्छति ॥36॥

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।  
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥37॥

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यतदग्रे अमृतोपमम् ।  
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥38॥

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।  
निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहतम् ॥39॥

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।  
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिर्जैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥40॥

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।  
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावभर्त्रौगुणैः ॥41॥

(35)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>38</sup> The perseverance through which the misguided person doesn’t discard dreaming,<sup>39</sup> fear, sorrow, despondency and ego is known as *tamas*-type.’

(36)

‘O best of the Bharatas!<sup>40</sup> Now hear from me about the three types of happiness. Where happiness comes from gradual practise and there is an end to unhappiness...’

(37)

‘...That which is initially like poison but at the end like ambrosia, based on the tranquillity of one’s intellect focused on the *atman*, that is known as *sattva*-type.’

(38)

‘That which comes from association with objects and the senses and is initially like ambrosia but at the end like poison, that happiness is said to be *rajas*-type.’

(39)

‘The happiness that, at the beginning and at the end, binds and deludes the *atman*<sup>41</sup> and that which is created from sleep, sloth and inadvertence<sup>42</sup> is known as *tamas*-type.’

(40)

‘On earth, in heaven and even among the gods, there doesn’t exist anything<sup>43</sup> that is free from these three qualities generated from nature.’

(41)

‘O scorcher of foes!<sup>44</sup> The actions<sup>45</sup> of *brahmanas*, *kshatriyas*, *vaishyas* and also *shudras* are separately segregated in accordance with qualities that result from their natures.’

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिराज्वरमेव च ।  
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥४२॥

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिराक्षयं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।  
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षत्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥४३॥

कृषिगेरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।  
परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥४४॥

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।  
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥४५॥

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।  
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥४६॥

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुच्छितात् ।  
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥४७॥

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।  
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥४८॥

(42)

‘Control over the mind, control over the senses, meditation, purity, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, self-realization and indeed faith are natural actions for *brahmanas*.’

(43)

‘Valour, bravery, perseverance, dexterity,<sup>46</sup> willingness to fight, generosity<sup>47</sup> and capacity to rule<sup>48</sup> are natural actions for *kshatriyas*.’

(44)

‘Agriculture, preservation of cattle and trade are natural actions for *vaishyas*. Servitude is natural action for *shudras*.’

(45)

‘A man who faithfully follows his indicated course of action attains liberation. Listen to how liberation is obtained by following one’s indicated course of action.’

(46)

‘Through his own action, man obtains liberation by worshipping he who is the origin of beings and their endeavour, and he who pervades all this.’<sup>49</sup>

(47)

‘Even when performed imperfectly, *svadharma*<sup>50</sup> is superior to someone else’s *dharma*, performed well. Sin does not result if one’s natural action is undertaken.’

(48)

‘O son of Kunti! <sup>51</sup> Natural action should not be discarded, even if it is tainted. Because all action is tainted, just as fire is shrouded by smoke.’ <sup>52</sup>

असक्तवुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतसृहः ।  
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥49॥

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथान्तोति निवोध मे ।  
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥50॥

बुद्ध्या विशुद्ध्या युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।  
शब्दादीन् विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागट्टेष्वौ व्युदस्य च ॥51॥

विविक्तसेवी लघ्वासी यत्वाक्कायमानसः ।  
ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैरांय समुपाश्रितः ॥52॥

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।  
विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥53॥

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।  
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥54॥

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।  
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥55॥

(49)

‘He<sup>53</sup> who is detached everywhere, has conquered his *atman*,<sup>54</sup> has overcome desire, through *sannyasa*,<sup>55</sup> attains the supreme liberation of freedom from action.’

(50)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>56</sup> Learn briefly from me, how one who has attained liberation attains the *brahman*. That is the supreme form of knowledge.’

(51)

‘United with pure intellect, controlling the *atman*<sup>57</sup> with perseverance, discarding objects like sound and renouncing love and aversion...’

(52)

‘...Inhabiting a secluded place, eating little, restraining speech, body and the mind, constantly practising meditation, seeking refuge in renouncement...’

(53)

‘...Discarding ego, power, insolence, desire, anger and possessions,<sup>58</sup> tranquil and without ego, he<sup>59</sup> is fit for merging with the *brahman*.’

(54)

‘Tranquil in merging with the *brahman*, such a person does not sorrow and does not desire. Looking upon every being equally, he attains supreme devotion towards me.’

(55)

‘Through devotion, he<sup>60</sup> comprehends my true nature, who I am and my different forms. Then, after knowing my true nature, enters.’<sup>61</sup>

सर्वकर्मण्यपि सदा कुर्वणो मद्यपाश्रयः ।  
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥५६॥

चेतसा सर्वकर्मणि मयि सन्यस्य मत्परः ।  
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥५७॥

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।  
अथ चेत्त्वमहङ्कारान् श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ॥५८॥

यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।  
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥५९॥

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निवद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।  
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात् करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥६०॥

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृदेशोऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।  
प्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारुढानि मायया ॥६१॥

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।  
तत्प्रसादात् परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥६२॥

(56)

‘Seeking refuge in me, he<sup>62</sup> always performs all action and, through my blessings, attains the eternal and indestructible abode.’

(57)

‘Through the mind, offering up all action to me, devoted to me and seeking refuge in *buddhi yoga*,<sup>63</sup> always immerse your mind in me.’

(58)

‘With mind immersed in me, with my blessings, you will overcome all difficulties. But if, through a sense of ego, you don’t listen to me, you will be destroyed.’

(59)

‘Through a sense of ego, you are thinking that you will not fight. But this resolution is false. Nature<sup>64</sup> will compel your’

(60)

‘O son of Kunti!<sup>65</sup> Whatever you don’t wish to do because of delusion, you will have to undertake in spite of that, because you are tied down by your natural duty.’

(61)

‘O Arjuna! God is established in the hearts of all beings and, through *maya*,<sup>66</sup> makes all beings whirl, as if they are mounted on machines.’<sup>67</sup>

(62)

‘O descendant of Bharata! <sup>68</sup> In every way, seek refuge in him alone. Through his blessings, you will attain supreme tranquillity and the eternal abode.’

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुहयादगुहयतरं मया ।  
विमृश्यैत दशोषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥63॥

सर्वगुहयतम् भूयः श्रृणु मे परमं वचः ।  
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढभिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥64॥

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।  
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥65॥

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।  
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥66॥

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभकताय कदाचन ।  
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥67॥

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।  
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्य-त्यसंशयः ॥68॥

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिच्चमे प्रियकृतमः ।  
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥69॥

(63)

‘I have explained to you this knowledge that is the most secret of all secrets. Having examined it completely, do what you wish to do.’

(64)

‘Listen yet again to my supreme words, the most secret of all secrets. You are my dearly beloved. Therefore, I am telling you what is good for you.’

(65)

‘Immerse your mind only on me, be devoted to me, worship me, bow in obeisance before me. I am pledging that you will attain me, because you are my beloved.’

(66)

‘Discard all *dharma*<sup>69</sup>s and seek refuge only in me. I will free you from all sins. Do not sorrow.’

(67)

‘You should not state this<sup>70</sup> to those who do not meditate,<sup>71</sup> or are devoid of devotion or do not wish to hear. Nor to those who show me disrespect.’

(68)

‘There is no doubt that he who explains this most secret knowledge to my devotees displays supreme devotion towards me and will attain me alone.’

(69)

‘Among men, there is no one who does greater service to me.<sup>72</sup> In the world, there is no one, and there will be no one, more dear to me.’

अध्येते च य इम धर्मं संवादमावयोः ।  
ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥७०॥

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।  
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाल्लोकान् प्राप्नुयात् पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥७१॥

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रूतं पार्थं त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।  
कच्चिदज्ञानसम्मोहः प्रणष्टस्ते धनंजय ॥७२॥

अर्जुन उवाच —  
नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्छ्रुतं ।  
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥७३॥

संजय उवाच —  
इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।  
संवादमिम मश्रीषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥७४॥

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रूतवानेतदगुहयमहं परम् ।  
योगं योगेश्वरात् कृष्णात् साक्षात् कथयतः स्वयम् ॥७५॥

राजन् संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।  
केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥७६॥

(70)

‘And he who will study this dialogue<sup>73</sup> of ours on *dharma*, my view is that he will worship me through *jnana yoga*.’

(71)

‘The man who only listens with faith and without disrespect, he too will be freed from sin and attain the worlds attained by those who are pure of deeds.’

(72)

‘O son of Pritha!<sup>74</sup> Have you listened to this with single-minded concentration? O Dhananjaya!<sup>75</sup> Has your delusion of ignorance been destroyed?’

(73)

Arjuna said:

‘O Achyuta!<sup>76</sup> Through your blessings, my delusion has been destroyed. I have obtained knowledge about what should be done and what shouldn’t be done.<sup>77</sup> I am steady. I no longer suffer from doubt. I will do what you instruct.’<sup>78</sup>

(74)

Sanjaya said:

I have thus heard this wonderful and thrilling<sup>79</sup> dialogue between the great souls Vasudeva<sup>80</sup> and Partha.<sup>81</sup>

(75)

Through the blessings of Vyasa,<sup>82</sup> I have heard this supreme and secret *yoga* directly from Krishna, the lord of all *yoga*, when he stated it.

(76)

O King!<sup>83</sup> Remembering again and again this sacred and wonderful dialogue between Keshava<sup>84</sup> and Arjuna, I have repeatedly been exhilarated.

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।  
विस्मयो मे महान् राजन् हृष्ट्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥७७॥

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।  
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्घुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥७८॥

इति श्रीमहाभारते शतसाहस्र्यां सहितायां वैयासिक्यां भीष्म  
पर्वणि श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूफनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।  
श्रीकृष्णजुनसंवादे मोक्षसंन्यासयोगो नाम अष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥

॥ ओ३म् तत् सत् ॥

(77)

O King!<sup>85</sup> Remembering that extremely wonderful universal form of Hari,<sup>86</sup> I am greatly amazed and repeatedly exhilarated.

(78)

Wherever<sup>87</sup> there is Krishna, the lord of *yoga*, and Arjuna, the wielder of the bow, exist prosperity, victory, increase in wealth and sound policy. That is my conviction.<sup>88</sup>

***Om Tat Sat***

## Greatness of the *Gita*

The *Gita* ends here. As is the case with the invocation, after the main text is over, there is a section that extols the virtues or the greatness of the *Gita*. This is known as *Gita mahatmya*. This is not part of the main text and is clearly a later addition. Indeed, most of it is lifted from a *Gita mahatmya* section in the *Varaha Purana*. Moreover, this is not standardized and is subject to regional variation. Therefore, we will avoid the Sanskrit and will only offer a gist of what it says, in free translation. In any case, Chapter 18 has some of this.

The sage said, ‘O Suta! In ancient times, Vyasadeva extolled the virtues of the *Gita*. Repeat for us what Vyasadeva said.’

Suta replied, ‘You have asked an excellent question. This is extremely secret knowledge. Who is capable of describing the virtues of the *Gita*? Krishna alone knows the answer. Arjuna, Vyasadeva, Vyasa’s son Shukadeva, Yajnavalkya and Janaka, the king of Mithila, know some fragments. Others hear tiny fragments and repeat them. I have heard a little bit from Vyasadeva and am repeating it.

‘The *Upanishads* are the cow, Krishna is the milkman, Arjuna is the calf and the immortal *Gita* is the milk. The learned drink this milk. I bow in obeisance before Krishna, who became Arjuna’s charioteer and gave us the immortal *Gita*. Those who wish to cross the ocean that is the world can happily use the boat that is the *Gita*. He who has not repeatedly heard and studied the *Gita*, yet desires liberation, will be laughed at by children. But those who hear it and study it are not humans. They are certainly like gods.

‘The best of *saguna* and *nirguna bhakti* is described in the *Gita*. This is the knowledge that Krishna gave to Arjuna. The eighteen chapters that are its steps provide liberation through *bhakti* and *karma* and purify the mind.

The wise clean themselves by bathing in its pure waters. But the faithless gain nothing. He who has not studied the *Gita* performs action in vain. There is no one inferior to someone who has not studied the *Gita*. Cursed is his knowledge, his lineage and his human body. All of his attempts fail. All knowledge that is against the *Gita* is useless. There is nothing comparable to the *Gita*, the summary of all that is pure in the *shastras*.

‘He who reads the *Gita* on auspicious occasions is never troubled by his enemies. He who reads the *Gita* in auspicious places is blessed by good fortune. Krishna is pleased more through reading the *Gita* than through donations, reading the *Vedas*, sacrifices, rites and visits to places of pilgrimage. Reading the *Gita* is tantamount to reading all the sacred texts. He who reads the *Gita*, or hears it being read, obtains the fruits of many sacrifices. A house where the *Gita* is worshipped is freed from all ill fortune. Action doesn’t bind someone who reads the *Gita*. He is freed from all sin.

‘He who is immersed in the *Gita* is truly learned. He is served by all the gods and the sages. The *Gita* is Krishna’s heart, his knowledge, his abode and his refuge. The *Gita* also has secret names like Ganga, Savitri, Satya, Pativrata, Brahmavali, Brahmavidya, Trisandhya, Muktigehini, Ardhayatra, Chita, Nanda, Bhavaghni, Bhrantinashini, Vedatrayi, Parananda and Tattvarthajnanamanjari. Even a recital of these names frees one from sin. Reading half the *Gita* brings the same gains as are obtained from donating a cow. Reading one-third the *Gita* brings the same gains as are obtained from bathing in the Ganga. If one hears the *Gita* at the time of death, one is freed from all sin. Whatever be the action that is performed, if the *Gita* is read at that time, the fruits of the action are certain. If the *Gita* is donated, all desires are achieved.

‘Happiness comes from the *Gita*. Kings like Janaka sought refuge in the *Gita*. In reading the *Gita*, there is no high or low. Everyone has equal access. But those who show disrespect to the *Gita*, or steal it, are condemned. Those who explain the *Gita* are Krishna’s beloved and must be worshipped and respected. After reading the *Gita*, the *Gita mahatmya* must be read. He who doesn’t read the *Gita mahatmya*, obtains no gain

from reading the *Gita*. But those who read both, and understand what they say, obtain all pleasures.'

# Notes

## Introduction

1. As a general principle, the author has not used quotation signs whenever Dhritarashtra or Sanjaya is saying something. Yet another preliminary statement, the explanations have been repeated in the notes. For example, Partha is Arjuna. This can be explained only once. But it is explained each time the word Partha occurs. Given what the *Gita* is, it is perfectly possible that people do not read it in continuation, but read chapters or *shlokas* individually. And that is the reason for repeating the explanation each time a word occurs.
2. *Bhagavat-Gita, an International Bibliography of 1785-1979 Imprints*, Jagdish Chander Kapoor, Garland Publishing, New York, 1983.
3. Below is the author's list of major English-language translations of the *Gita*, though by no means exhaustive, arranged chronologically and with a pronounced bias in favour of printed versions:
  1. *The Bhagavadgita*, Kashinath T. Telang, 1882, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 8, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
  2. *The Bhagavat-Gita*, William Quan Judge, 1890, reprinted by Theosophical University Press, 1967.
  3. *Young Men's Gita*, Jagindranath Mukharji, 1900, Rupa Publishing.
  4. *The Song Celestial. Or Bhagavat-Gita*, Edwin Arnold, 1900, reprinted by Dover Publications.
  5. *The Bhagavat Gita: The Lord's Song*, Annie Besant, 1905, reprinted by Theosophical Publishing House, 1987.
  6. *Srimad Bhagavat-Gita*, Swami Swarupananda, 1909, Advaita Ashrama.
  7. *Srimad Bhagavat Gita*, Swami Paramananda, 1913, Vedanta Centre.
  8. *The Bhagavat Gita according to Gandhi*, Mohandas K. Gandhi, 1926, eventually published in 1946, Navajivan Publishing House.

9. *The Bhagavat Gita*, W. Douglas P. Hill, 1928, Oxford University Press.
10. *The Geeta*, Shri Purohit Swami, 1935, Faber & Faber.
11. *The Message of the Gita (or Essays on the Gita)*, Sri Aurobindo, 1938, edited by Anilbaran Roy.
12. *Bhagavad Gita*, Swami Sivananda, 1942, Divine Life Society, reprinted 1995.
13. *Bhagavat Gita*, Swami Nikhilananda, 1943, reprinted 1974, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre.
14. *The Song of God, Bhagavat-Gita*, Swami Prabhavananda and Christoper Ishwerwood, 1944, Vedanta Society of Southern California.
15. *The Bhagavat-Gita*, Franklin Edgerton, 1944, Harvard University Press.
16. *The Bhagavat Gita*, S. Radhakrishnan, 1948, George Allen & Unwin.
17. *God Talks with Arjuna*, Paramhamsa Yogananda, 1955, Self-Realization Fellowship, Los Angeles.
18. *The Bhagavat Gita*, Juan Mascaro, 1962, Penguin Books.
19. *Bhagavat Gita*, C. Rajagopalachari, 1963, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
20. *The Bhagavat Gita*, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1967, Penguin Books (only the first six chapters were translated).
21. *The Bhagavat Gita: Translated with Introduction and Critical Essays*, E. Deutsch, 1968, University Press of America.
22. *The Bhagavad Gita*, R.C. Zaehner, 1969, Clarendon Press.
23. *The Bhagavat Gita As It Is*, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, 1972, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.
24. *The Holy Gita, Translation & Commentary*, Swami Chinmayananda, 1972, Chinmaya Mission Trust.
25. *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, Swami Vireswarananda, 1974, Sri Ramakrishna Math.
26. *Bhagavad Gita: A Verse Translation*, Geoffrey Parrinder, 1974, reprinted 1996, Oneworld.
27. *The Bhagavat Gita*, Kees. W. Bolle, 1979, University of California Press.
28. *The Bhagavad Gita in the Mahabharata*, J.A.B. van Buitenen, 1981, University of Chicago Press.
29. *The Bhagavad Gita*, Swami Chidbhavananda, 1982, Vedanta Press.

30. *The Bhagavat-Gita*, Winthrop Sargeant, 1984, State University of New York.
31. *Srimad Bhagavad Gita Bhasya of Sri Samkaracharya*, A.G. Krishna Warrier, 1984, Vedanta Press.
32. *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, Swami Tapasyananda, 1985, Sri Ramakrishna Math.
33. *The Bhagavat Gita*, Eknath Easwaran, 1985, Nilgiri Press.
34. *Bhagavat Gita*, B. Srinivasa Murthy, 1985, Long Beach Publishing.
35. *Bhagavad Gita*, Barbara Stoler Miller, 1986, Bantam.
36. *Bhagavat-Gita*, Raghavan Iyer, 1986, Concord Grove.
37. *Bhagavat-Gita for You & Me*, M.S. Patwardhan, 1990, Sangam Books.
38. *Bhagavat Gita*, Antonio T. De Nicholas, 1991, Nicolas-Hays.
39. *Bhagavad Gita*, Sachindra K. Majumdar, 1991, Asian Humanities Press.
40. *Bhagavat Gita*, O.P. Ghai, 1992, Sterling Publishers.
41. *Ramanuja Gita Bhashya*, Swami Adidevananda, 1992, Vedanta Press.
42. *Gita Bhashya*, Jagannatha Prakasha, 1993, John F. Kennedy University.
43. *Bhagavat Gita: Translation & Commentary*, Richard Gotshalk, 1993, Motilal Banarsidass.
44. *The Bhagavat Gita*, 1994, P. Lal, Roli Books.
45. *The Bhagavad Gita*, W.J. Johnson, 1994, Oxford University Press.
46. *Bhagavad Gita (The Song of God)*, Ramananda Prasad, 1996, Motilal Banarsidass and Vedanta Society.
47. *Bhagavad Gita*, Vrinda Nabar and Shanta Tumkur, 1997, Wordsworth Editions.
48. *The Living Gita: The Complete Bhagavat Gita: A Commentary for Modern Readers*, Swami Satchidananda, 1997, Integral Yoga Publications.
49. *Bhagavat-Gita*, Satyananda Saraswati, 1997, Motilal Banarsidass.
50. *Bhagavat-Gita with the Commentary of Sankaracarya*, Swami Gambhirananda, 1998, Advaita Ashrama.
51. *Bhagavad Gita, With Commentary of Sankara*, Alladi M. Sastry, 1998, Arcana Publishing.

52. *Transcreation of the Bhagavat Gita*, Ashok K. Malhotra, 1998, Prentice Hall.
53. *You Know Me: The Gita*, Irina Gajjar, 1999, Emerald Ink Publishing.
54. *The Bhagavat Gita, Your Charioteer in the Battlefield of Life*, R.K. Piparaiya, 1999, INDUSVista.
55. *The Bhagavat Gita, an Original Translation*, V. Jayaram, 2000.
56. *Bhagavad Gita: A Walkthrough for Westerners*, Jack Hawley, 2001, New World Library.
57. *Bhagavat Gita*, Rosetta Williams, 2001, Har-Anand Publications.
58. *The Bhagavat Gita of Order*, Anand Aadhar Prabhu, 2001.
59. *Bhagavad Gita: The Song Divine*, Carl E. Woodham, 2001, Torchlight Publishing.
60. *The Bhagavat Gita* (as part of the *Wisdom Bible*), Sanderson Beck, 2001.
61. *Bhagavat Gita: A New Translation*, Stephen Mitchell, 2002, Three Rivers Press.
62. *Bhagavat Gita As a Living Experience*, Wilfried Huchzermeyer and Jutta Zimmermann, 2002, Lantern Books.
63. *Bhagavad Gita*, Alan Jacobs, 2002, Watkins Publishing Limited.
64. *Bhagavad Gita: Translation and Commentary*, Veeraswamy Krishnaraj, 2002, Writer's Club Press.
65. *The Bhagavat Gita*, Richard Prime, 2003, Godsfield Press.
66. *The Sacred Song: A New Translation of the Bhagavad Gita for the Third Millennium*, McComas Taylor and Richard Stanley, 2004.

Some comments are in order about this list. First, there is a bias in this list in favour of more recent translations. That is perhaps inevitable. Relatively older ones (like Telang, Judge, Edwin Arnold, Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Sivananda, Nikhilananda, Prabhavananda and Isherwood, Edgerton, Radhakrishnan, Yogananda, Mascaro, Rajagopalachari, Deutsch, Zaehner, Prabhupada, Chinmayananda, Vireswarananda, Bolle) have stood the test of time. Even though they tend to be overtaken in readership and sales by more recent editions. We do not really know how many of the more recent ones will last. Second, there is one in this list (Rosetta Williams) that is implicitly targeted at children, or young adults. The others are targeted at adult audiences. However, Rosetta

Williams has been included because it is a translation of the *Gita*. Third, there are two in the list (Ashok Malhotra and P. Lal) that explicitly describe themselves as trans-creations. Nor should the Sri Aurobindo version be described as a translation. Indeed, Sri Aurobindo was careful to describe his essays as interpretations. Fourth, despite the bias in favour of the print media, there are a few in the list (V. Jayaram, Anand Aadhar Prabhu, Sanderson Beck and Taylor and Stanley) that seem to be exclusively meant for the Internet. Other versions, originally in print form, are also now in the free public domain through the Internet. Instances are Easwaran, Mahatma Gandhi, Edwin Arnold, Sri Aurobindo, Prabhupada, Judge, Ramananda Prasad and Telang. There are also audio-visual renderings, through the Internet or through CDs that have translations. One such, not included in the above list because the author is not indicated, is available at [www.bhagavadgita.org](http://www.bhagavadgita.org).

4. There is an invocation to the *Gita* before the main text begins, also known as *Gita-dhyana* (meditation on the *Gita*). It is addressed to the *Gita* itself. This is not part of the main text and is clearly a later addition. Moreover, this is not standardized and is subject to regional variation. Therefore, the Sanskrit has been avoided in this invocation and only a gist of what it says is given here, in free translation.

## Chapter 1: Arjuna's Dejection

1. As was mentioned earlier, there is no teaching in this chapter.
2. Father of the Kauravas. Dhritarashtra was born blind.
3. Since Dhritarashtra was born blind, Vedavyasa (or Vyasa Deva) offered him divine sight so that he could witness the war. But Dhritarashtra did not want to personally watch his relatives getting slaughtered. Sanjaya was born into a family of *sutas*. *Sutas* were charioteers as well as raconteurs. He was originally Dhritarashtra's charioteer and later became his minister. Vedavyasa therefore offered divine sight to Sanjaya, who, seated far away, could not only witness what was happening, but also understand what people were thinking. The Kurukshetra war, and the *Gita*, is thus described with Sanjaya as the speaker and Dhritarashtra as the listener.

4. King Kuru was born into the lunar dynasty (*chandramsha*). He was the ancestor of both the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Strictly speaking, both the Pandavas and the Kauravas can be described as Kauravas, although the word Kaurava is sometimes reserved for Duryodhana and his brothers. King Kuru was a righteous king and performed severe meditation at a place that came to be known as Kurukshetra after his name. Besides Kuru, others have also performed meditation here and various sacred texts therefore describe Kurukshetra as holy plains (*dharmaekshetra*). Earlier, Kurukshetra was called *Samantapanchaka*, because it was five by five *yojanas* (a *yojana* is 8-9 miles) in length and breadth.
5. Dhritarashtra's younger brother and the father of the Pandavas.
6. Dronacharya was the teacher of both the Pandavas and the Kauravas in martial arts. Why did Duryodhana go to Dronacharya rather than to Bhishma, who was the general, so to speak? Was it because Dronacharya was a *brahmana* and Duryodhana was concerned that Dronacharya might not fight, particularly because his favourite pupil Arjuna was on the other side?
7. Drupada's son was Dhrishtadyumna and he was also Dronacharya's student. During the Kurukshetra war, Dhrishtadyumna was one of the seven Pandava generals. Duryodhana could have mentioned Dhrishtadyumna by name. Instead, he said son of Drupada, perhaps to remind Dronacharya about his enmity with King Drupada and incite him to battle. There is a list of warriors on both sides in *Udyoga Parva* of the *Mahabharata*.
8. Another name for Satyaki of the Yadava clan. Satyaki studied martial arts under Arjuna.
9. The word used is *maharatha*. A *maharatha* is someone who can fight with 10,000 archers at the same time, keeping his own chariot and horses unharmed and is skilled in the use of weapons.
10. The son of Shishupala, from the kingdom of Chedi.
11. Of the Yadava clan.
12. Of the Panchala clan.
13. King Drupada's son.
14. Abhimanyu.
15. Duryodhana deliberately names Dronacharya first.
16. Kripacharya.

17. One of the Kaurava brothers.
18. Meaning Bhurishrava. In some versions, Jayadratha is mentioned here, after the son of Somadatta. Jayadratha is the king of Sindhu and married to Duhshala, sister to the Kauravas.
19. *Shastra* is a weapon and so is *praharana*. These words can be used synonymously. But etymologically, there is a difference between the two. *Shastra* is something that is used to kill. *Praharaṇa* is something that is used to beat someone up. And *astra* is something that is thrown.
20. This is the obvious meaning. *Paryapta* means that which can be measured and is therefore limited. *Aparyapta* is that which is unlimited, such as the Kaurava army is. This is the straightforward interpretation, the Kaurava army being larger than the Pandava one by a considerable magnitude. There were eleven *akshouhinis* (battalions) on the Kaurava side and seven on the Pandava side. However, a more convoluted interpretation is also possible, since *paryapta* also means adequate. Thus, the Kaurava army is inadequate, but the Pandava army is adequate and this interpretation is only possible if Duryodhana is worried about losing.
21. ‘His’ means Duryodhana’s. Duryodhana’s statement having ended, we are back with Sanjaya.
22. Meaning Bhishma.
23. Krishna.
24. Arjuna.
25. Krishna. Hrishikesha means Lord of the senses.
26. Arjuna.
27. Bhima. Vrikodara means someone with the belly of a wolf.
28. Sanjaya is speaking to Dhritarashtra.
29. Arjuna.
30. Dhritarashtra.
31. Krishna.
32. Krishna. Achyuta can be translated as someone who is firm and has not fallen.
33. Dhritarashtra.
34. Another name for Arjuna. Gudakesha means someone who has conquered sleep.
35. Arjuna, son of Pritha or Kunti. Kunti’s name was actually Pritha. She was known as Kunti because she was reared by King Kuntibhoja.

**36.** *Sakha* has been translated as a friend and *suhrida* as a well-wisher. All these terms can be translated as friend, but in the Sanskrit, there are differences of nuance. A *mitra* is someone with whom one works together. A *sakha* is a kindred soul. A *bandhu* is someone from whom one cannot bear to be separated. A *suhrida* is someone who is always devoted and a *bandhava* is someone who accompanies you to palaces and cremation grounds.

**37.** *Kripa* has been translated as pity. *Daya* is also pity. But there is a difference between the two and we will come to this in Chapter 2.

**38.** Arjuna's bow.

**39.** Krishna.

**40.** Krishna.

**41.** Krishna. Vishnu killed a demon named Madhu, thus the name.

**42.** Krishna. Vishnu killed a demon named Jana, thus the name.

**43.** According to the *shastras*, there are six types of criminals—arsonists, poisoners, those who bear arms to kill you, those who steal wealth, those who steal land and those who steal other people's wives. The *shastras* sanction the killing of these types of criminals. Hence, killing the Kauravas is sanctioned by law. However, Arjuna faces a conflict between law and morality.

**44.** Krishna.

**45.** Because the men have been killed in war.

**46.** Fall from heaven.

**47.** Krishna.

## Chapter 2: The Knowledge of the Self

**1.** The title of this chapter cannot be satisfactorily translated in English. *Sankhya* means evidence or testimony, that which is directly in front of you. It has been treated as synonymous with knowledge of the self, that is, *jnana yoga*.

**2.** Arjuna.

**3.** The word used is *kripa*, which means pity or compassion. *Daya* also translates as pity or compassion, but there is a difference between *kripa* and *daya*. If *daya* is the passion, one tries to do something actively to remove the reason for pity or compassion. That is, *daya* is the path of

the strong. *Kripa* is passive, without the necessary action and is the path of the weak.

4. Krishna.
5. Arjuna.
6. Krishna.
7. The word *karpanya* can be translated in ways other than helplessness also, such as wretchedness, a pitiable state, or even ignorance.
8. Krishna. Govinda is also Krishna.
9. Arjuna.
10. Dhritarashtra.
11. Attainment of another body, rather than death, is stated clearly. This establishes the two principles of rebirth and indestructibility of the soul.
12. Arjuna.
13. Arjuna.
14. Arjuna.
15. This is a complicated *shloka* and is subject to diverse interpretations. At one level, the soul is eternal. This is the truth or the real. The body, the senses and the world are untrue and unreal. They have no existence, in the sense of being illusory.
16. This *shloka* also gets into complicated issues of interpretation. ‘That’ means the *brahman*, *paramatman* or God. This is eternal and pervades everything. The body and the world are transitory. But the human soul (*jivatman*) is also eternal. Are the body and the world illusions, or are they real? What is the relationship between the *paramatman* and the *jivatman*? Such questions have led to intense philosophical speculation. The *Gita* uses the word *atman* for both the *paramatman* and the *jivatman*.
17. Arjuna.
18. *Atman*.
19. The *shastras* (sacred texts) speak of six types of transformations or maladies (*vikara*): birth, existence, increase, end, decrease and destruction. The *atman* is thus not subject to any of these.
20. Arjuna.
21. *Atman*.
22. Transformation or *vikara* has been mentioned in footnote no. 19.
23. Arjuna.

24. This is the straightforward translation. Not being manifest (*avyakta*) means not recognizable by the senses. Hence, apart from the period of life, beings are part of the infinite, both before birth and after death. In a more complicated interpretation, the reference is not to beings, but to the world itself, *avyakta* standing for primeval matter or *prakriti*. In this interpretation, the world is part of this primeval matter before creation and after destruction, and in between, has a separate existence.
25. Still the *atman*.
26. That is, it is impossible to understand the nature of the *atman*.
27. Arjuna.
28. This concludes one segment of the second chapter, the *jnana yoga* section, so to speak. In case this has not been enough to convince Arjuna, Krishna now moves on to a *karma yoga* argument. However, this is not just any action, but action without attachment.
29. Arjuna.
30. Arjuna.
31. Arjuna.
32. *Sankhya*. The word *buddhi* has many nuances or meanings, depending on the context. Here, we have translated it as wisdom.
33. Meaning *karma yoga*.
34. *Karma yoga* without attachment.
35. Arjuna.
36. That is, *karma yoga* without attachment is focused. But action with attachment becomes diffused.
37. Arjuna.
38. That is, rites and rituals of the *Vedas*, without the knowledge. The *Vedas* have four parts: *Samhita*, *Brahmana*, *Aranyaka* and *Upanishad*. The *Samhita* and *Brahmana* sections are known as *karma kanda*; they prescribe rites and rituals. The *Aranyaka* and *Upanishad* sections are known as *jnana kanda*; they are the paths of knowledge.
39. The cycle of action (*karma*) leading to birth (*janma*), birth leading to action, action leading to fruit (*phala*) and fruit leading to further rebirth.
40. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The world, and everything in it, is a mixture of these three qualities or *gunas* and this *shloka* asks Arjuna to rise above these three *gunas*. But the *shloka* also asks Arjuna to be always under the quality of *sattva*. Depending on one's point of view, there may, or may not, be an issue of interpretation here. In one interpretation,

rising above the three *gunas* means suppressing *rajas* and *tamas* and, therefore, *sattva* is needed to rise above the three *gunas*. In an alternative interpretation, rising above the three *gunas* is interpreted as being without attachment.

41. *Dvandva* means doubt. But it also means opposite sensations, like pleasure and pain or happiness and unhappiness. Therefore, *dvandva* is the outcome of the senses and to be without *dvandva* means to rise above the senses and look on everything equally.

42. *Yoga*.

43. *Kshema*.

44. What does this mean? To us today, this seems easy to accept and understand. Someone who knows the *brahman*, does not need the *Vedas*. But down the years, this dismissal of the *Vedas* was often a difficult proposition to accept. Hence, a complicated interpretation had to be resorted to along the following lines. Someone who performs action without attachment obtains great bliss and small worldly pleasures are only a very small part of that great bliss. He who knows that great bliss does not care for small worldly pleasures.

45. Arjuna.

46. As the second part of the *shloka* makes clear, the word *yoga* is used here in the very specific sense of treating success and failure equally.

47. Arjuna.

48. *Buddhi yoga*. The sense is that the motivation behind the action is superior to the outwardly effect of the action.

49. Meaning, praise of fruits and of heaven. The word *shruti* can mean that which is heard, or the *Vedas*. In this *shloka* and the next, if *shruti* is interpreted as the *Vedas*, one means the ritualistic aspects of the *Vedas*, which speak of fruits like heaven.

50. In a general sense, *yoga* means union between *jivatman* and the *paramatman*. That is also *samadhi*, union between the human and the divine. There are two words in this *shloka*, *nishchala* and *achala*, and the meanings differ marginally. *Nischala* has a negative nuance in the sense that the mind is not attracted towards irrelevant distractions. *Achala* has a positive nuance in the sense that the mind is focused on whatever one is meditating on and does not waver from that.

51. Krishna.

52. Arjuna.

53. Starving himself is the straightforward interpretation. However, a more general interpretation is also possible, that is, the reference is to a person who restrains his senses from addiction to sensual objects.
54. In a person in whom wisdom is established.
55. Arjuna.
56. The senses.
57. Objects.
58. Confusion of memory about what is right.
59. Attachment to sensual objects and hatred when desired outcomes don't result.
60. Intellect and thought about the *paramatman*.
61. There are five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.
62. Arjuna.
63. Ordinary beings are awake to sensual objects, but asleep on matters of wisdom. The sage is asleep to sensual objects, but is awake on matters of wisdom.
64. Arjuna.
65. That is, the time of death.

## Chapter 3: The Path of Action

1. Krishna.
2. The context of Arjuna's question is Chapter 2. In Chapter 2, the word *karma yoga* has never been used. Nevertheless, Arjuna has been exhorted to action, but this action has to be performed with wisdom (*buddhi yoga*) and, because of the emphasis on knowledge, there is a suggestion that *jnana yoga* is superior to *karma yoga*. At least, Arjuna has interpreted it in that fashion.
3. Krishna.
4. Arjuna.
5. Meaning either Chapter 2, or at the beginning of creation. These two paths of action and renunciation (*sannyasa*) are also indicated elsewhere in the *Mahabharata*, where it is stated that these two paths of addiction (*pravritti*) and renunciation (*nivritti*) were created before creation.
6. Followers of *sankhya* are those who tread the path of knowledge and the word *yogi* is being used for those who tread the path of action.
7. That is, giving up action.

8. *Prakriti* has been translated as nature. And the qualities are the three *gunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
9. That is, limbs and the like. The five organs of action are the mouth, hands, feet, the anus and sexual organs. The five senses of knowledge are sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.
10. Instead of hypocrite, one can use the stronger translation of liar. Some translators bring in the divine cow (*kamadhenu*) here. But that seems unnecessary.
11. There is scope for interpreting what prescribed action (*niyatam karma*) is. Is it rites and rituals? In that case, it does not quite apply to Arjuna, because he is not a *brahmana*. Is it duty? Is it action without attachment?
12. Arjuna.
13. This translation is problematic. Traditionally, *yajna* means a sacrifice, but the *Gita* is against such rituals. The word *yajna* has also been equated with God in the sense of Vishnu, but that is not terribly convincing either. It is also possible that these sections may have been interpolated into the *Gita* later. They do not quite fit. However, later, the *Gita* uses the word *yajna* in a broader sense.
14. Meaning, before creation.
15. Brahma, the creator.
16. The word sacrifice (*yajna*) causes a problem again. As opposed to the creation itself, sacrifice may mean laying down prescribed duties for these created beings.
17. The *yajna*.
18. The *yajna* again.
19. The gods.
20. Leftovers after gods and guests have had their shares.
21. This requires explanation, since there are three ‘*brahmans*’ in the *shloka*. The first two have conventionally been identified with the *Vedas* and the third with the *brahman*, although in a few rare cases, the third has also been identified with *Vedas*. That leaves the word *akshara*, meaning something that is indestructible. This, too, is the *brahman*.
22. Arjuna.
23. Righteous king. However, there was more than one king named Janaka and this reference is to the first Janaka, the son of Mithi, from whom

Mithila obtained its name. This Janaka, also mentioned in the *Ramayana*, is different from the Janaka who was Sita's father.

24. *Loka* can also be translated as people, but the sense is clearly of preserving all the worlds and all the beings in them.
25. Arjuna.
26. Arjuna.
27. Hybrid castes, but the sense is probably to convey a broader message of mixture and confusion.
28. Arjuna.
29. The ignorant ones. The *Gita* does not favour renunciation and withdrawal from action.
30. Nature is *prakriti* and the qualities are the three *gunas* mentioned earlier.
31. Arjuna.
32. The *gunas*.
33. Different in the sense of being performed by different senses or organs.
34. Another difficult *shloka* to translate. Nature's (*prakriti*) qualities work on each other and get action done through the senses and the organs. This realization means that one ceases to think of oneself as the doer.
35. In the sense of distracting them from action. That is, learned people should not ask ignorant ones to desist from action.
36. The expression *adhyatmachedasa* requires such a long translation.
37. Mental fever of suffering and sorrow.
38. The expression 'without finding fault' is significant. There must therefore have been opposition to this view or teaching. For instance, there was the school of *sannyasa* or renunciation, which advocated the giving up of all action.
39. From this *shloka* alone, it is not clear what restraint is meant. The next *shloka* suggests it is restraint of the senses. Because nature has its own way, forcible restraint of the senses is pointless. The point is not to restrain the senses, but rise above them.
40. If taste is the sense in question, a sweet taste can lead to attachment. But as its opposite, a bitter taste can lead to aversion.
41. Krishna.
42. Deviation from *svadharma* or falling prey to the senses.
43. Krishna.

44. There are six vices or sins: *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (avarice), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (vanity) and *matsarya* (envy). But here, desire and anger have been singled out.
45. In this world.
46. Meaning either this world, or knowledge.
47. The sins, specifically desire. Alternatively, ignorance can also be meant.
48. Arjuna.
49. Desire's.
50. Desire.
51. The senses.
52. Arjuna.
53. Desire.
54. We have used the word knowledge, but the *shloka* has two words signifying knowledge: *jnana* and *vijnana*. Today, we might translate *jnana* as knowledge and *vijnana* as science. But that is not the way the two words were used then. *Jnana* is knowledge one learns from one's teachers or from the sacred texts. *Vijnana* is a special type of *jnana* and is knowledge one picks up through introspection, meditation and self-realization.
55. Superior to objects, because senses are subtle. Or perhaps even superior to the body.
56. *The atman*.
57. Arjuna.
58. There is scope for interpretation here, because there are two *atmans* in the *shloka*. Use the *atman* to calm the *atman*. That is the literal translation, but what does it mean? We have translated the first *atman* as inner strength. Or the first *atman* may be the intellect and the second *atman* may mean the mind.

## Chapter 4: The Path of Knowledge, Action and Renunciation

1. Krishna.
2. Eternal, immutable or indestructible. The *yoga* is eternal or immutable in the sense that following it leads to imperishability. This *yoga* is a splicing of *karma yoga*, *jnana yoga* and *bhakti yoga*, because one spills over into another and differences between the three are artificial. The

expression ‘this’ *yoga* is used because the *yoga* has already been described in earlier chapters.

3. One of the twelve *adityas* born to the sage Kashyapa and Aditi. Vivasvat is thus a manifestation of the Sun god and his dynasty is the solar dynasty (*surya vansha*). Vivasvat’s son is Manu, known as Vaivasvata Manu. Manu is actually a title and there are fourteen Manus. Vaivasvata Manu, or the present Manu, is the seventh in this line of fourteen and the reference is to the beginning of *treta yuga* in the present *manvantara* (cycle of creation and destruction). Vaivasvata Manu’s son was Ikshvaku and Rama was born into this dynasty much later.
4. The expression is *rajarshi*, which means a king (*raja*) who is a sage (*rishi*), despite being a king. Janaka is an example.
5. The *yoga*.
6. Arjuna.
7. That is, knowledge of the *yoga* has been destroyed.
8. The word used is *sakha*, which, as mentioned earlier, means kindred soul.
9. Krishna.
10. Arjuna.
11. The word used in the Sanskrit is *maya*, translated often as illusion. Resolution is a better translation in this context, because the idea of *maya* as illusion came much later. This, and the next two *shlokas*, brings in the idea of *avatara* (incarnation). Usually, Vishnu is believed to have had ten incarnations. But twenty-two or twenty-four incarnations are also known.
12. Arjuna.
13. *Dharma* cannot and should not be translated as religion. *Dharma* has the sense, and the etymology, of holding everything up and is a broader concept than religion. Even righteousness is unsatisfactory as a translation.
14. The antithesis or opposite of *dharma*.
15. *Yuga* is an era or epoch. Each of Brahma’s days consists of four *yugas*: *satya*, *treta*, *dvapara* and *kali*.
16. The birth is divine because it is not the outcome of normal laws of birth and death, but results from Krishna’s own will.
17. Arjuna.

18. The sense is that *karma yoga* without attachment does lead to results, but that path is difficult and takes time. In contrast, pursuit of pleasure and wealth is easier and faster. Because people want quick results, they worship other gods, who help them achieve pleasure and wealth, even though these are transient.
19. In the translation, we have left the word as *varna* instead of caste, because the equation of *varna* with caste and, more importantly, when the caste system developed historically and when caste became hereditary are questions subject to debate. The three *gunas* or qualities are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The *sattva* quality predominates in *brahmanas* and their prescribed action is studying and priestly duties. The *rajas* quality, with some *sattva* quality, predominates in *kshatriyas* and their prescribed action is fighting and ruling. The *rajas* quality, with some *tamas* quality, predominates in *vaishyas* and their prescribed action is agriculture and trade. The *tamas* quality predominates in *shudras* and their prescribed action is serving the other three castes.
20. Without change and immutable.
21. The *paramatman* is both *nirguna* (without qualities) and *saguna* (with qualities). In the *saguna* or active form, the *paramatman* is the creator and the agent. But in the *nirguna* form, the *paramatman* is inactive or passive and not the agent.
22. The word used is *akarma*. Etymologically, this can mean action or inaction, the non-performance of action, the sense in which it has been translated. However, *akarma* can also mean the performance of action that is undesirable. But the next *shloka* indicates that performance of undesirable or prohibited action is *vikarma*.
23. And by implication, what is inaction.
24. This sounds confusing. Action is performed by the organs and the senses, not the *atman*. The wise or intelligent person thus sees inaction in action, and the vanity of action and attachment to its fruits are given up. There are those who indulge in inaction or renunciation, giving up action. But the wise or intelligent person realizes that not only does action continue to be performed even when ostensibly inaction is resorted to, there is vanity in this idea of giving up action. Because the person who has resolved to give up action is not the *atman* either. Therefore, there is action in inaction. Wisdom is in *yoga* or union with

the *paramatman*. And because one gives up the right to all action and inaction, one has the right to all action.

25. The expression used is devoid of *kamasankalpa*. *Kama* is desire, implying desire for the fruits of action. *Sankalpa* is will or resolution, implying the will or ego of performing action or inaction. Discarding *sankalpa* means discarding this ego.
26. Without refuge in action or its fruits, attained or unattained.
27. *Parigraha* is giving or taking of possessions, such as giving alms or receiving them. Since that has been given up, all ownership has been discarded.
28. Realizing that the body is not the same as the *atman*. An alternative interpretation of performing action only for the sake of preserving the body is possible, But that is the path of renunciation, a path the *Gita* does not approve of.
29. Unsought in the sense of these being gains one has not made an effort to obtain. Nor has one craved for these gains.
30. Opposite feelings of happiness and unhappiness or heat and cold.
31. Free from all emotions and sense of ownership.
32. In this context, *yajna* should not be translated as a sacrifice. *Yajna* does not mean a ritualistic sacrifice. It means action performed for union (*yoga*) with the *paramatman*.
33. The action and the fruits of the action are destroyed and do not lead to bondage, because this is inaction.
34. In a *yajna*.
35. Divine *yajnas* are ritualistic *yajnas* performed for various gods.
36. That is, everything is offered to the *brahman*. This may mean all action and its fruit. It may also mean the symbolic offering of the *jivatman* to the *paramatman*.
37. They control their senses.
38. They remain unattached to the senses.
39. Senses mean the five senses or organs of action (the mouth, hands, feet, the anus and sexual organs) as well as the five senses of knowledge (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch).
40. The breath of life is *prana* and this has five actions: *prana* (exhalation), *apana* (downward inhalation), *vyana* (diffusion through the body), *udana* (upward inhalation) and *samana* (digestive breath).
41. The yoga of *atmasanyama* or focusing the *atman* in the intellect.

42. The word used is *svadhaya*, meaning studying on one's own. This is interpreted as studying the *Vedas*.
43. This *shloka* brings in *pranayama*. *Prana* is a general expression for the breath of life, as well as a specific term for the act of exhalation. *Ayama* means control or restraint, so *pranayama* is control of the breath of life. *Pranayama* has three components: *puraka*, *rechaka* and *kumbhaka*. *Puraka* is when the inhaled *apana* air fills up the exhaled *prana* air and temporarily stops its exit. *Rechaka* is when the exhaled *prana* air stops the entry of the inhaled *apana* air. *Kumbhaka* is when *prana* and *apana* are both controlled and the air is restrained inside the body. Offering the *prana* breath in the *apana* breath is therefore *puraka*.
44. *Rechaka*.
45. *Kumbhaka*.
46. The Sanskrit says offer *prana* to *prana*. The first *prana*, in the plural, has traditionally been interpreted as the senses. The second *prana* can either be the senses or the breath of life.
47. After gods have had their share.
48. *Amrita*.
49. Arjuna.
50. The Sanskrit states *brahman*. This is important because most translations and interpretations interpret this *brahman* as the *Vedas* and therefore suggest sacrifices prescribed by the *Vedas*. Not only is this interpretation forced, the *Gita* does not generally assign such supremacy to the *Vedas*. Most ritual *yajnas* involve offerings made to the fire and Agni is therefore thought of as the mouth of the gods. In this broader definition of *yajnas*, probably no more than that extended metaphor is meant, when thinking of the *brahman*'s mouth.
51. Arjuna.
52. That is, a *yajna* where offerings of objects have the main focus.
53. Arjuna.
54. Arjuna.
55. This is the literal translation. Many translations translate this as, 'there is no purifier like knowledge'. But this is not correct.
56. This is usually interpreted as *karma yoga*. The text of course only says *yoga*.
57. The knowledge.
58. Arjuna.

59. Arjuna.

60. Interpreted as *karma yoga*.

## Chapter 5: The Path of Renunciation

1. That is, *karma yoga*. Hence, practice of action.
2. The issue arises because pursuit of knowledge (*jnana yoga*) has been stated to be better and this suggests renunciation (*sannyasa*) of action. Yet, there is an emphasis on *karma yoga*.
3. Krishna.
4. Arjuna.
5. That is, one does not have to renounce the world or renounce action to become a *sannyasi*.
6. Opposite sentiments of happiness and unhappiness and love and aversion and so on.
7. More literally, children.
8. In the Sanskrit *shloka*, the word *sankhya* stands for knowledge or renunciation and the word *yoga* for action or *karma yoga*.
9. Arjuna.
10. Alternatively, renunciation can only be attained with difficulty.
11. That is, sleep.
12. Open and close refers to the action of the eyelids.
13. The *atman* does not get involved in senses, action or objects.
14. This amounts to transcending the personal ego of thinking oneself to be the performer of action.
15. Attachment to fruits of action, as well as to egos. *Yogis* means *karmayogis*.
16. Alternatively, peace that results from steadfastness.
17. Recognizing that action is performed by the senses and the organs. That is, action is mentally discarded, not physically.
18. The nine gates of the body are two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, the anus and the genital organ.
19. The word used in the Sanskrit is *prahhu*, meaning lord. Depending on how lord is interpreted, the meaning can change. For instance, lord can be interpreted as the lord of all the worlds, instead of lord of the body, as we have interpreted it. For instance, in the next *shloka*, the

*paramatman* or lord of the worlds is meant and the word used is *vibhu*, meaning supreme lord. Therefore, *prabhu* probably means the *atman*.

20. The word used is *svabhava*, meaning one's own nature.
21. The great truth can also be interpreted as the *paramatman*.
22. Throughout this *shloka*, 'that' means the *paramatman*.
23. More literally, those beings do not return.
24. The word used is *shvapaka*, which means dog-eater or someone who cooks food for dogs. This is usually equated with *chandala* or outcaste.
25. This is not very clear. We have translated *sarga*, which can also mean creation, as the earth. The sense probably is that one can win or overcome this earth, with its birth and death, in this world itself, without waiting for future worlds.
26. Those whose minds are established in equality.
27. That is, pleasure through the senses.
28. Arjuna.
29. This world or this body.
30. Inside means in the *atman*.
31. The word *rishi* has been translated as *sage*.
32. Because the *brahman* exists all around.
33. This is *kumbhaka*.
34. The word used is *muni*.
35. The free sage is doing the knowing. In this *shloka*, the subject is not explicitly stated. And it is also the free sage who attains peace.

## Chapter 6: The Path of Meditation

1. Krishna.
2. The word used is *sannyasi*.
3. The word used is *niragni*. *Agni* (the fire) is associated with prescribed rites and sacrifices and *niragni* is someone who has given up the sacred fire, that is, these rites and rituals. Such a person is a mendicant who lives by alms.
4. Arjuna.
5. The word used is *muni*.
6. Tranquillity in the sense of self-possession. The word used is *shama* and this has also been translated as inaction. In that case, inaction is the means for a person who has ascended to *yoga*.

7. Realizing the essence of the *atman* is the core of *yoga*. One should use one's own self or *atman* to understand the true nature of the *atman*. Then the self or *atman* becomes the true *atman*'s friend. Otherwise, it is the true *atman*'s enemy.
8. Specifically, controlled the senses.
9. Transcending emotions like attachment and aversion.
10. Union between the *paramatman* and the *jivatman* is the core of *yoga*. But here, the word *paramatman* is used in the sense of the *jivatman*.
11. The words *jnana* and *vijnana* are both used. Both mean knowledge. But as mentioned earlier, *jnana* is knowledge obtained through instruction and *vijnana* is knowledge obtained through self-realization and introspection.
12. The words *suhrida* and *mitra* are both used. As mentioned earlier, *suhrida* is a well-wisher and a *mitra* is someone with whom one works together.
13. One who is unbiased, disinterested, non-aligned. *Udasin* and *madhyastha* both refer to disputes. *Udasin* is someone who is neutral to the dispute and *madhyastha* is someone who tries to arbitrate.
14. We have translated *bandhu* as friend. As mentioned earlier, a *bandhu* is someone from whom one cannot bear to be separated.
15. Such a person.
16. Without receiving and giving objects.
17. Or clean.
18. The subject is actually suppressed in the Sanskrit.
19. *Asana*.
20. *Kusha* is sacred grass. On a bed of *kusha* grass will first be placed the hide (*ajina*) of an animal (like a tiger) and then on top of that a piece of cloth (*chaila*) to get the seat.
21. Tip of one's nose is the literal translation. Some say, tip or top of the nose is to be interpreted from the bottom up, so it means the middle of the eyebrows. Others say the tip means the sky ahead of the tip of the nose.
22. *Brahmacharya* is a stage of life (*ashrama*) when continence or celibacy is observed. What happens then to the householder? Even for a householder, sexual intercourse is for prescribed purposes and times. For the rest, *brahmacharya* holds.

23. Literally, the Sanskrit says dreams too much rather than sleeps too much.
24. The sentence sounds incomplete in the English rendering. But the description is of a state when *yoga* is achieved.
25. The *yogi*.
26. The sentence sounds incomplete in the English rendering. Again, that is when *yoga* is achieved.
27. The subject is suppressed in the Sanskrit. It is the *yogi*, practising *yoga*.
28. The word ‘hopelessness’ requires clarification. Hopelessness can result because one may practise *yoga* for a long time without getting close to liberation.
29. The two words *sankalpa* (wish) and *kama* (desire) are almost synonymous and the *Gita* often uses them interchangeably. However, this *shloka* draws a difference between the two, suggesting that desire results from wishes.
30. That is, thinking about nothing else. What has been described is also called *raja yoga* or *samadhi yoga*. This has eight components: *yama* (the practise of moral virtues), *niyama* (purity in habits, study and practice of austerities), *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (the control of breath), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of the mind), *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation) and *samadhi* (merging with the *paramatman*).
31. This can also be translated as ‘without ignorance’.
32. Because of the realization that there is no difference between one’s own self and someone else.
33. In every being.
34. Krishna.
35. Of the mind.
36. Restraining the mind is as difficult as restraining the wind.
37. Krishna.
38. Arjuna.
39. Arjuna.
40. Krishna.
41. The word ‘both’ needs explanation. Such a person is denied liberation because he has deviated from *yoga*. At the same time, he is deprived of heavenly pleasures, because he has not followed that path either.
42. Krishna.

43. Arjuna.
44. Arjuna.
45. Even if this falls short of the complete *yoga* of liberation or deviates from the path.
46. There are many such worlds (*lokas*) and it will be incorrect to think of this only as heaven (*svarga*). The *Gita* will have more details later.
47. Arjuna.
48. The subject is suppressed in the Sanskrit.
49. About liberation.
50. To the path of *yoga*.
51. The word used in the Sanskrit is *shabdabrahma*, as opposed to the *paramatman*, *brahman* or *parabrahma*. *Shabdabrahma* is the ritualistic elements of the *Vedas*, the *karmakanda*. A person who wishes to know about *yoga* does better than someone who practises rituals alone.
52. Those who are learned in the sacred texts alone.
53. Those who perform action like sacrifices for the purpose of attaining heaven.

## Chapter 7: The Path of Knowledge

1. Krishna.
2. Arjuna.
3. This is knowledge through self-realization (*vijnana*), as opposed to knowledge through instruction or texts (*jnana*).
4. By implication, among thousands.
5. More generally, energy.
6. The *Gita* uses the expression *apara prakriti*. This corresponds to what is called *prakriti* in *sankhya* philosophy, the original source of the material world. And the *Gita* uses the expression *para prakriti* for what is called *purusha* in *sankhya* philosophy. *Apara prakriti* is inert or inactive and insensate. *Para prakriti* is active and sensate.
7. Arjuna.
8. *Para prakriti*.
9. Sensate and insensate.
10. The two *prakritis*.
11. Arjuna.
12. Arjuna.

13. *Pranava*.
14. The word used is *paurusha* and in stating that God is present in human prowess, there are two related nuances. First, prowess has a divine origin and, therefore, one should not be vain about it. Second, if God is present in humans as prowess, there is no reason for weakness and one should attempt to awaken this innate prowess.
15. Arjuna.
16. Arjuna.
17. Desire is *kama* and is an emotion that concerns objects that have not been obtained. Attachment is *raga* and is an emotion that concerns objects that have already been obtained and are in one's possession.
18. Everyone is not able to transcend desire. For ordinary people, some desire that concerns householder's duties or the physical act of existence is sanctioned by *dharma*.
19. *Bhava* has been translated as condition. When sattva dominates, the condition is characterized by thirst for knowledge, lack of attachment and the like. When *rajas* dominates, the condition is characterized by delight, pride, lust and the like. When *tamas* dominates, the condition is characterized by sorrow, illusion, sloth and the like.
20. The word used is *maya* and most people translate this as illusion. As we have said earlier, the identification of *maya* with illusion seems to have come later. For present purposes, *maya* seems to mean *apara prakriti* or *prakriti* of *sankhya* philosophy, created from the three *gunas* and, therefore, constituting ignorance.
21. Arjuna.
22. In this world or in heaven. The first three categories are driven by desire, of one form or another.
23. Always united with me and worshipping me alone.
24. These four.
25. Krishna.
26. That form or god or idol.
27. That rite or method.
28. Those worshippers.
29. Are temporary.
30. Arjuna.
31. Arjuna.

32. *Dvanda*, mentioned earlier. Opposite sensations like pleasure and pain or happiness and unhappiness.
33. The *jivatman*.

## Chapter 8: The Path to the Supreme Spirit

1. Krishna.
2. The Sanskrit uses the expression *adhyatma*, as it does in *shloka* 29 of Chapter 7 as well. This is usually, but not always, interpreted as the individual *atman* or *jivatman*. *Adhyatma* has also been interpreted as the natural trait of any object.
3. These expressions occur in *shloka* 30 or the last verse of Chapter 7. We have translated *adhibhuta* as that which underlies all beings and *adhidaiva* as that which underlies all gods. *Adhibhuta* is the temporary element that occupies all beings, such as that object's nature or the body. *Adhidaiva* is the creator, Hiranyagarbha or Brahma. *Shloka* 30 of Chapter 7 also has reference to that which underlies all *yajnas*, that is, *adhiyajna*. *Adhiyajna* is Vishnu. However, as we have said earlier, *adhyatma* has also been interpreted as the natural trait of any object. In that interpretation, *adhibhuta* is the temporary trait of any object and *adhidaiva* is its permanent counterpart. Paraphrased, the *brahman* is without qualities. But the *brahman* is manifested in a form with qualities for purposes of creating the universe and the elements and that is *adhyatma*.

However, the universe and all action are temporary, they are *adhibhuta*. Nevertheless, the universe and all action retain a permanent quality and that is *adhidaiva*.

4. Krishna.
5. *Adhiyajna*.
6. Krishna.
7. In sacrifices.
8. Arjuna.
9. Arjuna.
10. Arjuna.
11. The subject is suppressed in the Sanskrit. The subject is the *yogi* and he attains the supreme spirit.

12. Beyond darkness can be interpreted in the metaphorical sense of being beyond transient nature. This description of the supreme spirit draws on the *Upanishads*.
13. The thinking is taking place at the time of death.
14. The Sanskrit says all the gates and we have translated this as all the senses and organs. As mentioned earlier, the nine gates of the body are two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, the anus and the genital organ.
15. Arjuna.
16. A word of explanation is needed. The reference in *shloka* 13 to giving up the body is not a reference to ordinary death. It is a reference to using *yoga* to willfully giving up one's body and attaining *samadhi*, or union with the *brahman*. But this is not a path available to the ordinary person. *Shloka* 14 is therefore for the ordinary person.
17. Through rebirth.
18. Arjuna.
19. There are seven *lokas* or worlds and, in ascending order, these are *bhuh* (the earth), *bhuvah*, *svah*, *mahah*, *janah*, *tapah* and *satya* or *brahma*. Depending on one's action, one may attain one of these *lokas*. But that residence there is temporary and is only for the duration that one's righteous action entitles one to. Thereafter, one is reborn on earth unless one attains the *brahman*, when one is freed from the cycle.
20. *Yuga* is an era or epoch. Each of Brahma's days consists of four *yugas*: *satya*, *treta*, *dvapara* and *kali*. But before that, time is not the same for the gods and humans. Six human months correspond to a divine day and six human months correspond to a divine night. Therefore, 360 human years are equivalent to one divine year. Measured in divine years, *satya yuga* is 4000 years, *treta yuga* is 3000 years, *dvapara yuga* is 2000 years and *kali yuga* is 1000 years, giving a total of 10,000 years. But there are also 500 years as transition periods from one *yuga* to another, so a four-*yuga* cycle actually consists of 12,000 divine years. A four-*yuga* cycle, known as *mahayuga*, is therefore 4,320,000 human years, *satya yuga* contributing 1,728,000, *treta yuga* 1,296,000, *dvapara yuga* 864,000 and *kali yuga* 432,000 years. 1000 *mahayugas* are Brahma's day and another 1000 *mahayugas* are Brahma's night. Each of Brahma's days is called a *kalpa*. The beginning of a *kalpa* is when creation occurs and at the end of the *kalpa* there is destruction.

21. There is an emphasis that it is the same beings that are born again and again.
22. Arjuna.
23. The first unmanifest is Brahma when he is sleeping, or nature (*prakriti*). The second unmanifest is the *brahman* or *paramatman*.
24. Arjuna.
25. Arjuna.
26. *Kala* should actually be translated as time or period. But, in what follows, the enumeration is of path or road. Broadly, there are two roads to liberation: *devayana* and *pitriyana*. *Devayana* is the path of austerities, penance and knowledge, leading to the attainment of *brahmaloka*. *Pitriyana* is the path of action, righteous householder duties and action, leading to the attainment of *chandraloka*.
27. *Shuklapaksha*.
28. *Uttarayana*, when the sun is in the northern solstice.
29. This is descriptive of *devayana*. Those who follow *devayana* are said to first attain energy and then, in ascending order, day, *shuklapaksha*, six months of *uttarayana*, the year, the sun, the moon, lightning, ending with *brahmaloka*.
30. *Krishnapaksha*.
31. *Dakshinayana*, when the sun is in the southern solstice.
32. Is subject to rebirth.
33. This is descriptive of *pitriyana*. Those who follow *pitriyana* are said to first attain smoke and then, in ascending order, night, *krishnapaksha*, six months of *dakshinayana*, *pitriloka*, and the sky, ending with *chandraloka*.
34. Arjuna.

## Chapter 9: The Path of Royal Knowledge and Royal Secrets

1. Krishna.
2. The Sanskrit can be translated as ‘someone who is not envious’ or ‘not a detractor who finds fault’. Had Arjuna been such a person, secret knowledge should not have been divulged to him.
3. As mentioned earlier, knowledge is *jnana* and self-realization is *vijnana*.

4. Both for ‘secret’ and ‘knowledge’, the qualifying word *raja* is used. This can also be translated as royal. That explains the title of the chapter.
5. Arjuna.
6. This apparent contradiction is the reason the word *yoga* is used in this *shloka*. The *paramatman* is both with qualities (*saguna*) and without qualities (*nirguna*). In *saguna* form, beings are established in the *paramatman*, but not in *nirguna* form. Also, the *paramatman* is not established in beings because it is more than beings and the universe taken together.
7. Arjuna.
8. At the end of the *kalpa*, destruction takes place and creation occurs when a new *kalpa* starts.
9. The beings are helpless because their rebirth and nature is preordained by their earlier action.
10. Arjuna.
11. Arjuna.
12. Alternatively, because of this, the universe goes round and round.
13. That is, those who are ignorant and show disrespect. Actually, the words *asura* and *rakshasa* are both used in the Sanskrit and we have captured both as demons. However, *asura* is the antithesis of gods (*sura*) and *rakshasa* is a separate species.
14. Arjuna.
15. The subject is actually suppressed in the Sanskrit.
16. Worshipping as one means regarding the worshipper and the worshipped as identical. This can be called the *advaitva* attitude. Worshipping as separate is the *dvaitva* attitude, where the worshipper and the worshipped are regarded as distinct.
17. *Kratu*, *yajna* and *svadha* are all words for sacrifices, but they have been listed separately in the *shloka*. *Svadha* is a sacrifice performed specifically for dead ancestors, like *shraddha* ceremonies. *Kratu* is a ritualistic *yajna*, with prescribed rites. The word *yajna* can be used in the broader and non-ritualistic sense.
18. This is sometimes translated as, ‘I am the purifier’. But our translation is more literal.
19. The respective hymns that collectively constitute the *Rig*, the *Sama* and the *Yajur Veda*.

20. The repository of everything after destruction and the seed of creation.
21. I provide heat as the sun and attract water up in the sky as clouds. The Sanskrit uses the words *sat* and *asat* and we have translated these as eternal and the transient, meaning the indestructible *brahman* and the transient universe. However, *sat* can also be translated as unmanifest nature and *asat* as its manifest counterpart. Indeed, in some *Upanishads*, *sat* is taken to mean what can be seen, that is, the universe and *asat* is taken to mean what cannot be seen, that is, the *brahman*. This will then be exactly the opposite of what we have translated. However, our translation is in conformity with usage elsewhere in the *Gita*.
22. The three *Vedas*: the *Rig Veda*, the *Sama Veda* and the *Yajur Veda*. The *Atharva Veda* came later.
23. Here, heaven can also be translated as the abode of Indra.
24. The three *Vedas* again.
25. What is yet to be attained is *yoga* and what has been attained is *kshema*.
26. Arjuna.
27. To rebirth on earth.
28. *Pitrис* or Manes.
29. Alternatively, the spirits. The worshippers of *yakshas* or *rakshas* are examples.
30. My worshippers.
31. Arjuna.
32. As has been said earlier, *sannyasa* does not mean asceticism and the abjuring of action. It means detachment and offering all action and its fruit to the *paramatman*.
33. The most evil of persons.
34. Arjuna.
35. Arjuna.
36. The idea is that the *shastras* are prohibited to women, *vaishyas* and *shudras*. But *bhakti yoga* is available to everyone. Those of evil birth means people whose evil actions in earlier lives have led to their present lowly stations. The construction does not suggest ‘those who are of evil birth’ as an adjective for women, *vaishyas* or *shudras*. Instead, a separate category seems to be meant, perhaps those who were outside the fourfold caste system.
37. That they will attain supreme liberation.

**38. Rajarshis.**

**39.** This *shloka* causes a translation problem because the sentence is complete. Having attained what? One possibility is: having attained the status of pure *brahmanas* and royal sages. Another possibility is to link it to the clause about the earth being temporary and the source of unhappiness.

Hence, having attained a status that is permanent and the source of happiness and so on. Either way, the translation, or the interpretation, does not seem very convincing.

## Chapter 10: The Divine Glory

1. Krishna.
2. Arjuna.
3. The word *prabhava* can also be translated as strength, instead of origin.
4. *Maharshis*.
5. Alternatively, on earth.
6. Equality across all beings and across all sentiments.
7. There are two listings of the seven great sages (*saptarshis*), with a large degree of overlap. The first list is Marichi, Angirasa, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vashishtha. The second list is Bhrigu, Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulaha, Pulastya and Kratu.
8. Who are the four who came before the seven great sages? This causes problems of interpretation. Usually, commentators take this to mean the four great sages Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatana and Sanatkumara, who preceded the *saptarshis*. However, these sages never married and talk of their descendants does not quite make sense. Therefore, this is sometimes interpreted in a metaphorical sense. That is, these four are the four manifestations (*murti* or *vyuha*) of Vasudeva: Vasudeva as the soul, Sankarshana as living beings, Pradyumna as the mind and Aniruddha as the ego.
9. As was mentioned earlier, there are fourteen Manus in a *kalpa*. The list of names varies. But the most common list of the present fourteen Manus is Svayambhuva, Svarochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Chakshusha, Vaivasvata or Satyavrata, Savarni, Dakshasavarni, Brahmasavarni, Dharmasavarni, Rudrasavarni, Devasavarni and Indrasavarni. The present Manu is Vaivasvata.

10. The word *yoga* is twice used in this *shloka*, with different senses. We have translated *vibhuti* as divine, but it can also be translated in the sense of might or strength. Given the use of the word *vibhuti*, *yoga* (the first usage) simply means divine power and glory.
11. Now *yoga* means union with the *paramatman* and the required meditation and self-realization.
12. About me.
13. The subject is actually suppressed.
14. Narada is a divine sage (*devarshi*). He was created mentally (rather than physically) by Brahma.
15. Many translations translate Asita and Devala as separate sages. That is not correct. The same sage, who lived on the banks of the Sarasvati river, is sometimes called Asita, sometimes Devala and sometimes Asita-Devala.
16. Vyasa means Vedavyasa or Vyasadeva. He is the collator of the four *Vedas*, hence the title of Vedavyasa or Vyasadeva. However, in the task of collating and dividing the *Vedas*, Vedavyasa or Vyasadeva is a title and there has been more than one Vedavyasa. Twenty-eight to be precise. Alternatively, the same Vedavyasa was reborn twenty-eight times. This particular Vedavyasa is the son of the sage Parashara, his mother's name being Satyavati. His actual name is Krishna Dvaipayana, Krishna because he was dark and Dvaipayana because he was born on an island. Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa also authored the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*.
17. Krishna.
18. If the gods and the demons do not know, an ordinary mortal is hardly expected to do so.
19. Krishna in the sense of lord of all *yoga*.
20. Krishna.
21. Krishna.
22. Krishna.
23. Arjuna.
24. So the telling will be selective.
25. Arjuna.
26. The three stages of creation, preservation and destruction.
27. The word *aditya* means born of Aditi and can refer to all gods in general. However, in this context, it means the twelve manifestations of

the sun. These are Dhata, Mitra, Aryama, Rudra, Varuna, Surya, Bhaga, Vivasvan, Pusha, Savita, Tvasta and Vishnu. According to some accounts, one of these shines in each month.

28. The *maruts* are gods of the wind. The number of the *maruts* varies from place to place, but in most cases it is forty-nine.
29. *Nakshatra* can also be translated as constellation.
30. This is slightly strange, because the *Rig Veda* is usually regarded as chief among the *Vedas*. The *Sama Veda* has hymns that are sung. So perhaps the rationale is that in *bhakti yoga*, or the path of devotion, songs have greater appeal than *mantras* that are merely recited.
31. Vasava is one of Indra's names.
32. As a god, Rudra is both one and many. As a single god, Rudra occurs in the *Vedas* and in the *Upanishads*. However, there are also descriptions of eleven *rudras*: Aja, Ekapada, Ahivradhna, Virupaksha, Sureshvara, Jayanta, Bahurupa, Tryambaka, Aparajita, Vivasvata and Haya. Sometimes, one has Raivata, Savitra, Pinaki and Ajaikapada replacing Aja, Ekapada, Aparajita and Vivasvata in the list. However, in no list of the eleven *rudras* does Shankara figure as a name. So this probably means Shankara as the lord of the *rudras*, rather than the chief one in a list.
33. Accounts of creation differ. According to one account, Brahma created some creatures in the night. At that time, Brahma was hungry and the resultant creatures also turned out to be hungry. Some tried to eat Brahma and these became the *yakshas*. Others tried to prevent these devourers and these came to be known as the *rakshas*. According to other accounts, Brahma created water and then created beings. Some of these wanted to worship and these came to be known as *yakshas*. Others wanted to protect the water and came to be known as *rakshas*. The Sanskrit does not use the word Kubera. The Sanskrit expression is literally translated as lord of wealth, which, of course, is Kubera. Kubera is also the lord of the *yakshas*, though not quite of the *rakshas*.
34. The word used for fire is *pavaka*. The fire-god is Agni and his companions are the *vasus*, who are eight in number: Apa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha and Prabhasa. Sometimes, Dyu is mentioned instead of Apa.
35. A mountain that is at the centre of the earth.
36. Arjuna.

37. The concept of Brihaspati has evolved over time. Beyond a point, Brihaspati became the priest and the preceptor of the gods.
38. That is, Kartikeya, the general of the gods.
39. One of the seven great sages. According to one account, Bhrigu kicked Vishnu and thereby left his footprint on Vishnu's chest.
40. *Om*.
41. There are different kinds of *yajnas* and the *Gita* has already mentioned them. *Yajnas* are usually associated with ritualistic sacrifices and the *Gita* has already said that these are inferior to *yajnas* that involve *karma yoga* and *bhakti yoga*. There is thus a broader interpretation of the word *yajna*. The word *japa* means uttering prayers in an undertone and continuously. Hence, *japa yajna* means invoking Krishna's name (*nama*) and is thus also called *nama yajna*.
42. *Ashvattha*, a holy tree.
43. *Gandharvas* are a semi-divine species and they are celestial singers and musicians. Chitraratha is the king of the *gandharvas*.
44. The great sage Kapila, son of Kardama and Devahuti and proponent of *sankhya* philosophy.
45. The immortal nectar is *amrita* and the gods and the demons collectively churned the ocean to raise *amrita*. Together with the *amrita*, the horse Ucchaishrava and the elephant Airavata arose from the ocean and were accepted by Indra.
46. Indra's thunderbolt.
47. The cow that yields all objects of desire, sometimes known as Surabhi. The word used in the *shloka* is actually *kamadhuk*, which means a granter of wishes.
48. Kandarpa is the god of love, also known as Kama or Madana. The suggestion probably is that desire for procreation is superior to desire for desire's sake alone.
49. Vasuki is the king of serpents.
50. We have translated the *sarpa* of *shloka* 28 as serpent and the *naga* of *shloka* 29 as snake. This is unsatisfactory. Ananta is the king of *nagas* and Vasuki is the king of *sarpas*. What is the difference between *sarpas* and *nagas*? Some people translate *sarpa* as a poisonous snake and *naga* as a non-poisonous snake. But that is not quite true. Ananta and Vasuki are brothers—they are the sons of Kadru. However, here, they are quite clearly mentioned as distinct species. *Sarpas* and *nagas* seem to be

differentiated in two ways. First, unlike *sarpas*, *nagas* can assume human form. Second, unlike *sarpas*, *nagas* have separate geographical areas of habitation. *Sarpas* live on earth.

51. The lord of the ocean.
52. Aryama is a manifestation of the sun and is the ruler of the *pitrīs*, ancestors or Manes.
53. Those who control the fruits of righteous and evil conduct.
54. We have translated *daityas* as demons. *Daityas* are a specific category of demons, the progeny of Did. Although born into this clan, Prahlada, the son of Hiranyakashipu, was a devotee of Vishnu's. Eventually, Prahlada became the king of the *daityas*.
55. There is a slight problem of translation, because the word *kalayatam* can mean those things that overcome us or those things that devour us.
56. Actually, the Sanskrit does not use the expression lion. Instead, it uses the expression king of animals.
57. The son of Vinata is Garuda, king of the birds.
58. The word used is *makara* and a *makara* is not quite a crocodile. It is part mythical and is sometimes also translated as a shark.
59. The river Ganga. Ganga is also known as Jahnavi because she was the daughter of the king Jahnu.
60. There are three kinds of arguments used in debating. *Jalpa* represents arguments to establish one's own point of view. *Vitanda* represents arguments advanced to neutralize the opponent's point of view. *Vada* is delinked from the objective of winning and is simply an impartial and objective attempt to deduce the truth.
61. *Samasa* is part of grammar and the *samasa* rules are used for compounding words. *Dvanda* is one type of rule.
62. Type of *mantra* where the lord is worshipped as the lord of everything.
63. The month of Agrahayana. The month of Agrahayana or Margashirsha is the foremost month because, at that time, this used to be the first month of the year.
64. A collection of flowers, that is, spring.
65. Gambling representing the best form of cheating.
66. Krishna.
67. Arjuna.
68. Ushanasa is another name for Shukracharya, son of Bhrigu and preceptor of the demons. Shukracharya is also a writer on the law. The

word *kavi* does not mean a poet. It means someone who is wise, a seer.

69. Those who ruled had four methods or stratagems: *danda* (punishment), *sama* (appeasement), *dana* (bribery) and *bheda* (sowing dissension).
70. Arjuna.

## Chapter 11: Vision of the Universal Form

1. Krishna.
2. Krishna.
3. Krishna.
4. Krishna.
5. That form.
6. Krishna.
7. Krishna.
8. Arjuna.
9. Arjuna.
10. The twelve *adityas*, eight *vasus*, the eleven *rudras* and the forty-nine *maruts* mentioned earlier. The two *ashvinis* are physicians of the gods, named thus because their mother (Samjna) was then (at the time of conception) in the form of a horse. Their names are actually Ashivini and Revanta.
11. Arjuna.
12. Dhritarashtra.
13. Krishna.
14. Son of Pritha, Arjuna.
15. Arjuna, the son of Pandu.
16. Arjuna.
17. With ordinary eyes.
18. Krishna.
19. There is a minor contradiction in what Arjuna has said. No one other than Arjuna has seen, or can see, this Universal Form.
20. The *saddhyas* are gods, twelve or thirteen in number.
21. The *vishvadevas* is a collective word for gods and divine energy taken together, originally believed to be thirty-three in number (eleven on earth, eleven in the sky and eleven in heaven). This later became thirty-three crore.
22. These are the *pitrис*, ancestors or Manes, to whom warm food is served.

23. Demons, the antithesis of gods.
24. The *siddhas* are a semi-divine species, inhabiting the area between the sun and the earth and 88,000 in number.
25. Krishna.
26. As was mentioned earlier, *sutas* were charioteers and raconteurs. Although born into a royal family, Karna was raised by a *suta* and was therefore known as the son of a *suta*.
27. Or having swallowed all the people. The word *loka* can be translated in either way.
28. Krishna.
29. The word *kala* can also be translated as time. But *kala* also means destroyer or fate or Yama. In this context, destroyer seems a better translation. Similarly, *loka* has been translated as people, but also means world.
30. That is, even if Arjuna does not fight.
31. Warriors in the opposing army.
32. Krishna's.
33. Arjuna was also known as Kiriti and that is the name used in the *shloka*. Kiriti means someone who wears a crown and Arjuna was so named because he received a crown from Indra.
34. Krishna.
35. Demons mentioned earlier.
36. Semi-divine species mentioned earlier.
37. Krishna.
38. The *brahman* or the *paramatman*.
39. The god of the wind.
40. The god of death.
41. The god of fire.
42. The god of the ocean.
43. The moon or the moon-god.
44. Meaning, in this context, Brahma. The word *prajapati* literally means lord or creator of beings. Brahma mentally created ten *sages*, who later created other beings. These ten sages, who were also known as *prajapatis*, were Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vashishtha, Daksha, Bhrigu and Narada. Other beings were descended from them and Brahma is therefore the grandfather (*pitamaha*). Since

the word *prajapati* is used in the *shloka* in the singular rather than the plural, it clearly means Brahma.

45. If Brahma is the grandfather (*pitamaha*), great grandfather (*prapitamaha*) is Brahma's creator, that is, the *brahman* or the *paramatman*.
46. The Universal Form.
47. Krishna.
48. This sentence sounds incomplete in the English rendering. Like a father, a friend or a beloved forgives the son's, friend's or lover's errors or transgressions, forgive mine.
49. Earlier form.
50. If *chakra* has to be translated, it can only be translated as disc or discus. The *chakra* is Vishnu and Krishna's weapon.
51. This requires explanation. Krishna has two arms, but Vishnu has four. The explanation therefore is that Arjuna knew Krishna to be a manifestation of Vishnu. Alternatively, Krishna could have adopted Vishnu's form temporarily.
52. Krishna.
53. Arjuna.
54. Krishna.
55. Krishna.
56. Krishna.
57. Krishna.
58. Arjuna.
59. Arjuna.

## Chapter 12: The Path of Devotion

1. The *brahman* or the *paramatman*.
2. Paraphrased, is *bhakti yoga* superior or is *jnana yoga* superior? The word *yogi* is being used for someone who achieves union with God.
3. Krishna.
4. The word *kutastha* can be translated in various ways. We have translated it in the sense of being the original cause of everything. But it can also mean unchanging or the refuge of this illusory world. There can even be a metaphorical interpretation of being immovable like the peak of a mountain.

5. And therefore possess a sense of the individual self and the individual ego.
6. That is, the path of *jnana yoga* is difficult. The path of *bhakti yoga* is easier.
7. Arjuna.
8. In some interpretations, there is an emphasis on the ‘alone’ clause, arguing that this is superior to establishing one’s mind on the *brahman* and, therefore, this *shloka* demonstrates the superiority of *bhakti yoga* to *jnana yoga*. This interpretation seems both contrived and unnecessary.
9. After death.
10. Arjuna.
11. Practise *yoga*, with practise used as a verb, makes for better English. But a literally more accurate translation is, through the *yoga* of practice. The word *yoga* is used in many different senses in the *Gita*. Later *shlokas* suggest that the *yoga* of practice means *pranayama*.
12. This is not the same as performing action without attachment. That comes in the next *shloka*. Here, deeds mean rites or acts associated with *bhakti yoga*, such as listening or singing devotional songs, ceremonies of worship and the like.
13. That is, *karma yoga*, where action and fruits of all action are offered up to the *brahman*.
14. Historically, this *shloka* has caused several problems of interpretation. By practice, one means the practice of *yoga*, or *pranayama*. Since this can be purely mechanical, knowledge (*jnana*) must be superior to this. But in what sense is *dhyana* (meditation) superior to knowledge? The answer certainly lies in the distinction drawn between *jnana* (knowledge) and *vijnana* (self-realization). *Jnana* is knowledge learnt from one’s teachers or from the sacred texts. *Vijnana* is a special type of *jnana* and is knowledge picked up through introspection, meditation and self-realization. So the knowledge of this *shloka* is specific knowledge picked up from elsewhere and is not knowledge in a general sense. And *vijnana* or knowledge through meditation and self-realization is superior to *jnana*. Most historical commentators preferred renunciation of action to *karma yoga*. The preference was for *sannyasa*. Therefore, there were problems in interpreting the superiority of action to meditation. And by linking up *shloka* 12 with *shloka* 11, it was argued

that *karma yoga* was for those who could not perform meditation and follow the path of *jnana*, *jnana* being interpreted generally, rather than in the specific sense of knowledge picked up from teachers or sacred texts.

15. This firmness of conviction or resolution is interpreted as firmness of faith in Krishna.
16. The word used is *amarsha*. This can be translated as dissatisfaction from not having attained one's desires. But it can also be translated as envy, because others have got what they want.
17. Or, without expectation.
18. Renouncing all fruit is not a literal translation. A literal translation is renouncing all attempts, beginnings or endeavours (*arambha*). However, attempts, beginnings or endeavours are for specific gains, in this world or the next. Hence, someone who has renounced these is someone who has renounced all fruits.
19. The interpretation of giving up good and evil is that one has given up the good and evil fruits or results of action.
20. A literal translation of *mouni* is someone who is silent or does not speak.
21. Without habitation or without a home presumably means someone who is not attached to the home or habitation.

## Chapter 13: Discrimination between Nature and the Self

1. Krishna.
2. Arjuna.
3. Field or repository.
4. The body is the *kshetra*. The person who knows the body is someone who has a sense of ownership in the body and this is the *kshetrajna*, that is, the *jivatman* or the individual soul. Those who know about *kshetra* and *kshetrajna* call the individual soul *kshetrajna*.
5. Arjuna.
6. That is, this is true knowledge.
7. The *kshetrajna*.
8. The theory of *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*.
9. The reference to the sages (*rishis*) singing is to the *Vedas*. The *Brahmanas*, the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads* followed the *Vedas* and

are collectively known as *Vedanta*. One interpretation is that this *shloka* refers to the *Vedas* and the *Vedanta*, and in the latter case, especially to the *Upanishads*, because it is there that the nature of the *brahman* is particularly discussed. However, there is also a collection of aphorisms (*sutras*) known as *Brahmasutra*. This is ascribed to Badarayana, Badarayana being identified as Vedavyasa. If the *Brahmasutra* was compiled before the *Gita*, the second part of this *shloka* could also be a reference to this specific text.

10. The five core elements of *prithvi* or *kshiti* (the earth), *apa* (water), *tejas* (energy), *vayu* or *marut* (the wind) and *akasha* or *vyoma* (the sky).
11. As mentioned earlier, the unmanifest (*avyakta*) means primeval matter or *prakriti*.
12. The ten organs of sense are the five organs of action (the mouth, hands, feet, the anus and sexual organs) and the five senses (sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching).
13. By the single one is meant the mind.
14. The objects of the five senses are *rupa* (form), *shabda* (sound), *gandha* (smell), *rasa* (flavour) and *sparsha* (touch).
15. The word *sanghaat* means union, combination or collection. Because the senses are united in the body, combination refers to the body.
16. Towards others.
17. In righteous action.
18. Towards objects.
19. The subject is suppressed. With that knowledge, the seeker attains immortality.
20. The subject is again suppressed and is a reference to the *brahman*. We have translated *sat* and *asat* as the eternal and the transient, meaning the indestructible *brahman* and the transient universe. However, *sat* can also be translated as unmanifest nature and *asat* as its manifest counterpart.
21. The *brahman*.
22. This *shloka* comes straight from the *Upanishads*.
23. The *brahman* is both *nirguna* (without qualities) and *saguna* (with qualities).
24. The *brahman*.
25. The *brahman*.
26. Know the *brahman*; the object is suppressed in the *shloka*.

27. The *brahman*.
28. The *brahman* is established.
29. The word used is *bhava*, which can be translated in different ways. The devotee attains or realizes the *brahman*'s nature. Alternatively, the devotee gains Krishna's love and affection.
30. The qualities (*gunas*) of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
31. In *sankhya* philosophy, *prakriti* is the original source of the material world and is active. The *Gita* has earlier used the expression *apara prakriti* for *prakriti*. *Purusha* (the soul) is inert or inactive and the *Gita* has earlier used the expression *para prakriti* for *purusha*.
32. This is the straightforward translation. But in interpretations, the senses are the cause and the body is the effect.
33. The reason.
34. Otherwise, the inactive *purusha* should not have a sense of happiness or unhappiness.
35. Of the *purusha*.
36. Because the word *atman* can mean different things, there is a problem of interpretation. The simplest meaning is the following. Some people themselves (with the *atman*) use meditation to see the *atman* (the *paramatman*) in themselves (in the *atman*). But *atman* can also mean body, mind or intellect. Hence, an alternative translation is to use the mind to see the *paramatman* in the intellect or to use the mind to see the *paramatman* in the body.
37. Here, *sankhya yoga* probably means *jnana yoga*, or the path of knowledge. But it can also mean *sannyasa yoga*, or the path of renunciation.
38. Failing to know through their own efforts.
39. Arjuna.
40. What does killing the *atman* with the *atman* mean? Incidentally, instead of a strong translation of killing, a weaker translation of doing violence to is also possible. The traditional interpretation of killing the *atman* with the *atman* is the following. Uplifting one's self (*atman*) is possible. Not attempting to do this is tantamount to killing oneself. If the weaker translation of doing violence is used, another interpretation is possible. He who has attained true knowledge sees the same *paramatman* in everything and knows that there is no difference between doing harm to one's own self and to someone else. He avoids

doing violence to the *atman* (someone else) with the *atman* (one's own self).

41. The seeker. The subject is actually suppressed.
42. The *paramatman*.
43. Arjuna.
44. Specifically, not attached to the fruit of action.
45. Arjuna.
46. *Kshetra* is, of course, the body. And the word *kshetrajna* has been used for the *jivatman*. Here, the word *kshetri* obviously stands for the *paramatman* and *kshetri* and *kshetrajna* are effectively synonymous.
47. What does freedom from beings and *prakriti* mean? *Prakriti* is the root cause of being and beings and *prakriti* therefore stands for ignorance. Knowledge brings freedom from this ignorance. Therefore, one could also have said 'freedom of beings from *prakriti*'. Indeed, some translations state it thus. But our translation is a more correct rendering of the Sanskrit.

## Chapter 14: Separation between the Three *Gunas*

1. Krishna.
2. The bondage of life.
3. The subject is suppressed in this *shloka*, but the continued reference is to the sages.
4. Arjuna.
5. Meaning, *prakriti* or nature.
6. We have translated *yoni* as womb and *garbha* as seed. Instead of seed, embryo would have been more accurate, but seed sounds better.
7. Arjuna.
8. Nature again.
9. The word used is *yoni*, which can also be translated as womb.
10. Arjuna.
11. Arjuna.
12. The three *gunas* or qualities.
13. Because this knowledge is not knowledge of the *paramatman*, nor is it happiness that comes from such supreme knowledge. Hence, there is attachment and that binds the *atman*. Some commentators have argued that the pure *sattva* quality involves supreme bliss and supreme

knowledge. However, ordinarily *sattva* is mixed with *rajas* and *tamas* and that gives rise to attachment to happiness and knowledge that is less than supreme.

14. Arjuna.

15. We have translated *trishna* as thirst, but it can also be translated as desire or greed. What is the difference between thirst or desire, and attachment? One is attached to what one already possesses. And one is thirsty for, or desirous of, what one does not already possess.

16. The *rajas* quality.

17. The expression used is ‘occupier of the body’, meaning the *atman*.

18. Arjuna.

19. The *tamas* quality.

20. Alternatively, inadvertence.

21. What is bound is not specified. But clearly, the *atman* is meant.

22. Arjuna.

23. Arjuna.

24. That is, *rajas* overcomes *sattva* and *tamas* and becomes strong.

Similarly, *tamas* overcomes *sattva* and *rajas* and becomes strong. The point is that all three *gunas* are combined in every being. However, in every being, one of the *gunas* tends to dominate, compared to the other two.

25. As stated earlier, the nine gates of the body are two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, the anus and the genital organ.

26. Arjuna.

27. For other people’s possessions.

28. Inclination towards action.

29. These beginnings of action are because of attachment to the fruits.

30. Arjuna. Arjuna is, of course, a descendant of Kuru, not a direct son.

31. Pure or unsullied instead of shining is also possible.

32. Who are those who have supreme knowledge? Different interpretations are possible, such as the sages or worshippers of the *brahman*. This can also be a reference to the gods themselves.

33. That is, when *tamas* becomes strong.

34. That is how this is invariably interpreted. However, the Sanskrit should literally be translated as ‘species that is confused and ignorant’. That is not necessarily sub-human.

35. A more accurate translation of the first part is, ‘Righteous action has pure *sattva*-type fruit.’ But given the second and the third clauses, what we have used sounds better.
36. That is, to heaven and among the gods.
37. The middle means the earth and among humans. Those with *rajas* means those with a preponderance of *rajas*.
38. Below may mean hell, among the demons. It may also mean a lowly rebirth.
39. The realization that the *atman* is not an agent sinks in. Action is performed by the *gunas* or qualities of *prakriti*.
40. Krishna.
41. Krishna.
42. Arjuna.
43. The subject is suppressed in the *shloka* and is a reference to someone who has transcended the three qualities. If *sattva* predominates, there is engagement in knowledge. If *rajas* predominates, there is engagement in inclination (for action). And if *tamas* predominates, there is engagement in delusion. However, even if there is such engagement, the transcender does not hate the happiness or unhappiness that results. And even if there is withdrawal from such engagement, the transcender does not desire the engagement or its fruit. He is completely detached.
44. That is, established in the *atman*.
45. As has been said before, beginnings of action are for specific gains, in this world or the next. Hence, someone who has renounced these is someone who has renounced all fruits.
46. There are two alternative interpretations, both of which are possible and make sense. First, the *brahman* is indestructible and immortal. Second, ‘I am indestructible and immortal.
47. That is, I am the embodiment of eternal *dharma* and absolute bliss.

## Chapter 15: Union with the Supreme Being

1. Krishna.
2. The *ashvattha* tree is the holy fig tree. It has a root above, because the origin or root of the world is the *brahman*. This comparison of the *ashvattha* tree with the world also occurs in the *Upanishads*. The subject

of the sentence is left implicit. That is, we do not know who is doing the saying. But obviously, ‘they’ stands for those who know the truth.

3. Metres mean the *Vedas*.
4. The qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
5. The interpretation is that these objects are those that gratify the five senses (sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching).
6. This should also be translated as roots, but is liable to cause confusion. The main root, the *brahman*, has already been described as extending upwards. But this is a banyan tree, with additional rootlings descending to the ground. Since action and its fruits are secondary, rather than primary, there is a comparison with rootlings.
7. This world.
8. This tree’s form.
9. No rebirth.
10. The *brahman*.
11. This description occurs in the *Upanishads*, with almost identical words used.
12. The five senses (sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) plus the mind add up to six.
13. Meaning flowers.
14. The lord of the body or the *jivatman*.
15. The word ‘these’ is a continued reference to the six senses, or the five senses and the mind.
16. The *jivatman*.
17. The establishment and enjoyment in the present body and the progress to another body is also by the *jivatman*. And it is also the *jivatman* that has the qualities (*gunas*) as attributes.
18. Care or exertion in meditation.
19. The moon is believed to be watery and the source of all sap and juice, required to nourish plants and trees.
20. *Prana* is the breath of exhalation and *apana* is the breath of downward inhalation.
21. The four types of food are those that are chewed (*charvya*), sucked (*choshya* or *chushya*), licked (*lehya*) and drunk (*peya*).
22. The *Upanishads* are known as *Vedanta*, because they represent the ultimate knowledge of the *Vedas*.
23. That is, I am established in the intellect that gets to know the *Vedas*.

24. The destructible *purusha*.
25. The fixed is the *jivatman* or the indestructible *purusha*.
26. In this context, heaven, earth and hell.
27. The word used for the Supreme Being is *purushottama*.
28. The word used is *loka*, which can mean the world. But it can also mean among people. And in some interpretations, the word is taken to mean the *Puranas* because these are popular among all people.
29. Arjuna.
30. Arjuna.
31. Arjuna.
32. Accomplishment of all that is prescribed. The implicit suggestion is that Arjuna should also become knowledgeable and accomplished.

## Chapter 16: Distinction between the Divine and the Demonic

1. Krishna.
2. Alternatively, resorting to the *sattva* quality.
3. Two possible interpretations are possible here. First, *jnana yoga*, or the path of knowledge. Second, *jnana* and *yoga*, that is the path of knowledge and the path of action or *karma yoga*, the word *yoga* being interpreted as *karma yoga*.
4. Of the senses.
5. Of the sacred texts like the *Vedas*. Or what has been called *japa yajna* earlier, that is, meditation.
6. Or uprightness.
7. Of desire and the fruits of action.
8. Sense of shame because of evil action committed.
9. Arjuna.
10. The sense is that one's action in earlier lives determines birth so as to possess these divine attributes, characteristic of *sattva* qualities. Twenty-six attributes are listed in these three *shlokas* and are almost identical to the attributes described in *shlokas* 7–11 of Chapter 13.
11. Arjuna.
12. Arjuna.
13. Arjuna.
14. Not just in this chapter, but in earlier chapters also, such as Chapters 2, 12, 13 and 14. In contrast, except a little bit in Chapter 9, *shlokas* 11-12,

nothing has been said about demonic attributes.

15. Inclination towards righteous action and disinclination or restraint from evil action.
16. This falsehood has also been interpreted as falsehood of sacred texts like the *Vedas* and the *Puranas*.
17. Without the basis of *dharma* and *adharma*. *Dharma* holds things up and is therefore the basis.
18. There is a slight problem of interpretation here. Instead of translating as without continuity, one can also say that the world is created through mutual union between men and women. In that case, the subsequent clause about satisfying desire will mean lust. The world is created because of lust and there is no other purpose. In the broader interpretation, desire is more than narrow lust. And creation has a continuity from the *paramatman* to the sky, from the sky to the wind, from the wind to fire, from fire to water, from water to the earth and so on. By emphasizing mutual union as the source of creation, this continuity is being negated.
19. The word *mada* can also be translated as intoxication, insanity or lust.
20. Search of the untrue is interpreted as worship of various gods with different *mantras*. And some of these rites can be impure.
21. With the subject implicit. ‘They’ does not actually figure in the Sanskrit.
22. Time of destruction means the time of death and there is the conviction that no other objective except the satisfaction of desire exists. The thoughts are about desirable objects and the senses and these are immeasurable or uncountable.
23. These *yajnas* or donations are driven by the wrong motive of self-gratification and, therefore, do not lead to liberation.
24. Demonic birth means birth into a sub-human species.
25. Arjuna.
26. Because there is a hierarchy in sub-human species also. For example, insects will be lower than animals.
27. Arjuna.
28. The sacred texts or scriptures.
29. What ‘this’ means is not clear. It can certainly mean this world. It has also been interpreted as this arena of action. Finally, it has also been interpreted as this country of action, that is, India.

## Chapter 17: Distinction between the Three Types of Faith

1. Implicitly, this discarding of the *shastras* is being done inadvertently, perhaps through ignorance or sloth. The reference is not to those who discard the *shastras* deliberately and consciously, as a mark of disrespect.
2. Or, those who sacrifice.
3. Krishna.
4. This nature is the outcome of action in earlier lives.
5. Arjuna.
6. Any human being—the word used in the Sanskrit is *purusha*. A convoluted interpretation is possible, with the word *purusha* being taken to mean the Supreme Being. So the Supreme Being is full of faith and is manifested to humans depending on the kind of faith that human being possesses.
7. Or sacrifice to the gods. Obviously, this worship or sacrifice must be without desire or attachment.
8. That is, worship *yakshas* and *rakshas*. The *yakshas* are semi-divine species, the *rakshas* can loosely be translated as demons. Accounts of creation vary. In some accounts, some created beings tried to eat Brahma and these became the *yakshas*. Others tried to prevent these devourers and these came to be known as the *rakshas*. According to other accounts, Brahma created water and then created beings. Some of these wanted to worship and these came to be known as *yakshas*. Others wanted to protect the water and came to be known as *rakshas*. But the general purport of the *shloka* is clear enough. Those of the *rajas*-type worship species that are less than divine.
9. Or sacrifice to.
10. Or spirits, the Sanskrit is *pretas*.
11. The class of devils or demons, *bhutaganah*.
12. Alternatively, possessed of desire, attachment and strength.
13. Inside the body as the *atman*.
14. The Sanskrit is *asura*.
15. All beings.
16. The word used is *sattva*, which can also be translated as strength or steadfastness, instead of vitality. Alternatively, one can also translate this as food that increases the *sattva* quality.

17. Or spicy with chillies.
18. Implying food that is cold.
19. Alternatively, this can be translated as food that is burnt.
20. Alternatively, food cooked the day before.
21. Or simply, leftover food.
22. Arjuna.
23. The insolence results from a desire to establish one's wealth, greatness or righteousness.
24. The word used is *dvija* and translating it as *brahmana* is indeed indicated. However, *dvija* means twice-born and thus applies to any of the first three castes.
25. In a narrow sense, *brahmacharya* is continence or celibacy.
26. *Ahimsa* is invariably translated as non-violence. But it really means lack of injury towards others.
27. In places like the *Manu Samhita*, a reference is made to three kinds of speech—that which is true (*satya*), that which is pleasant (*priya*) and that which leads to welfare (*hita*). The moral dilemma is obvious. Does one speak the truth even if it does not lead to overall welfare? Both in the *Manu Samhita* and in the *Mahabharata*, the suggestion is that the truth should not be spoken if the truth does not lead to overall welfare. However, the truth should be spoken even if it is unpleasant to hear.
28. The literal translation is only self-study. However, this is usually translated as study of the *shastras* or, even more specifically, study of the *Vedas*.
29. Kindliness, amiability, gentleness.
30. This is interpreted as purity in behaviour towards others. A translation as purity of heart is also possible.
31. This means this world. So the fruits are temporary and uncertain in this world.
32. That is, without any ulterior motive.
33. Or will not benefit the donor in the future. There is no quid pro quo.
34. The sacred texts indicate appropriate place, time and subject for donations. Unfortunately, commentators have often interpreted these in very narrow terms. For instance, subjects can only be *brahmanas*. The place can only be places of pilgrimage and the time can only be an auspicious moment.
35. Alternatively, thought of by those learned in the *Vedas*.

36. This is sometimes translated as those who are learned in the *Vedas*.
37. Arjuna.
38. Arjuna.
39. That is, without fruits.

## Chapter 18: The Path of Liberation and Renunciation

1. Krishna.
2. Krishna.
3. Krishna, thus named because he killed the demon Keshi.
4. *Sannyasa* (renunciation) and *tyaga* (relinquishing) may seem to have identical meanings. However, *sannyasa* is also the fourth stage (*ashrama*) of life, when one renounces action. But, earlier, the *Gita* has not used the word *sannyasa* in this sense of asceticism and the word has been used more in the sense of *tyaga*.
5. Krishna.
6. Arjuna.
7. Arjuna.
8. Arjuna.
9. That is, fruits resulting from the action. By relinquishing attachment is meant giving up a sense of ownership or ego in performing the action.
10. The *shloka* uses the word *sannyasa*. By indicated action is meant one's own *dharma* or *svadharma*, which varies from person to person.
11. A *tamas*-type, that is, dark or evil kind of relinquishing.
12. *Sannyasis* do not face such fruits of action. By a *sannyasi* is meant a person who relinquishes attachment and fruits, not one who relinquishes action.
13. Arjuna.
14. The word *sankhya* is used in the Sanskrit. This may either mean *sankhya* philosophy specifically, or it may mean sacred texts like the *Vedas* in general.
15. This is a difficult *shloka* to understand. The abode of any action is the human body. The agent is the ego or the ownership of the action. The different types of instrument are the senses and various types of endeavour are *pranayama*. All four are required for any action to take place. That leaves the divine element and this has been interpreted in various ways. First, this can mean divinities who rule over different

parts of the body and different types of senses. Second, it can be the influence of the *paramatman*, working through the body. Third, it can be the residual element as a determinant of action, after all the other four have been accounted for. Fifth, it can be the effect of action performed in earlier births.

16. That is, action is due to these five determining causes.
17. Does not see the truth.
18. Such a person is not tied down by the fruits of the action. The mention of killing dramatizes the point. And after all, Arjuna is being addressed against the background of Arjuna refusing to kill his friends and relatives.
19. Because action requires a resolution that the action should take place and this involves knowledge, that which can be known and the knower. Without these three, the resolution will not materialize.
20. Meaning, *sankhya* philosophy. The three impetuses of knowledge, that which can be known and the knower have been cited. The action, the instrument and the agent have been cited as the base for action. Of these six, knowledge, action and the agent have been now singled out for detailed attention and the reason is clear. The knower is identified with the agent, that which can be known is identified with knowledge and the instrument is not independent either. That leaves the other three.
21. The *brahman* or the *paramatman*.
22. Without appreciating the whole.
23. *Tamas*-type knowledge.
24. *Sattva*-type action.
25. Injury to others and destruction of objects like wealth.
26. Avaricious towards objects owned by others and injurious towards others.
27. The word used is *prakrita*, which can also be translated as unrefined or illiterate.
28. This is interpretation rather than literal translation. Instead of disrespectful, it can also be a person who inhibits the actions of others.
29. Arjuna.
30. Arjuna.
31. That is, the intellect that knows the difference between these.
32. Arjuna.
33. Arjuna.

34. The opposite of what should actually be thought.
35. Arjuna.
36. Arjuna.
37. We have deliberately retained *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* in the Sanskrit in the translation. *Kama* is desire that satisfies the senses *artha* is wealth and other possessions. But in this context, by *dharma* one means rites and rituals performed with a desire to accumulate good deeds. The point is that *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* are all driven by inclination, by a desire to gain something. This is in contrast to *moksha* or liberation, driven by disinclination and detachment.
38. Arjuna.
39. Meaning sleep.
40. Arjuna.
41. Meaning the self or the intelligence.
42. Inadvertence about right action.
43. Any being or any object.
44. Arjuna.
45. Prescribed actions or duties.
46. Implying dexterity in action.
47. In donating alms.
48. A more literal translation is lordliness or sovereignty.
49. The world or the universe.
50. One's own *dharma* is *svadharma*. This can be translated as 'one's own indicated course of action or duty'. This meant *varnashrama dharma*, which meant that a person's duty depended on his *varna* (caste) and his *ashrama* (stage of life).
51. Arjuna.
52. Because this might be interpreted as advocating renouncement of all action, the next *shloka* follows.
53. The subject is actually suppressed in the Sanskrit.
54. Interpreted as controlling the senses or overcoming a sense of ego.
55. *Sannyasa* does not mean giving up action. It means giving up attachment to action and fruits of action.
56. Arjuna.
57. Meaning the mind.
58. The word used is *parigraha*, which, in this context, means the acceptance of possessions, such as in the form of donations from other

people, to sustain physical life.

59. The subject is suppressed in the Sanskrit.
60. The subject is suppressed in the Sanskrit.
61. That is, enters me.
62. The subject is suppressed in the Sanskrit.
63. The *Gita* uses the words *buddhi yoga* and *karma yoga* synonymously. Sometimes, the word *yoga* is used instead.
64. Arjuna's nature as a *kshatriya*.
65. Arjuna.
66. *Maya* is often translated as illusion. Resolution is a better translation, because the idea of *maya* as illusion came much later.
67. In interpretations, the imagery used is of puppets on a string.
68. Arjuna.
69. There is scope for interpretation in deciding what this discarding of all *dharma*s means. At an obvious level, these various *dharma*s mean those duties laid down in the *shastras* (sacred texts) and the injunction is to give up these rites and duties and adopt *bhakti yoga* instead. In more complicated interpretations, it is suggested that *prakriti* is subject to notions of *dharma* and *adharma* and *purusha* is beyond these. Therefore, the injunction is to immerse oneself in the *brahman*.
70. This knowledge and, more generally, the knowledge of the *Gita*.
71. Also interpreted as those who do not follow their *svadharma*.
72. Than one who undertakes the task of explaining this knowledge.
73. The *Gita* again. Alternatively, this sacred dialogue—instead of dialogue on *dharma*.
74. Arjuna.
75. Arjuna.
76. Krishna.
77. The word used in the Sanskrit is *smriti*, which we have translated as knowledge about that which should be done and that which should not be done. In an even more literal way, *smriti* can be translated as Arjuna having obtained his memory back.
78. That is, fight.
79. Literally, a dialogue that makes one's hair stand up.
80. Krishna.
81. Son of Pritha, or Arjuna.

- 82. Vyasa or Vedavyasa gave Sanjaya the divine sight through which he could witness what was happening.
- 83. Dhritarashtra.
- 84. Krishna.
- 85. Dhritarashtra.
- 86. Krishna.
- 87. On whichever side.
- 88. Sanjaya is obviously suggesting to Dhritarashtra that peace should be sought with the Pandavas and the war should end.

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