GitaBhashya in English

[shrImatE rAmAnujAya nama:]

[Back to Basics 2](#_Toc488528590)

[Transliteration notes 8](#_Toc488528591)

[Chapter 1 9](#_Toc488528592)

[Chapter 2 19](#_Toc488528593)

[Chapter 3 57](#_Toc488528594)

[Chapter 4 82](#_Toc488528595)

[Chapter 5 106](#_Toc488528596)

[Chapter 6 121](#_Toc488528597)

[Chapter 7 143](#_Toc488528598)

[Chapter 8 162](#_Toc488528599)

[Chapter 9 178](#_Toc488528600)

[Chapter 10 196](#_Toc488528601)

[Chapter 11 218](#_Toc488528602)

[Chapter 12 241](#_Toc488528603)

[Chapter 13 250](#_Toc488528604)

[Chapter 14 280](#_Toc488528605)

[Chapter 15 294](#_Toc488528606)

[Chapter 16 307](#_Toc488528607)

[Chapter 17 319](#_Toc488528608)

[Chapter 18 332](#_Toc488528609)

[The Beginning of Joy 374](#_Toc488528610)

# Back to Basics

Many words in Sanskrit and English have multiple meanings. Let’s fix an interpretation to frequently encountered words. This interpretation may be different from what we’re accustomed to. If you don’t understand even after reading this, don’t worry. Stay in the journey of inquiry and don’t get anxious about answers.

Who am I?

### [Atma] - The Self

As the Lord Himself states, it is not possible to describe the [Atma] in speech, nor is it possible to understand it using the intellect. Needless to say, the word [Atma] is difficult to translate. I have used the word ‘Self’ with an uppercase 'S' as the translation of the word [Atma].

Rather than thinking about the [Atma] as a ghostly soul, consider it as being ‘me’. The Self is 'me'. That brings us to the question 'What am I?' Let's start by seeing what the Self isn't.

I am not my body, am I?

Am I a body, a walking bundle of cells and chemicals, a machine that keeps responding to stimuli? If that's the case, I would be a different 'me' through my life - the molecules in our body, our shape, size, even our knowledge and memory - none of them are constant through the life of the body. However, I still remain 'me' throughout my life even if every aspect of my body gets replaced along the way.

I am not just a thought, am I?

Let' go a little deeper. Am I my brain? The brain is part of the nervous system, which routes all stimuli through its circuits. Those circuits are nerve cells insulated from each other by fatty tissue, connected through gaps in the insulation. This is known to be the way memory is built and information is processed.

There are thoughts in the brain that seem to run on their own. They seem to have an existence independent of external stimuli - something that I hear in my head when I just sit around doing nothing. It's the 'chatterbox center'. Somewhere in the brain, my 'identity' is located, which could be a 'memory of me'. It says things like 'I am short, arrogant, intelligent but lazy' and so on. Do these centers constitute 'me'? Does it cause the experience of 'I exist'?

No, these thoughts can change over time while I remain 'me'. If I change my identity, maybe become an active person from a lazy one, do I become a different 'me'? No. When I grow old and lose some memory and other mental faculties, 'I' still exist. The experience of 'I exist' is perhaps part of what's called 'consciousness'.

What am I? Let’s begin the discovery of the Self and its relation with the Lord.

The current state of the art has not revealed the true nature of our consciousness. What is consciousness made of? Does it follow any laws of conservation? Did it exist when the universe was created? Is it responsible for the awareness and experience of the universe? Are there different types of consciousness?

Let's use the term 'Self' to refer to that which gives rise to 'consciousness'. The Lord begins his conversation with Arjuna by describing the nature of the Self in the second chapter. He then explains the method of realizing it.

### [yOga] - To associate, gain and realize

Yoga is about realization - a journey to get real. To associate facts and observations, gain knowledge and materials required to realize our objective. We commonly use the word 'yoga' to mean the postures and activities that go into realizing the capabilities of our body and mind. This word has a deeper meaning.

Yoga is a journey to discover reality. Every form of yoga leads to the same discovery.

Three forms of yoga are seen in the conversation of the Gita.

First, the Lord reveals the art of practicing yoga in all our activities. It’s about realizing that we aren't entitled to any outcomes, that the Lord is the enjoyer and the purpose of our actions. This is reality. Practicing this reality is called [karmayOga].

Second, He describes yoga in our thoughts. This is the realization that we are not our body; that the Self exists for the Lord; that The Lord is all-powerful and acts according to His principles. This is real knowledge and its practice is called [jnAnayOga].

Third, He talks about practicing yoga in devotion. It is to adore the Lord and have Him in our thoughts always. This is our state of being and our relationship with the Lord. Such practice is called [bhaktiyOga].

Yoga – be it postures, the forms described above, a study of a science or contemplation - each of them is a journey in our understanding of the material universe, our body as a part of the universe, us and our relationship with the Lord. Such understanding comes with equanimity.

What am I doing?

### [karma] - Action, Activity

Our journey in life is a series of activities. Is it about ‘doing’ or ‘making it happen’?

The word [karma] is used in many contexts, so let’s pick the basic meaning - any activity and any action we initiate is called [karma]. An ‘action’ is something we do with an intention. Activity happens in the material universe. We experience outcomes.

The distinction between actions, activities, happenings, goals and outcomes can be hazy, so let's clarify with an example - Let’s say I intend to call my friend. I initiate the action by picking up the phone and dialing. The action itself is accomplished by the activities of my body. The call is transmitted by electromagnetic waves. My friend needs to receive the call. That's when the call happens. In this manner, I intend to do something and initiate an action.

Many things need to come together to make the activity 'happen'. Only one of them is 'me'. The belief that I make things happen is not reality. You may remark that none of it would happen unless I initiated the action. That would be right – I am entitled only to an independent intention and an initiation of the action. I don’t make the rest of the story happen, though I can predict what happens in material terms. What I cannot predict is the outcome.

An activity has an outcome that we experience. Let’s take the example ahead- suppose my friend responds cheerfully to my call. Normally I would experience joy. However, if I were under a lot of stress, I may feel envy. Suppose my friend didn't answer my call. I could get frustrated. Or I could simply call later.

In this way, we initiate an action with some intention. After that, things happen, followed by an outcome in the form of an experience. [karma] is the initiation of the activity. It's not to be mixed up with what actually happens, or with any outcomes encountered along the way.

These outcomes and experiences form the 'fruit' of the action, called [karmaphala]. The results that follow my actions can give me joy or sorrow, depending on my attachment towards the action and its result. An outcome doesn't belong to the action – by doing something, I am not entitled to a particular experience. If I don't recognize this, I tie my activity to my experience and will be bound by it. Such activity wouldn't be liberating anymore, it would be pretty depressing.

Why am I doing it?

If the action doesn’t guarantee an outcome, why should I work, or give my 100% to achieve a goal?

### [dharma] – That which uplifts

It is the first word in the Gita and appears many times in the epic. Often, it's translated to mean 'righteousness', which gives the impression that there is always 'one right thing'.

That’s not always the case. For instance, is it right to tolerate the mistakes of our dear ones? Or confront them even at the cost of friendship? Righteousness is indeed confusing, so Yudhishtira asks Bhishma at the end of the war- 'Which [dharma] do you consider superior?' - implying many righteous behaviors.

Consider [dharma] as a purpose that uplifts you. Usually, such an 'uplifting' would liberate you to see an even higher purpose. For instance, let’s say you set out to earn money and achieve your goal legally. This may liberate you to pursue your interests, or it may open opportunities to make even more money. Which [dharma] you pick is your choice.

This brings us to the distinction between goals, means, purpose, expectation and outcomes.

Let's take an example - the activity of cooking. The 'goal' is 'what' you're making - a meal, in this case. The 'means' is 'how' you're making it, including the utensils, recipe, and items that go into making the meal. The 'purpose' says 'why' you're doing it.

The purpose of cooking could be to eat, to feed your family, to feed guests, to earn money, as a duty or just for the love of cooking.

The 'expectation' is linked to desire - it's what we want for ourselves from the activity. In this example, while cooking for the family, we could expect appreciation; we could also expect them to simply finish the food. Something happens as an outcome of the activity. Our experience of the outcome depends on how we relate it to our expectations.

In all of this, [dharma] relates to the purpose. Your purpose 'uplifts' you in varying degrees- cooking for the love of cooking may be more uplifting than just doing it for someone else. On the other hand, if you're doing it for someone whom you adore, that may be more uplifting than doing it for yourself.

Look beyond desire. Focus on the purpose even when you don’t reach the goal you expect.

With this example, I know the meaning of [dharma] but its application remains shady. Do I consider my duty and profession to be above personal relationships? Or cater to the needs of my dear ones, disregarding rights and opportunity when they come in the way? What is the purpose of my activities?

The problem of purpose appears again and again in the Mahabharata. The resolution is also consistently stated each time: Look beyond desires. Focus on purpose and don't go behind outcomes. Have the Lord as your purpose and worship Him. At this point, there doesn’t seem to be a logical link from the ‘problem of purpose’ to the ‘resolution by worship’. That’s the journey of the Gita.

### [yajna] - An act of worship

To ‘worship’ is to ‘honor and adore’. Doing this consciously means doing it according to a procedure. Though the word [yajna] is often used to mean ‘sacrifice’, here we consider the more general meaning of ‘worship’.

Is there a different way?

### [mOksha] - The joy of liberation

Moksha is to be free of all limitations.

What’s it like to be really free?

We cannot really imagine this state of being, since we’ve never been free of all limitations. To start with, we need to live with the limitations of our body. Then there is the limitation that comes from our desires and attachments - which may come from things we own, the society, family or friends.

All of them are undoubtedly valuable - be it the body, the society, family or friends. We cannot accomplish much without them. The question is: How many activities do we initiate, expecting to gain or maintain them? How many activities do we initiate independently, after which the rest of the story comes together to make it [happen](#actions_and_happenings)?

It isn’t necessary to have expectations whenever we initiate something. In fact, expectations are limiting in nature. Take the activity of singing, for instance. When I expect appreciation and sing, I do not feel much liberty in the initiative, being constrained by my impression of the audience. Even when I'm appreciated, it’s temporary and I need more appreciation the next time. It doesn’t liberate me in any way. On the other hand, if I sing for the joy of singing, it feels more liberating. There is no question of failure while I’m enjoying my singing. Though I may delight in an activity in this way, repeating the same thing feels boring and my initiative reduces. Then, such an initiative is not totally liberating either.

What if there is a purpose that we’re always meant to achieve? What if any initiative towards that purpose was never to fail? What if that purpose is easy and always delightful, no matter how many times it’s repeated, no matter how much criticism happens? Being in such a purpose is the ultimate liberty. That purpose is the Lord. Achievement of that purpose is Moksha.

Those who are in this purpose [are not driven](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html) by the world.

Let’s examine a few more words before we get started with the Bhagavad-Gita.

### [anAdi kAla] - Beginning-less time

It's the time that transcends the creation and destruction of the universe. As opposed to this, the ‘normal’ time is the one we experience, which starts with the creation of this universe.

### [vishEShaNa] - Attribute

An attribute is a property that cannot exist on its own. For example, 'red color' is an attribute of blood: the attribute of 'redness' cannot exist on its own: there has to be an object that shows up as red, for the attribute to exist. Likewise, we and our universe are attributes of the Lord.

### [mana:] - The mind

The mind is an instrument for the Self to experience this universe. Understanding, perception, intelligence and cognition come from the mind.

### [buddhi] - The intellect

The intellect gives the ability to reason and distinguish.

### References to the Lord:

All references to the Lord, including pronouns, start with an uppercase letter. For example: The Lord said ‘I make Myself come into being by My own will’.

# Transliteration notes

Transliteration is about writing the letters of Devanagari in the English alphabet. Here is a table with the mapping used in this document.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| अ | आ | इ | ई | उ | ऊ | ऋ | ॠ |
| A | A | i | I | u | U | r' | r'' |
| ए | ऐ | ओ | औ | अं | अः |  |  |
| E | ai | O | Au | aM | a: |  |  |
| क | ख | ग | घ | ङ |  |  |  |
| K | kh | g | Gh | G |  |  |  |
| च | छ | ज | झ | ञ |  |  |  |
| ch | Ch | j | Jh | J |  |  |  |
| ट | ठ | ड | ढ | ण |  |  |  |
| T | Th | D | Dh | N |  |  |  |
| त | थ | द | ध | न |  |  |  |
| T | th | d | Dh | n |  |  |  |
| प | फ | ब | भ | म |  |  |  |
| P | ph | b | Bh | m |  |  |  |
| य | र | ल | व | श | ष |  |  |
| Y | R | l | V | sh | Sh |  |  |
| स | ह |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| S | H |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Some exceptions have been made for readability**:

ज्ञ is transliterated as jna. E.g., [yajna], [jnAna], etc.

\_: used for S. For example, [bhakta:] + [asi] = [bhakO\_si]

अं is normally transliterated as aM, as shown in the table above. In certain places, it is approximated by 'm' or by 'n'. Ease of reading is given preference over literal accuracy.

# Chapter 1

*The first chapter begins with Dhrtarashtra, the king of Arjuna’s enemies asking about the status on the battlefield.*

## 1-1 to 1-11

[

dhr'tarAShTra uvAcha -

dharmakShEtrE kurukShEtrE samavEtA yuyutsava: |

mAmakA: pAMDavA: chaiva kimakurvata sanjaya || 1 ||

]

[dhr'tarAShTra uvAcha] Dhrtarashtra said - [sanjaya] Sanjaya, [mAmakA:] my people [cha] and [pAMDavA:] the sons of Pandu [samavEtA:] have assembled [kurukShEtrE] in Kurukshetra, [dharmakShEtrE] the place of righteousness. [kim akurvata] What are they doing?

[

sanjaya uvAcha -

dr'ShTvA tu pAMDavAnIkam vyUDham duryOdhana: tadA |

AchAryam upasaMgamya rAjA vachanam abravIt || 2 ||

]

[sanjaya uvAcha] Sanjaya said - [rAjA] my king, [dr'ShTvA tu tadA] upon seeing [pAMDavAnIkam vyUDham] the armies of the Pandava in formation, [duryOdhana:] Duryodhana [upasaMgamya] approached [AchAryam] his Guru [abravIt vachanam] and said this -

[

paShyaitAn pAMDuputrANAm AchArya mahatIm chamUm |

vyUDhAm drupada putrENa tava shiShyENa dhImatA || 3 ||

]

[AchArya] O my guru Drona, [paShyaitAn] see these [mahatIm chamUm] great armies [pAMDuputrANAm] of the Pandava. [vyUDham] They have been placed in formation [tava dhImatA shiShyENa] by your bright student, [drupada putrENa] the Son of Drupada.

[

atra shUrA mahEShvAsA bhImArjuna samA yudhi |

yuyudhAnO virATashcha drupada: cha mahAratha: || 4 ||

dhr'ShTakEtu: chEkitAna: kAshI rAjashcha vIryavAn |

purujit kuntibhOja: cha shaibya: cha narapuMgava: || 5 ||

yudhAmanyu: cha vikrAnta: uttamauja: cha vIryavAn |

saubhadrO draupadEyA: cha sarva Eva mahArathA: || 6 ||

]

[atra] In that army, [shUrA:] the daring warriors [mahEShvAsA:] carrying great bows, [bhImArjuna samA:] equal to Bhima and Arjuna [yudhi] in war are - [yuyudhana:] Satyaki, [virATa:] Virata, [drupada: mahAratha:] Drupada the great chariot-warrior, [dhr'ShTakEtu: chEkitAna: cha vIryavAn kAshI rAja:] Dhrshtaketu, Chekitana along with the brave king of Kashi, [purujit kuntibhOja: cha shaibya: narapuMgava:] Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Shaibya, who are heroes among men; [yudhAmanyu: cha vikrAnta:] Yudhamanyu, who is proficient in war, [cha uttamauja: vIryavAn] along with Uttamauja the brave; [saubhadra: draupadEyA:] the son of Saubhadra and the sons of Draupadi - [sarva Eva mahArathA:] they are all great chariot-warriors themselves.

[

asmAkam tu vishiShTA yE tAnnibOdha dvijottama |

nAyakA mama sainyasya saMjnArtham tAn bravImi tE || 7 ||

bhavan bhIShma: cha karNa: cha kr'pa: cha samitinjaya: |

ashwatthAmA vikarNa: cha sOmadatta: tathaiva cha || 8 ||

anyE cha bahava: shUrA: madarthO tyakta jIvitA: |

nAnA shastra praharaNA: sarvE yuddha vishAradA: || 9 ||

]

[dvijottama] O best of Brahmins, [tu] on the other hand, [nibOdha] consider [yE] those [vishiShTA:] who are distinguished [asmAkam] among us. [bravImi tE] I will tell you [nAyakA: mama sainyasya] about the leaders in my army [saMjnArtham] for your recognition. [bhavAn] Your illustrious self, [cha] along with [bhIShma:] Bhishma, [karNa:] Karna [cha kr'pa: samitinjaya:] and the victorious Kripacharya; [ashwatthAmA vikarNa: cha sOmadatta:] Ashwatthama along with Vikarna and Somadatta; [bahava: anyE] many other [shUrA:] brave warriors [tyakta jIvitA:] have left their livelihoods [madartha:] for my sake. [prajaraNA:] Wielding [nAnA shastra] various weapons, [sarvE] they are all [vishAradA:] skilled [yuddhE] in warfare.

[

aparyAptam tadasmAkam balam bhIShmAbhirakShitam |

paryAptam tu idam EtEShAm balam bhImAbhirakShitam || 10 ||

]

[tat balam asmAkam] This force of ours, [bhIShmAbhirakShitam] protected by Bhishma, [aparyAptam] is insufficient. [tu] On the other hand, [idam balam EtEShAm] their force [bhImAbhirakShitam] protected by Bhima [paryAptam] is sufficient.

[

AyanEShu cha sarvEShu yathA bhAgam avasthitA: |

bhIShmam EvAbhirakShantu bhavanta: sarva Eva hi || 11 ||

]

[bhavanta: sarva Eva hi] All of you [bhIShmam Eva abhirakShantu] protect Bhishma [sarvEShu AyanEShu] in all movements of our army [yathA bhAgam avasthitA:] in your respective divisions.

We often doubt and worry about achieving wealth, success and other outcomes.

Duryodhana saw the armies of his enemies protected by Bhima, and his own army protected by Bhishma. He expressed his anxiety that the enemy army is sufficient to defeat his own, and that his own army is unequal to the task.

## 1-12 to 1-19

[

tasya saMjayan harSham kuruvr'ddha: pitAmaha: |

simhanAdam vinadya uchchai: shankham dadhmau pratApavAn || 12 ||

]

[pitAmaha:] Grandfather Bhishma, [kuruvr'ddha:] the eldest among the Kurus, [saMjayan tasya harSham] was the one to lift his spirits [vinadya simhanAdam] by roaring like a lion. [dadhmau shankham] He blew his conch [uchchai:] loudly [pratApavAn] and turned on the heat.

[

tata: shankhA: cha bhEryA: cha paNavAnaka gOmukhA: |

sahasaiva abhyahanyanta sa shabda: tumulO\_bhavat || 13 ||

]

[tata:] Then, [sahasaiva] that instant, [shankhA:] conches [cha] and [bhEryA: paNavAnaka gOmukhA:] various instruments [abhyahanyanta] were beaten. [sa shabda:] That sound [abhavat] became [tumula:] a violent uproar.

[

tata: shwEtai: hayairyuktE mahati syandanE sthitau |

mAdhava: pAMDava: chaiva divyau shankhau pradadhmatu: || 14 ||

]

[tata:] After that, [mAdhava:] Krishna [cha] and [pAMDava:] Arjuna [pradadhmatu:] sounded [divyau shankhau] their divine conches, [sthitau] standing [mahati syandanE] in their famous chariot [yuktE shwEtai: hayai:] pulled by white horses.

[

pAnchajanyam hr'ShikEshO dEvadattam dhananjaya: |

paunDram dadhmau mahA shankham bhImakarma vr'kOdara: || 15 ||

]

[hr'ShikEsha:] Krishna [pAnchajanyam] sounded the conch called Panchajanya, [dhananjaya:] Arjuna [dEvadattam] the conch called Devadatta [vr'kOdara:] and Bhima, [bhImakarma] who is capable of fearsome deeds, [dadhmau] sounded [paunDram] the conch called Paundra.

[

anantavijayam rAjA kuntIputrO yudhiShThira: |

nakula: sahadEvashcha sugHOSha maNipuShpakau || 16 ||

kAshya: cha paramEShvAsa: shikhaNDI cha mahAratha: |

dhr'ShTadyumnO virATa: cha sAtyaki: chAparAjita: || 17 ||

drupadO draupadEyA: cha sarvata: pr'thivIpatE |

saubhadra: cha mahAbAhu: shankhAn dadhmu: pr'thak pr'thak || 18 ||

]

[rAjA] My King, [kuntIputrO] the son of Kunti, [yudhiShThira:] Yudhishtira, [dadhmu: anantavijayam] sounded the Anantavijaya, along with [nakula: sahadEvashcha sugHOSha maNipuShpakau] Nakula and Sahadeva blew their conches called Sughosha and Manipushpaka. [cha] Along with them, [kAshya: paramEShvAsa:] the King of Kasi with his great bow, [shikhaNDI cha mahAratha:] Shikhandi the great chariot-warrior, [dhr'ShTadyumna: virATa: cha aparAjita: sAtyaki:] Drshtadyumna, Virata, the undefeated Satyaki, [drupadO draupadEyA: cha sarvata: pr'thivIpatE] Drupada, his sons, all the Kings [cha saubhadra: mahAbAhu:] and the mighty Son of Subhadra [dadhmu: pr'thak pr'thak] sounded their respective [shankhAn] conches.

[

sa ghOShO dhArtarAShTrANAm hr'dayAni vyadArayat |

nabha: cha pr'thivIm chaiva tumulO vyanunAdayan || 19 ||

]

[sa ghOSha:] That sound [vyadArayat] tore through [hr'dayAni] the hearts [dhArtarAShTrANAm] of Dhrtarashtra's sons. [vyanunAdayan] It resonated [tumula:] into a tumultuous crescendo, [nabha: cha pr'thivIm] filling the earth and the sky.

In our anxiety, we interpret anything that happens as a signal of doom

Looking at Duryodhana's anxiety, Bhishma uttered a roar and blew his conch to raise Duryodhana's spirits. Bhishma also got others in his army to utter sounds of victory.

On the other side, Krishna - The Lord of lords, the Master of everything, who was Arjuna's charioteer, and Arjuna himself, seated in a special chariot qualified to conquer all worlds, blew their conches- Panchajanya and Devadatta. Then Yudhishtira, Bhima and others blew their conches.

‘That sound pierced the heart of Duryodhana and the rest of your sons. *The power of the Kauravas is destroyed today*, they thought.’ - Sanjaya said this to Dhritarashtra, who desired the victory of the Kauravas.

## 1-20 to 1-23

[

atha vyavasthitAn dr'ShTvA dhArtarAShTrAn kapidhvaja: |

pravr'ttE shastra saMpAtE dhanurudyamya pAMDava: || 20 ||

hr'ShikEsham tadA vAkyam idam Aha mahIpatE |

]

[atha] Next, [mahIpatE] my King, [pravr'ttE shastra saMpAtE] it was time to start wielding weapons. [pAMDava:] Arjuna, [kapidhvaja:] with Hanuman on his flag, [dr'ShTvA] saw [dhArtarAShTrAn] the clan of Dhrtarashtra [vyavasthitAn] present there. [tadA dhanurudyamya] Then he lifted his bow [Aha idam] and said this [hr'Shikesham] to Krishna –

[

sEnayOrubhyO: madhyE ratham sthApaya mE achyuta || 21 ||

yAvat EtAn nirIkShE aham yOddhukAmAn avasthitAn |

kairmayA saha yOddhavyam asmin rana samudyamE || 22 ||

yOtsyamAnAn avEkShE\_ham ya etE atra samAgatA: |

dhArtarAShTrasya durbuddhE: yuddhE priya chikIrShava: || 23 ||

]

[achyuta] Krishna, [sthApaya] park [mE ratham] my chariot [madhyE sEnayO: ubhayO:] between the two armies [yAvat] so that [aham nirIkShE] I can see [yOddhukAmAn avasthitAn] those who have assembled to fight - [kairmayA saha yOddhavyam] those whom I must confront [asmin rana samudyamE] in this war. [aham avEkShE] I shall see [etE yOtsyamAnAn] those warriors [ya atra samAgatA:] who have come here [priya chikIrShava:] as the inspiration [durbuddhE: dhArtarAShTrasya] for the evil sons of Dhrtarashtra [yuddhE] in war.

Arjuna was on the chariot and had Anjaneya, the one who burnt Lanka, on his flag. Seeing the Kauravas assembled with the intent of war, he wanted to see them in their true strength. ‘Park my chariot at such a position that I can see them’ he told Krishna, his charioteer.

It doesn’t matter who you are or what you’re asking for. Be in this conversation. Keep enquiring.

Krishna has the six qualities of knowledge, strength, force, wealth, valor and radiance. By His mere will, He can cause the creation, sustenance and destruction of whole worlds. He controls everyone in all ways, both from inside and out. He is invariably affectionate towards people who have taken refuge in Him. He was Arjuna's charioteer.

## 1-24 to 1-25

[

Evam uktO hr'ShikEshO guDAkEshEna bhArata |

sEnayOrubhayO: madhyE sthApayitvA rathottamam || 24 ||

bhIShma drONa pramukhata: sarvEshAm cha mahIkShitAm |

uvAcha pArtha pashyaitAn samavEtAn kurUn iti || 25 ||

]

[bhArata] O King of the Bharata dynasty, [Evam ukta: guDAkEshEna] as Arjuna said, [hr'ShikEsha:] Krishna [sthApayitvA] parked [rathottamam] that superior chariot [senayOrubhayO: madhyE] between the two armies, [pramukhata:] in front of [bhIShma drONa] Bhishma, Drona [sarvEshAm cha mahIkShitAm] and all the other Kings. [uvAcha] He then said - [pArtha] Arjuna, [pashyaitAn] see this [kurUn] army of the Kurus, [samavEtAn] who have come together.

As requested by Arjuna, Krishna immediately stationed the chariot as instructed, even as all the kings were looking. Then Krishna said ‘This is how your people are, such is their possibility of victory’

## 1-26 to 1-47

[

tatrApashyat sthitAn pArtha: pitr''n atha pitAmahAn |

AchAryAn mAtulAn bhrAtr''n putrAn pautrAn sakhIn tathA || 26 ||

]

[tatra] There, [pArtha:] Arjuna [apashyat] saw [pitr''n] his father's generation [atha] along with [pitAmahAn] his grandfathers, [AchAryAn] teachers, [mAtulAn] uncles, [bhrAtr''n] those who were like brothers, [putrAn] sons, [pautrAn] grandsons [tathA] and [sakhIn] friends.

[

shvashurAn suhr'da: chaiva senayO: ubhayOrapi |

tAn samIkShya sa kauntEya: sarvAn bandhUn avasthitAn || 27 ||

kr'payA parayAviShTO viShIdannidam abravIt |

]

[samIkShya] Looking at [tAn] all those [shvashurAn suhr'da: chaiva] relatives and friends [senayO: ubhayOrapi] in both armies, [avasthitAn] standing there [sarvAn bandhUn] along with everyone he called his own, [sa kauntEya:] Arjuna [kr'payA parayAviShTa:] was overcome with great pity, [idam abravIt] said this [viShIdan] in despair –

[

dr'ShTvA imam svajanam kr'ShNa yuyutsum samupasthitam || 28 ||

sIdanti mama gAtrANi mukham cha parishuShyati |

vEpathushcha sharIrE mE rOmaharSha: cha jAyatE || 29 ||

]

[kr'ShNa dr'ShTvA imam svajanam samupasthitam yuyutsum] Krishna, seeing my own people who have come here to wage war, [mama gAtrANi sIdanti] my limbs slacken [mukham cha parishuShyati] and my mouth is dry. [mE sharIrE vEpathushcha] My body perspires [rOmaharSha: cha jAyatE] and my hairs stand.

[

gANDIvam sramsatE hastAt tvakchaiva paridahyatE |

na cha shaknOmi avasthAtum bhramatIva cha me mana: || 30 ||

]

[gANDIvam sramsatE hastAt] My bow, the Gandiva, slips from my hand. [tvakchaiva paridahyatE] My body burns. [na cha shaknOmi avasthAtum] I will not be able to stand, [bhramatIva cha me mana:] I'm dizzy.

[

nimittAni cha pashyAmi viparItAni kEshava |

na cha shrEya: anupashyAmi hatvA svajanamAhavE || 31 ||

]

[kEshava pashyAmi viparItAni nimittAni cha] Krishna, I see only undesirable consequences. [na anupashyAmi cha shrEya: hatvA svajanamAhavE] I don't see anything good coming from killing my own people.

[

na kAnkShE vijayam kr'ShNa na cha rAjyam sukhAni cha |

kim nO rAjyEna gOvinda kim bhOgai: jIvitEna vA || 32 ||

]

[kr'ShNa] Krishna, [na kAnkShE] I do not desire [vijayam] victory, [na cha rAjyam sukhAni cha] kingdom and comfort. [gOvinda] O protector, [kim nO rAjyEna] what do we do with this kingdom, [bhOgai: jIvitEna vA] its pleasures or with life itself?

[

yEShAmarthE kAnkShitam nO rAjyam bhOgA: sukhAni cha |

ta imE avasthitA yuddhE prANAn tyaktvA dhanAni cha || 33 ||

AchAryA: pitara: putrA: tathaiva cha pitAmahA: |

mAtulA: shvashurA: pautrA: shyAlA: sambandhina: tathA || 34 ||

]

[yEShAmarthE kAnkShitam nO rAjyam bhOgA: sukhAni cha] The people for whom we desire the kingdom, it's comfort and enjoyment - [ta imE avasthitA yuddhE] those very people are standing in this war, [tyaktvA prANAn dhanAni cha] leaving behind their lives and their wealth - [AchAryA: pitara: putrA: tathaiva cha pitAmahA:] they are my teachers, they are like my father, sons, grandfathers, [mAtulA: shvashurA: pautrA: shyAlA: sambandhina: tathA] uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives.

[

EtAnna hantum ichChAmi ghnatO\_pi madhusUdana |

api trailokya rAjyasya hEtO: kim nu mahIkr'tE || 35 ||

]

[madhusUdana] Krishna, [na ichChAmi EtAn hantum] I don't want to kill them, [ghnatO\_pi] even if it means I will get killed. [api trailokya rAjyasya hEtO:] I wouldn't even do it for the sake of three worlds, [kim nu mahIkr'tE] why would I do it for this patch of land on Earth?

[

nihatya dhArtarAShTrAn na: kA prIti: syAt janArdana |

pApamEvAshrayEt asmAt hatvaitAn AtatAyina: || 36 ||

]

[janArdana] O slayer of enemies, [na: kA prIti: syAt] why would we take pleasure [nihatya dhArtarAShTrAn] in killing the sons of Dhrtarashtra? [hatvaitAn AtatAyina:] By killing these wicked people, [pApamEvAshrayEt asmAt] we will definitely court misfortune.

[

tasmAt nArhA vayam hantum dhArtarAShTrAn sva bAndhvAn |

svajanam hi katham hatvA sukhina: syAma mAdhava || 37 ||

]

[tasmAt] Hence, [hantum sva bAndhvAn dhArtarAShTrAn] killing our relatives, the sons of Dhrtarashtra [nArhA vayam] doesn’t befit us. [mAdhava] Krishna, [katham syAma sukhina: hi] how can we be happy indeed, [hatvA svajanam] after killing or own people?

[

yadyapi EtE na pashyanti lObhOpahata chEtasa: |

kulakShaya kr'tam dOSham mitradrOhE cha pAtakam || 38 ||

katham na jnEyam asmAbhi: pApAt asmAt nivartitum |

kulakShaya kr'tam dOSham prapashyadbhi: janArdana || 39 ||

]

[yadyapi] Even if [EtE lObhOpahata chEtasA] they are overcome by greed [na pashyanti] and do not see [kulakShaya kr'tam dOSham] the wrongs that come from the destruction of the clan [mitradrOhE cha pAtakam] and the misfortune in betraying friends, [katham na jnEyam asmAbhi:] why can't we think of [nivartitum asmAt pApAt] turning away from this sin, [janArdana] Krishna? [kulakShaya kr'tam dOSham prapashyadbhi:] We see the harmful effects of destroying the lineage clearly.

[

kulakShayE praNashyanti kuladharmA: sanAtanA: |

dharmE naShTE kulam kr'tsnam adharmO abhibhavatyuta || 40 ||

]

[kulakShayE sanAtanA: kuladharmA: praNashyanti] With the destruction of the clan, the ancient code of conduct is lost. [naShTE dharmE] With the loss of conduct, [adharmO abhibhavatyuta kulam kr'tsnam] immorality would prevail in the entire clan.

[

adharmAbhibhAvat kr'ShNa praduShyanti kulastriya: |

strIShu duShTAsu vArShNEya jAyatE varNasankara: || 41 ||

]

[kr'ShNa] Krishna, [adharmAbhibhAvat] when immorality prevails, [kulastriya: praduShyanti] the ladies of the clan would be abused. [strIShu duShTAsu vArShNEya jAyatE varNasankara:] With such abuse, different classes of people get mixed up.

[

sankarO narakAyaiva kulaghnAnAm kulasya cha |

patanti pitarO hyEShAm lupta piNDOdaka kriyA: || 42 ||

]

[sankarO] This mixture [narakAyaiva kulaghnAnAm kulasya cha] leads the clan and its slayers to hell. [patanti pitarO hyEShAm] Their ancestors would lose their place, [lupta piNDOdaka kriyA:] being deprived of ceremonies and offerings.

[

dOShai: Etai: kulaghnAnAm varNasankara kArakai: |

utsAdyantE jAtidharmA: kuladharmA: cha shAshvatA: || 43 ||

]

[shAshvatA: jAtidharmA: cha kuladharmA:] Ancient codes of social order and family customs [utsAdyantE] are destroyed [dOShai: Etai: kulaghnAnAm] by the faults of these clan-destroyers [varNasankara kArakai:] who brought about the intermingling of the classes.

[

utsanna kuladharmANAm manuShyANAm janArdana |

narakO\_niyatam vAsO bhavatIti anushushruma || 44 ||

]

[janArdana] Krishna, [anushushruma] we've heard [iti] that [utsanna kuladharmANAm manuShyANAm] people whose dynastic code of conduct is destroyed [narakO\_niyatam vAsO bhavati] will definitely get to live in hell.

[

ahO bata mahat pApam kartum vyavasitA vayam |

yat rAjya sukha lObhEna hantum svajanam udyatA: || 45 ||

]

[ahO bata] Alas! [vayam vyavasitA kartum mahat pApam] we are set to commit great crimes. [hantum svajanam udyatA:] We are ready to kill our own people [yat rAjya sukha lObhEna] due to our greed for kingdom, comforts and enjoyment.

[

yadi mAm apratIkAram ashastram shastra pANaya: |

dhArtarAShTrA raNE hanyu: tanmE kShEmataram bhavEt || 46 ||

]

[yadi dhArtarAShTrA] If the sons of Dhrtarashtra [shastra pANaya:] wield weapons [raNE hanyu: mAm] and kill me in war [ashastram] when I am unarmed [apratIkAram] and unresisting, [tanmE kShEmataram bhavEt] it would seem the better option to me.

[

sanjaya uvAcha -

Evam uktvArjuna: sankhyE rathOpastha upAvishat |

visr'jya sasharam chApam shOka samvigna mAnasa: || 47 ||

]

[sanjaya uvAcha] Sanjaya said - [Evam uktvA sankhyE] Having spoken thus on the battlefield, [arjuna:] Arjuna [visr'jya chApam sasharam] put down his bow along with his arrows and [rathOpastha upAvishat] sat down on the seat of his chariot, [shOka samvigna mAnasa:] being overwhelmed by sorrow.

In the midst of action, we sometimes worry ‘Am I going to hurt someone? Is the outcome worth it?’

Sanjaya said -

Arjuna is a person with a great mind. He is extremely sympathetic and maintains firm bonds of friendship. He is righteous and has similar-minded brothers. He was cheated by you (Dhritarashtra) many times by terrible acts - such as lodging them in a house of wax and setting fire to it. Arjuna has the Lord himself as his support. Having seen your people who were to be slain in battle, he was overcome by friendship, sympathy, fear of righteous and unrighteous behavior. He lost strength in his organs and said ‘I will never wage war’. Then, overcome by sadness at the sight of his relatives to be treated as his opponents, he threw away the bow and arrow. He sat on the edge of his chariot.

# Chapter 2

## 2-1 to 2-3

[

tam tathA kr`payAviShTam ashrupUrNAkulEkShaNam |

viShIdantamidam vAkyam uvAcha madhusUdhana: || 1 ||

kutastvA kashmalamidam viShamE samupasthitam |

anAryajuShTam asvargyam akIrtikaram arjuna || 2 ||

klaibyam mA sma gama: pArtha naitatvayi upapadyatE |

kShudram hr`daya daurbalyam tyaktvA uttiShTha parantapa || 3 ||

]

[ththA] Then, [madhusUdhana:] Krishna [idam vAkyam uvAcha] said this sentence [tam] to Arjuna, [kr`payAviShTam] who was overcome with pity, [ashrupUrNAkulEkShaNam] whose eyes were full of tears:

[Arjuna] Arjuna, [kuta: idam kashmalam samupasthitam] why has this confusion come to you [viShamE] at an inappropriate time? [anAryajuShTam] This confusion is not fit for noble people. [asvargyam] It is discomforting [akIrtikaram] and disgraceful.

[pArtha] Arjuna, [mA sma gama:] don’t entertain [klaibyam] such cowardice. [Etat] It [tvayi na upapadyatE] does not befit you. [parantapa] You are the one who destroys enemies. [tyaktvA] Give up [hr`daya daurbalyam] this weakness in your heart [uttiShTha] and rise.

When Arjuna sat down this way, Lord Krishna considered - ‘Why did this sorrow come at such an inappropriate time?’ and said ‘Abandon this weakness, which is the property of people without wisdom. It results in disgrace and does not help you in any place or situation. Get up to fight’.

## 2-4 to 2-5

[

arjuna uvAcha -

katham bhIShmamaham sankhye droNam cha madhusUdana |

ishubhi: pratiyOtsyAmi pUjArhAvarisUdana || 4 ||

gurUnahatvA hi mahAnubhAvAn

shrEyashchartum bhaikShyamapIha lOkE |

hatvArthakAmAmstu gurUnihaiva

bhunjIya bhOgAn rudhirapradigdhan || 5 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna says: [arisUdana] O slayer of enemies, [madhusUdana] Krishna, [katham pratiyOtsyAmi] how can I challenge and fight [bhIShmam droNam cha] Bhishma and Drona [ishubhi:] with my arrows [saMkhye] in war, [pUjArhau] while they actually deserve devotion?

[iha lOke] In this world, [shrEya: hi] it is better [ahatvA] to refrain from killing [mahAnubhAvAn] great [gurUn] teachers [bhaikShyam chartum api] even if it means we've to beg for a living. [hatva] Having killed [gurUn] my teachers [ihaiva] right here, [arthakAmAmstu] even when they like to enjoy wealth, [bhunjIya] how can I enjoy [bhOgAn] those pleasures, [rudhirapradigdhan] which are bathed in their blood?

Again, Arjuna is overcome by the haze between rightfulness and wrongdoing. His fear arises out of friendship and pity.

He says ‘How can I kill teachers like Bhishma and Drona, who are to be respected in reality? How can I kill them, even as they are interested in enjoying the kingdom, enjoy the same wealth that seems to be drenched in their blood? How can I sit on the same seat they had occupied before?’

## 2-6 to 2-7

[

na chaitadvidma: katarannO garIyO

yadvA jayEma yadi vA nO jayEyu: |

yAnEva hatvA na jijIvishAma:

tE\_vasthitA: pramukhE dhArtarAShtrA: || 7 ||

kArpanyadOShOpahatasvabhAva:

pr`chChAmi tvA dharmasammUDhachEtA: |

yachChrEya: syAnnishchitam brUhi tanmE

shiShyastE\_ham shAdhi mAm tvam prapannam || 8 ||

]

[yadvA jayEma] Whether victory is ours [yadi vA jayEyu:] or we are conquered- [Etat na vidma:] We don’t know [katarat garIya:] what is better [na:] for us. [yAnEva] Those very people, [hatvA] after killing whom [na jijIvishAma:] we don’t wish to live further, [tE dhArtatAShtrA:] those people of Dhritarashtra [avasthitA:] are standing [pramukhE] in front of their army.

[kArpanyadOShOpahatasvabhAva:] I am overcome with the weakness of pity, [dharmasammUDhachEtA:] and am confused about my code of conduct. [pr`chChAmi tvA] I ask you- [yat] which is [nishcitam] decidedly [shEya:] better [mE] for me? [brUhi] Tell me [tat] that. [shAdhi] Order [mAm] me, [tvam prapannam] I have taken refuge in you, [shiShya: tE aham] I am your student.

Arjuna continues-

‘Suppose we turn back after starting this war. If Dhritarashtra's people were to pursue and kill us, so be it. The way I see it, our death at the hands of those who cannot differentiate between right and wrong is better than our victory. Our victory would be tainted by unrighteousness. I am your student and I surrender to you. Tell me what you determine to be the best option.’

Saying this, Arjuna humbly took refuge at the Lord's feet.

## 2-8 to 2-9

[

na hi prapashyAmi mamApanudyAt

yachChOkam uchChOShaNam indriyANAm |

avApya bhUmAvasapatnam r`ddham

rAjyam surANAmapi chAdhipatyam || 8 ||

sanjaya uvAcha -

EvamuktvA hr`ShIkEsham guDAkEsha: parantapa: |

na yOtsyAmIti gOvindam uktvA tUShNIm babhUva ha || 9 ||

]

[na hi prapashyAmi] I really don’t see [yat apanudyAt] anything that can get rid of [mama shOkam] my sorrow, [indriyANAm uchChOShaNam] which is draining my sense organs, [avApya api] even after I obtain [Adhipatyam] control over [r`ddham rAjyam] this prosperous kingdom [surANAm cha] with its good people, [asapatnam] having no enemies [bhUmau] on this earth.

[sanjaya uvAcha] Sanjaya said- [guDAkEsha:] Arjuna, [parantapa:] the destroyer of enemies [hr`ShIkEsham Evam uktvA] having spoken this way to Krishna, [babhUva] became [tUShNIm] quiet, [uktvA] having said the words [na yOtsyAmi] ‘I shall not fight’, [gOvindam] to Krishna.

The Lord knows that Arjuna lacks knowledge about the true nature of the Self. Fighting with a dispassionate mind is a way to realize the Self - The Lord also knows that Arjuna does not realize this fact.

With feelings of friendship and pity, Arjuna does not realize that a righteous war is his supreme duty. Being confused between right and wrong, he sought refuge in the Lord. Addressing Arjuna, the Lord begins His exposition on the Science of the Self.

## 2-10

[

tamuvAcha hr`ShIkEsha: prahasanniva bhArata |

sEnayOrubhayOrmadhyE sIdamAnamidam vacha: || 10 ||

]

[bhArata] O Dhritarashtra, [hr`ShIkEsha:] Krishna [idam vacha: uvAcha] spoke the following words [prahasanniva] teasingly [tam] to Arjuna [sIdamAnam] who was overcome with grief, [ubhayO: sEnayO: madhyE] situated in the midst of the two armies.

Krishna addresses Arjuna in the next Shloka. Arjuna had sunk under sorrow and contradictory feelings. Such contradictions come into play when we do not know that the body and the Self are distinct.

Krishna opens his conversation in a manner meant to tease Arjuna. He starts with the statement ‘There was never a point in time, when I was not present’ two Shlokas hence (Chap.2#12). He finishes in the final chapter (Chap.18#66) saying ‘I will free you of all sins. Do not grieve’.

In between, He describes the real nature of the Self and the Lord along with the means to realize them: [Karmayoga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), [Jnanayoga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) and [Bhaktiyoga](#bhakti_a_defn).

## 2-11

[

ashOchyAn anvashOchastvam prajnAvAdAm cha bhAShase |

gatAsUn agatAsUn cha nAnushOchanti panDitA: || 11 ||

]

[tvam] You [anvashOcha:] feel sad [ashOchyAn] for things that you should not feel sorry about [prajaAvAdAm cha bhAShase] and you speak supposedly enlightened words. [panDitA:] Learned people [na anushOchanti] do not feel sorry for [gatAsUn] (temporary) bodies [agatAsUn] or the (everlasting) Self

Why do I hesitate?

The Lord addresses Arjuna- ‘You feel sorrow for things that you don’t need to feel sorry about. You preach about the elders in the family dying and the ancestors losing their illustrious place (Chap.1#42). You say this out of a limited knowledge about the body and the Self.

We don’t grieve in such a situation, when we know the real nature of the body (as temporary) and the Self (as everlasting). In the absence of this knowledge, contradictory thoughts arise in you - sorrowful thoughts like ‘Must I kill them’ on one side; preaching of duty and doing the ‘right’ thing on the other.

Hesitation happens when you mix-up the Self with your body and the rest of the environment.

In reality, a sense of duty and righteousness follows from the knowledge that the body is distinct from your Self. You do not know the real nature of your body, nor do you know about your Self.

The Self is separate from the body and is ever-lasting. You don’t know that performing duties (such as war) is a method to realize your Self. Fighting this war without attachment to its outcome is a way to realize the true nature of your Self.

Your Self does not depend on birth to exist, nor is it compelled by death to be destroyed. Your Self does not have birth and death. Thus, the Self is not something to feel sorry about.

Your body is without consciousness and has an end by its very nature. It’s natural that it is born and that it dies; the body is also not something to feel sorry about. That's the opinion of the Shloka.

First, listen to the nature of your Self.

## 2-12

[

na tvEvAham jAtu nAsam na tvam nEmE janAdhipA: |

na chaiva na bhaviShyAma: sarvE vayamata:param || 12 ||

]

[jAtu] At any point in time, [na] it has never been that [aham] I [nAsam] did not exist. [tvam na] It has never been that you did not exist. [imE janAdhipA: na] It has never been that all these kings did not exist. [ata: param chaiva] Even in future, [na] there will never be a time when [sarvEvayam] any one of us [na bhaviShyAma:] do not exist.

The Self is separate from the environment and your body. The Self is ever-lasting. So is the Lord.

The Lord continues- There has been no time in the past in which I, the controller of everything, have not existed. I was always in existence. You and all the people you see before you-who are knowledgeable and skilled in their own fields, are similar. There has been no point in time when you did not exist. You always existed.

There will be no point of time in the future as well, in which we will not exist. We will always exist.

There is no doubt that I, the Lord of everything, am ever-existing. In the same way, there is no doubt that all of you are ever-existing as well.

Is there anything other than the observable universe?

*In this Shloka, Krishna is explicit that all of us exist distinctly. He also makes it clear that there is something to us, other than our body.*

*This is not as obvious as it sounds, when we ask ourselves who we are. Our body is put together from atoms that are part of the universe. In time, every atom in our body would be exchanged. So, everything just seems to be a part of the physical universe, where distinctions like 'you' and 'me' are not real and purely made for convenience. Within such a belief, our consciousness seems to be an imaginary concept in the physical universe.*

Is the universe only an effect of the law governing it?

*It is improbable that the organized complexity of the universe came into being on its own. There must be a supreme law that keeps the order in the universe – a law from which all other laws are derived. This law would be knowledge and everything else would be its manifestation.*

*As an example, the law of gravitation deals with the attraction between two masses. It is just knowledge. The earth's revolution or something falling on the ground are its manifestations, they aren't really different forces.*

*Likewise, the supreme law that governs the whole universe would be knowledge and the rest of the universe - including us - would just be its manifestations. Again, distinctions like 'you' and 'me' wouldn't be real. Our observation of the physical universe is insufficient to determine this reality - the supreme law must allow us to find it, since it governs everything in the universe.*

Let’s be free of doubt in our journey to realization

*Krishna is the supreme law. In this Shloka, He states that we are distinct. He also states that we have always been present and will always be - though we see that everything in the universe keeps integrating and disintegrating.*

*This brings a fresh set of questions - Since Krishna is supreme, He has full control over us, so we are a part of Him and are completely under His control. Why should we suffer the consequences of our actions, since none of those actions are 'ours'? What are we?*

*This is where Krishna starts to clarify - starting with this Shloka, concluding in Chap.18#66. To grasp this clarity in a coherent way, we must have no doubt about the fact that we are distinct from the Lord and distinct among ourselves - though we may not know what exactly we are.*

*In the following commentary, Ramanujacharya picks up alternate interpretations of Krishna's clarification in this Shloka and knocks them off, so we are left with no doubt in our journey to grasp and embrace His teaching.*

We are distinct from the Lord. Each of us is distinct as well.

Thus, the Lord, as the owner of everything, is distinct from others, who are themselves distinct from one another - The Lord Himself has stated this fact in the Shloka. While clarifying to Arjuna, the Lord uses the phrases 'I', 'you', 'all these people' and 'we'. The opinion that they are actually the same and only appear to be separate due to some reason is incorrect - the distinction has been clarified by the Lord.

The distinction clarified by the Lord is also stated in the scriptures as a natural way of being:

In the [shvEtAshvatara], 6-13 and [kaThOpaniahat], 5-14, it is said: 'The Lord is the One permanent, conscious being who grants the wishes of the many permanent, conscious beings'.

Is there any possibility that the distinctions are a figment of our imagination?

What if these distinctions are imaginary and we believe them to be real, due to ignorance? This doesn't hold - The Lord is supreme and these are His statements. If the Lord were to be the only real entity without any attributes, unchanged and permanent, ignorance doesn't happen.

So, the Lord's statement that we are many and are distinct from the Lord couldn't have been made in ignorance.

What if knowledge and ignorance coexist in the Lord, who remains unaffected by that ignorance? The analogy given to illustrate this possibility is that of a burnt piece of cloth or paper, left undisturbed. Though it may have retained its shape, it doesn't have its original function. However, this doesn't hold either. For example, a mirage makes the illusion of water.

However, once we know that a mirage can do that, we will not reach out to fetch water from it or initiate any action based upon such an illusion again. In the same way, if all distinctions were due to ignorance and such ignorance was resolved, there wouldn't be a situation in which the Lord would explain these distinctions to Arjuna.

There's no possibility of the Lord being under the influence of ignorance at some point in the past, as mentioned in the scriptures:

[mundakOpanishat], 1-2-6 says: He is aware of everything and knows everything.

[shvEtAshvatara], 6-8 says: The Lord's strength is described in many ways. Such strength is His by nature, along with knowledge, strength and His activities.

In Chap.7#26, the Lord says: I know the beings whose time has passed, who are present now and those who will be in the future. However, there isn't anyone who knows Me.

If indeed the Lord is the only one and the rest are imaginary, the Lord would know that and so would the people He teaches. Then whom will the Lord teach that there is only one? Everyone else would be imaginary.

What if there is only one and it appears multiple - like reflections? Arjuna, receiving the teaching, is like a reflection of the Lord. Any sane person wouldn't look at his own reflection on a shining surface and clarify these distinctions to it.

What if the Lord has the knowledge and is still limited by past ignorance? That doesn't hold either, let’s see why.

Having knowledge and still being limited can be illustrated with an analogy - Suppose there is someone who sees two moons due to a defect in his vision. Even after he knows that there's only one moon, he can still see two moons. However, the defect in his sight doesn't cause any harm anymore.

This analogy doesn't hold in case of Krishna. There's no possibility of any defect returning. If at all a teacher has the complete knowledge that there is indeed a single Lord and nothing else is real, there's no possibility for him to explain anything to anyone - because they don't exist. If the teacher doesn't have such complete knowledge, he cannot teach anyway. If the teacher is imaginary, then his teachings are also imaginary. If the purpose of the teaching was to get rid of ignorance, it applies to the teachers as well. If at all these distinctions are due to ignorance and if the teacher is free of such ‘ignorance’, whom will he teach?

No, we don’t need to doubt our existence in our journey of realization and worship.

Considering what Krishna said and the contradictions that come from alternate interpretations, we are distinct from the Lord and we are distinct from one another. This is real, not ignorance.

*Next, the Lord describes what we are.*

## 2-13

[

dEhinO\_smin yathA dEhE kaumAram yauvvanam jarA |

tathA dEhAntaraprApti: dhIrastatra na muhyati || 13 ||

]

[yathA] Just as [dEhina:] the Self, tied in with a body, experiences [kaumAram] infancy, [yauvvanam] youth, [jarA] and old age [asmin dEhE] in that body, [tathA] so also [dEhaAntaraprApti:] it obtains another body. [dhIra:] A wise and steadfast person [na muhyati] does not get carried away [tatra] in this matter.

When a person gives up childhood and gets to be a youth in the same body, we reason that the person - his Self - is still the same and don't grieve that 'the Self is destroyed'.

In the same way, when the Self is done with one body and gets another one, a wise and steadfast person would reason that it isn't destroyed. Thus, every Self is ever-lasting and it’s not something to grieve about.

Whenever you are driven by outcomes, you confuse the Self with the environment.

What we must do here is just this. The ever-lasting Self is under the influence of actions it has committed - activities driven by outcomes, performed since beginning-less time. It gets associated with a body due to such influence, which is in-line with those actions. The Self is liberated from entrapment in such bodies by doing activities suited to its body, as prescribed by the Lord - without being driven by outcomes.

Even while working without being driven by outcomes, the organs of its body contact their stimuli - as always. This results in feelings such as warmth and cold, triggering experiences of comfort or discomfort. They must be endured till our duty is done.

This is elaborated in the following Shloka:

## 2-14

[

mAtrAsparshAstu kountEya shItOShNa sukha du:khadA: |

AgamApAyinO\_nityA: tAn titikShasva bhArata || 14 ||

]

[kauntEya] O son of Kunti, [bhArata] born in the Bharata clan, [mAtrAsparshA: tu] contact with the material world [shItOShNa sukha du:khadA:] gives rise to feelings of cold, heat, joy and sorrow. [AgamApAyina:] They come and go. [anityA:] They are temporary. [tAn titikShasva] Endure them with patience.

Touch, sound, form, taste and smell - all of them lie in the primary elements of matter. This matter causes many experiences within you, when it comes into contact with your organs. Organs that sense events such as touch and sound give us feelings of cold, heat, hardness, softness and so on. These feelings in turn lead to experiences of joy and sorrow. Words like ‘cold’, ‘heat’, ‘joy’ and ‘sorrow’ are used as examples to illustrate all your different experiences.

Tolerate your experiences. They are effects of past activities that were driven by outcomes.

Till your duties (such as war) are over, tolerate these experiences with courage and patience. Since they come and go, they are definitely tolerable by the courageous who are patient. They are indeed temporary: Your experience of the material world is an effect of your past deeds. Such effect binds you to the experience. As soon as the effect gets spent, the experience disappears. That's the meaning of the Shloka.

Next, the Lord explains the purpose of tolerating these experiences -

## 2-15

[

yam hi na vyathayantyEtE puruSham puruSharShabha |

samadu:kha sukham dhIram sO\_mr`tatvAya kalpatE || 15 ||

]

[puruSharShabha] O best among men, [yam puruSham] the person whom [EtE] these feelings of sorrow and joy [na vyathayanti] do not drain, [samadu:kha sukham] who views sorrow and joy equally, [dhIram] who is wise and steadfast - [sa:] such a person [amr`tatvAya kalpatE] is fit to attain liberation from downfall.

*Liberation, also known as moksha, is to be free of everything that binds us. It is to realize the true nature of our Self and its complete and utter dependence on the Lord. It is a state of eternal knowledge and infinite joy.*

Do your duties to attain liberation. Then those experiences do not drain you.

A wise and steadfast person treats the unavoidable sorrows of life on par with joy. He performs duties such as war without yearning for outcomes. He does it for liberation. The various experiences associated with duty do not affect or drain such a person. He alone will get liberation from downfalls- Not men like you who cannot tolerate this sorrow. In summary, the Self is eternal and all you need to do is work for liberation.

The Lord described the eternal nature of the Self and the temporary nature of the body, giving assurance that there is no need to grieve. Next, He elaborates the statement made before (in Chap.2#11) - ‘Wise people do not grieve for the Self or the body’:

## 2-16

[

nAsatO vidyatE bhAva: nAbhAvO vidyatE sata: |

ubhayOrapi dr`ShTOntastvanayO: tatvadarShibhi: || 16 ||

]

[asata:] The body [na vidyatE] does not have [bhAva:] a stable form. [sata:] The Self [na vidyatE] does not have [abhAva:] an unstable or perishing nature. [anta:] The distinction [ubhayO: api anayO:] between the two of them [dr`ShTa:] has been realized [tatvadarShibhi:] by those who know and can show reality as it is.

How is the Self different?

The body, which is never constant, does not have a stable form. The Self, which is unchanging, is not subject to instability. Leaders who show the path have realized the true nature of the body and the Self. The distinction between the body and the Self is realized by knowing their true nature. The word [anta] in this Shloka refers to such distinction.

The body has no consciousness. It has instability and change as its very nature. The Self, having consciousness, has stability in its nature - this is the meaning here. Unstable things are, by nature, subject to destruction. Stable things do not get destroyed.

The Self is pure and unbounded knowledge. It has been that way and will always remain so.

Here are references from other scriptures that state the same:

[vishNu purANa], 2-12-43: Sri Parashara has said thus- ‘The Self is the embodiment of knowledge. Anything other than that is not permanent.’

[vishNu purANa], 2-12-45: ‘Thus the Self, whose form is constituted by knowledge, is said to be true and unchanging. Other things do not have a true form. This way, the true nature of the Self has been told to you by me’

[vishNu purANa], 2-14-24: ‘The indestructible Self is indeed the ultimate goal to be achieved - Thus say the enlightened people. All inanimate objects are made up of things that are destructible; hence they are bound to be destroyed. There is no doubt here’

[vishNu purANa], 2-13-100: ‘Even over the ages, it does not obtain different forms, which are normally caused by the usual cause-and-effect occurrences. What is such a thing?’ (Indicates that it’s nothing that’s visible to the senses)

Even in the Gita, it is said in Chap.2#18: ‘these bodies are destructible’; in Chap.2#17: ‘know that the Self is indestructible’. The term [sattva] is used for the Self and [asattva] for the body. This Shloka doesn’t touch upon the performance of good deeds - the word [sat] does not indicate goodness here, though it is one of its meanings.

The purpose of describing the destructible and indestructible nature of the body and the Self is to eradicate any confusion in recognizing them.

It was said in Chap.2#11: ‘Wise people do not feel sorry for temporary bodies or the everlasting Self’. How can we know the everlasting nature of the Self?

## 2-17

[

avinAshi tu tadviddhi yEna sarvamidam tatam |

vinAsham avyayasya asya na kashchit kartumarhasi || 17 ||

]

[viddhi] Know that [tat] the Self [yEna] by which [idam sarvam] all this [tatam] is pervaded [avinAshi] is indestructible. [na kashchit] Nothing [kartum arhati] is capable of [vinAsham] destroying [avyayasya asya] the indestructible Self

Know without any doubt, that the Self is indestructible.

The Self is indestructible because it is subtle. It’s not made up of anything else.

The Self is conscious. It pervades all the other stuff that lacks consciousness. Know that this 'Self' is indestructible. Since it pervades everything, it is extremely subtle. It cannot be destroyed by anything, due to its pervasiveness.

Things other than the Self are gross. Things that cause destruction, such as weapons, water, fire and air overwhelm only those things that can be destroyed and achieve their decomposition.

For example, a hammer can destroy something when it strikes with speed. It shatters an object by generating shock and vibration within the object. It cannot destroy anything subtle, since there is no material to shatter. *An example of something that’s* *subtle is space- it cannot be destroyed in the way we would destroy an object*.

In this way, the Self is indestructible due to its subtle nature.

The following Shloka teaches that our bodies are destructible by their very nature.

## 2-18

[

antavanta imE dEhA nityasyOktA: sharIriNa: |

anAshina: apramEyasya tasmAt yudhyasva bhArata || 18 ||

]

[ime dEhA:] These bodies [antavanta: ukta:] are said to have an ending. [sharIriNa:] They belong to their Selves, [nityasya anAshina:] which are ever-lasting, [apramEyasya] which cannot be grasped by the sense organs.

All our bodies have an end. Destruction is in their nature.

Take a material thing like a pot, for example. A pot is composed of various different elements. Due to this, it wears out and is eventually seen to perish.

The body is a collection of the five elements - air, energy, earth, water and space. The body exists to let the everlasting Self experience the outcomes of activities. These experiences happen according to the specifications listed in the scriptures, such as 'virtue results from virtuous deeds' ([brihadAraNyaka upanishad], 4-4-5). The body perishes after the effects of the activities are spent.

The Self is never destroyed. Since the Self is not gross, it cannot be grasped by our sense organs. The Self is not available to experience, as our sense organs are only capable of sensing gross things. The Self is in the form of subtle knowledge.

The Self brings awareness – the power to experience and know.

In Chap.13#1, it is said ‘Whoever knows this, is said to know the body as the field of action’. Moreover, the Self is not made up of other things. It is experienced everywhere in the body as ‘I know’. It’s experienced as the knowledge of the body itself and other things- as a single, subtle form.

The subtle Self is not like the body and other material things. Material things differ in form at different points in space.

Thus, the Self is ever-lasting by virtue of having a single form, not being subject to change, being the knower and being pervasive.

In contrast, the body is a collection of other elements and is subject to growth and deformation. It is created only for the Self to experience the outcome of activity. It takes on multiple forms. Due to these reasons, it is subject to destruction. The body is pervaded by the Self.

The body is subject to destruction by its very nature. The Self is by nature everlasting. Hence, neither is to be grieved over. Knowing this, be with courage; bear the inevitable effects of weapons on your body and on others. Perform the act of war without expectations regarding the outcome of your actions, with the intent of gaining freedom from birth and death ([moksha](#Moksha)).

## 2-19

[

ya Enam vEtti hantAram yashchainam manyatE hatam |

ubhau tau na vijAnItO nAyam hanti na hanyatE || 19 ||

]

[ya:] The one who [vEtti] knows [Enam] this Self [hantAram] as something which can kill, [yashcha] and the one who [manyatE] assumes that [hatam] it is killed- [ubhau tau] both of them [na vijAnIta:] don’t know [nAyam hanti] that the Self does not kill, [na hanyatE] nor can it be killed.

People who believe that the Self (whose qualities are described above) can kill, or in any way be a cause for killing, as well as those who believe that it can be killed due to any cause, do not know.

Due to the facts mentioned before, also due to the fact that the Self is indestructible, it cannot be a cause for killing. The Self cannot be killed either, due to the same facts.

The verb 'kill' has the Self as the object. It refers to the act of separating the Self from the body. The fact expressed is that the Self cannot be killed. In that case, what about the scriptures that say 'One must not cause harm to animals', 'A student of the scriptures must not be killed'? These statements forbid certain actions, referring to ‘killing’ in the sense of separating the body from the Self.

## 2-20

[

na jAyatE mriyatE vA kadAchit

nAyam bhUtvA bhavitA vA na bhUya: |

ajO nitya: shAshvatO\_yam purANO

na hanyatE hanyamAnE sharIrE || 20 ||

]

[ayam] The Self [kadAchit na jAyatE mriyatE vA] is not born and never dies [ayam] It [na] has not [bhUtvA] come into being, [bhUya: na bhavitA vA] neither will it ever cease to be. [ayam] It is [aja:] without birth, [nitya:] ever-existing, [shAshwata:] everlasting in a single form, [purANa:] existing fresh from the beginning-less past. [na hanyatE] The Self is not killed [sharIrE hanyamAnE] in a body that inevitably gets dead.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, the Self is indestructible. It isn’t subjected to the effects of nature and is not subject to birth and death. Birth and death are natural to inanimate objects- that’s the message conveyed in the Shloka.

'It is born, it will die': While birth and death are experienced all the time in bodies belonging to each one of us, they do not touch the Self at any time. The concepts of coming into being and ceasing to exist do not apply to the Self.

It means the Self has not come into being at the time of creation (at the beginning of the [kalpa](#kalpa_definition)), nor will it cease to exist at the time of destruction. Brahma, the principal engineer of the universe, is born and will eventually die. So do all the other great powers. Even in them, birth and death do not affect the Self.

In this way, the Self in each body is without birth. It is everlasting, doesn’t get destroyed and isn’t related to the unending series of cause-effect changes in the environment. Though ancient, the Self still seems to be new. It is experienced as though it had no past - this is the meaning expressed here. Thus, the Self is not killed inside the body that perishes.

*The beginning of time as we know it starts at the time of* [*creation*](#CosmicInflation_stages)*. The ‘beginning-less time’ spans across cycles of creation and destruction. In this way, it has no beginning.*

## 2-21

[

vEda avinAshinam nityam ya Enam ajam avyayam |

katham sa puruSha: pArtha kam ghAtayati hanti kam || 21 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [ya:] whoever [vEda] knows [Enam] the Self [avinAshinam] as being indestructible, [ajam] without birth, [avyayam] without change in form [nityam] and everlasting, [katham] how can [sa: puruSha:] such a person [kam ghAtayati] hurt anyone [kam hanti] or kill anyone?

The Self is indestructible, being without birth and without wearing out. How can anyone with this awareness hurt any body's Self? Or kill and destroy anyone? How can he even be the initiator of the killing? - That is the message here. The feeling of sadness, such as 'I will hurt the Self within them, I will kill them' - is caused by ignorance of the real nature of the Self. That is the assertion here.

This gives rise to a doubt – Even when we know that death is merely the separation of the Self from the body, isn’t the disintegration of the body something to grieve about? After all, the body is a medium to enjoy the good things in life. When the Self discards its body, isn’t it a sorrowful event? This doubt is addressed in the next Shloka.

## 2-22

[

vAsAmsi jIrNAni yathA vihAya navAni gr`hNAti narO\_parANi |

tathA sharIrANi vihAya jIrNAni anyAni samyAti navAni dEhI || 22 ||

]

[yathA] Just as [nara:] a person [vihAya] discards [jIrNAni vAsAmsi] worn-out clothes [gr`hNAti] and procures [navAni aparANi] other new ones, [tathA] so also [dEhI] the Self, which owns the body, [vihAya] discards [jIrNAni sharIrANi] worn-out bodies [samyAti] and takes on [anyAni navAni] other new bodies.

The Self owns different bodies over time. It remains unchanged even as the body keeps changing.

People who give up the body while performing their duty of war will obtain a new body, which is superior to the one they sacrificed. This is known from the scriptures, just as discarding worn-out clothes and wearing new ones is an occasion of joy indeed.

Again, the statement made before in Chap.2#17: ‘Know that the one, by which all this is pervaded, is indestructible’ is explained next. To make it easier to comprehend, the concept of the Self being indestructible is strengthened here.

## 2-23 to 2-24

[

nainam Chindati shastrANi nainam dahati pAvaka: |

na chainam klEdayantyApO na shOShayati mAruta: || 23 ||

achChEdyO\_yamadAhyOyam aklEdyO\_shOShya Eva cha |

nityassarvagata: sthANu: achalO\_yam sanAtana: || 24 ||

]

[shastrANi] Weapons [na Chindati] do not cut [Enam] the Self. [pAvaka:] Fire [na dahati] does not burn [Enam] it. [Apa:] Water [na klEdayanti] does not wet [Enam] it. [mAruta:] Wind [na shOShayati] does not dry [Enam] it.

[ayam] This Self [achChEdya:] cannot be cut, [ayam adAhya:] cannot be burnt, [aklEdya:] cannot be wet, [ashOShya Eva cha] and cannot be dried either. [ayam] The Self [nitya:] is ever-lasting. [sarvagata:] It pervades everything. [sthANu:] It is stable, [sanAtana:] having been in existence forever.

Weapons, fire, water and wind - these cannot affect (respectively cut, burn, wet and dry) the Self. That's because the Self pervades everything by its nature. By its nature, it is subtler than all other things. The effects of cutting, burning, wetting and drying are achieved only when the material world overwhelms something.

Hence the Self cannot be overwhelmed. It is ever-lasting, stable, ancient and un-assailable. It has been in existence forever.

## 2-25

[

avyaktO\_yam achintyO\_yam avikAryO\_yamuchyatE |

tasmAdEvam viditvainam nAnushOchitumarhasi || 25 ||

]

[ayam] This Self [avyakta:] cannot be distinguished by experiences of the sense organs. [ayam achintya:] It cannot be realized via any thought process. [ayam avikArya: uchyatE] It is said to be of unchanging form. [tasmAt] Thus, [Enam viditvA] knowing this fact, [anushOchitum na arhasi] you don’t need to feel any sorrow for the Self.

The Self is not experienced with the kind of 'proof of existence', using which we experience sensory objects. Unlike material objects, the Self cannot be split into parts either. It cannot be understood in terms of things that we can sense.

The Self is distinct from all the objects we experience. The Self cannot be deduced by thought either: Since it is distinct from everything we experience, we cannot think about it in terms of any material characteristics. The Self is not subject to any change of form.

With the knowledge of the Self as explained above, you don’t need to feel sorrow for it.

## 2-26

[

atha chainam nityajAtam nityam vA manyasE mr'tam |

tathApi tvam mahAbAhO naivam shOchitumarhasi || 26 ||

]

[atha cha] In an other way, [manyasE] if you assume that [Enam] the Self [nityajAtam] is something that's always subject to birth, [vA] or [manyasE] you assume that [nityam mr'tam] it's something that is always subject to death, [tathApi] even then, [mahAbAhO] O powerful one, [tvam] you [na arhasi] need not [Evam shOchitum] feel sorrow this way.

On the other hand, let’s suppose you didn’t hear the above illustrations that the Self is different from the body. Let’s say you believe the body to be your Self, recycled across births and deaths as a part of the environment. Even then it is inappropriate to feel so much sorrow.

Creation and destruction are inevitable for the body, since it is subject to the effects of the environment by its very nature.

## 2-27

[

jAtasya hi dhruvO mr`tyu: dhruvam janma mr`tasya cha |

tasmAdaparihAryE\_rthE na tvam shOchitumarhasi || 27 ||

]

[mr`tyu: dhruvO hi] Just as death is definite [jAtasya] for one who is born, [dhruvam janma] birth (in another form) is definite [mr`tasya cha] for one who is dead. [tasmAt] Hence, [aparihAryE arthE] this inevitable phenomenon [tvam shOchitum na arhasi] does not qualify as something for you to feel sorry about.

The destruction of anything that's born is certain - This inevitability is evident.

Also, it is inevitable that something that has been destroyed comes into existence. How is it possible, that something that has been destroyed is born again?

To answer the question, consider this: For things that are perceived to exist, their creation is evident. For things that don’t seem to exist, it’s not evident. Terms like creation and destruction describe different states of an object that has existence.

As an analogy, things that do exist, such as threads, when put together, form something that’s called cloth. The same thing applies even to things that don't seem to exist - The thread changed its context, it did not cease to exist.

When things like clothes are created, nothing else is observed, except that threads are put together in a pattern. Merely by a transaction, or by using a different name, or by using it for a different purpose, the thought that new matter has been created is not appropriate. Thus, things like creation and destruction are different states of an existing object.

'Destruction' is said to happen when an object, which is in the state called 'created', obtains a state that seems opposite to its created state. For example, mud can exist in different states such as 'dough-like-mass', as a 'pot', as ‘pieces’ and as ‘powder’.

In the same manner, any object that’s affected by its environment inevitably undergoes a series of transformations. For an object that exists in a certain state, obtaining the next state is its destruction. For the object in the succeeding state, obtaining that state itself is its creation. Thus, it’s inevitable that any object that's affected by its environment undergoes a series of creations and destructions: There is no need to feel sorry about this.

Even the slightest sorrow that may arise on seeing an object change from one state to another does not arise in the case of humans and other beings – The Lord states that next.

## 2-28

[

avyaktAdIni bhUtAni vyaktamadhyAni bhArata |

avyakta nidhanAnyEva tatra kA paridEvanA || 28 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [bhUtAni] living beings [avyaktAdIni] are previously in a state that cannot be perceived. [vyaktamadhyAni] In-between, they can be perceived. [avyakta nidhanAnyEva] After death, they cannot be perceived anyway. [kA paridEvanA] What’s the sorrow [tatra] over there?

Living beings such as humans are not perceived in their previous state, before birth. They are perceived to exist as 'human' in the 'middle' states and are not perceivable in their succeeding state after death. They will exist as per their nature. Hence, there is no cause for sorrow. Even in the argument that the body and the Self are identical, there is no cause for sorrow.

The Lord explained the amazing nature of the Self and clarified that it’s distinct from the body. Next, He says that it’s rare to find someone with definite knowledge of the Self, who talks about it, listens and is in line with the listening.

## 2-29

[

Ashcharyavat pashyati kashchidEnam

Ashcharyavat vadati tathaiva chAnya: |

Ashcharyavat chainam anya: shr`NOti

shrutvApyEnam vEda na chaiva kashchit || 29 ||

]

[kashchit] Someone [pashyati] has a glimpse of [Enam] this Self [Ashcharyavat] and is astonished. [tathaiva] Just so, [anya:] another [vadati] speaks about it, [Ashcharyavat] astonished. [anya:] Another [shr`NOti] listens [Enam] about the Self, [Ashcharyavat] amazed. [shrutvApi] Even after listening, [na kashchit] no one [vEda Eva cha] knows it in its real form.

The Self is amazing and is unlike anything except itself. Its qualities have been mentioned before. One among many beings will see the Self by virtue of great perseverance, being rid of misdeeds and by virtuous actions.

Nobody knows the Self as it really is. This Shloka illustrates three ways of experiencing the Self - seeing, speaking and listening. Even through sight, speech and listening, it is extremely difficult to comprehend the Self in its actual form, to speak or to listen about it, as it really is.

## 2-30

[

dEhI nityamavadhyO\_yam dEhE sarvasya bhArata |

tasmAt sarvANi bhUtAni na tvam shOchitumarhasi || 30 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [ayam dEhI] this Self, which is the owner of the body [nityam avadhya:] is ever indestructible [sarvasya dEhE] inside every body. [tasmAt] Hence, [tvam] you [na arhasi] don’t need [shOchitum] to feel sad [sarvaNi] about all [bhUtAni] beings.

It should be learnt that the Self owns the body, is situated inside the body and is never killed, even though everyone's body perishes. That holds even for the bodies of [gods](#gods_and_other_powers).

Thus, the nature of the Self in all beings is the same and everlasting due to the characteristics mentioned above. It doesn’t matter if those beings have different forms, be they [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) or just stationary organisms. Any differences in form and other temporary characteristics relate to the body alone. Hence, you don’t need to feel sad regarding any of the beings, including the Gods. Leave alone Bhishma and others.

## 2-31

[

svadharmam api chAvEkShya na vikampitumarhasi |

dharmyAt hi yuddhAt shrEyO\_nyat kShatriyasya na vidyatE || 31 ||

]

[api cha] Moreover, [avEkShya] considering [svadharmam] your own code of conduct, [na arhasi] it is not appropriate for you [vikampitum] to be afraid. [kShatriyasya] For a warrior, [anyat na vidyatE] there is nothing else [shrEya:] more appropriate than [dharmyAt hi yuddhAt] a righteous war.

Moreover, being a warrior, you must recognize this war as your duty. Even though it will cause the death of many people, it is not appropriate that you are overcome with fear.

For a warrior, the words ‘duty’ and ‘righteousness’ imply there can be nothing better than a war fought for justice. As said in Chap.18#43: ‘Valor, energy, resolve, fitness and not running away in war characterize an administrator's activities born out of inherent nature’.

In this war, those who have died will obtain better bodies, as said before in Chap.2#22: ‘Just as a person discards old worn-out clothes and acquires new ones’. It is similar to a doctor using his instruments for the purpose of curing a disease.

## 2-32

[

yardr`chChayA chOpapannam svargadvAram apAvr`tam |

sukhina: kShatriyA pArtha labhantE yuddhamIdr`sham || 32 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [kShatriyA:] warriors [sukhina:] who are fortunate [labhantE] get [yuddHam] a war [Idr`sham] such as this one, [svargadvAram apAvr`tam] which is like an open door to heaven, [upapannam] obtained [yardr`chChayA] without even asking.

We get into situations by the will of the Lord. He is always with us.

Fortunate and virtuous warriors get to fight such a war. You have got this fight without even asking. It is a perfect path to attain unsurpassed joy.

## 2-33

[

atha chEtvamimam dharmyam saMgrAmam na kariShyasi |

tata: svadharmam kIrtim cha hitvA pApamavApsyasi || 33 ||

]

[atha] Even then, [tvam na kariShyasi chEt] if you do not perform [imam] this [dharmyam saMgrAmam] righteous war, [pApam avApsyasi] you will incur misfortune, [tata: hitvA] having lost [svadharmam] your conduct [kIrtim cha] and your reputation.

To fight is the duty of a warrior. If you refuse to fight this ongoing war due to the effect of your emotions, you would abandon the duty that you began. You lose the incomparable joy that is the fruit of duty. You also miss the unmatched fame you gain by a victory. Instead, you only beget misfortune.

## 2-34

[

akIrtim chApi bhUtAni kathayiShyanti tE\_vyayAm |

sambhAvitasya chAkIrti: maraNAdatirichyatE || 34 ||

]

[apicha] Moreover, [bhUtAni] everyone [kathayiShyanti] will talk about [tE] your [avyayAm akIrtim] ever-lasting ill repute. [sambhAvitasya cha] For a respectable person, [akIrti:] infamy [atirichyatE] is more undesirable [maraNAt] than death.

It's not that you would only be deprived of unparalleled joy and fame. The stigma of ‘Arjuna ran away at the beginning of the war itself’ will stick to you for all time, and at all places. All people, both the capable and the incapable ones, will say this.

If your response to this is ‘So what?’, then know this: You are a person esteemed for qualities such as bravery, valor and daring. Dishonor comes to people like you, when you associate with the opposite qualities. Such dishonor is even worse than death. The opinion expressed in this Shloka is - death is indeed better, when compared to such dishonor.

## 2-35

[

bhayAt raNAt uparatam manyantE tvAm mahArathA: |

yEShAm cha tvam bahumatO bhUtvA yAsyasi lAghavam || 35 ||

]

[mahArathA:] Great leaders [manyantE] would be of the opinion that [tvAm] you [raNAt uparatam] turned back from war [bhayAt] due to fear. [lAghavam yAsyasi] You will earn disrepute [yEShAm] among those whom [tvam] you [bahumata: bhUtvA] hold in high esteem.

Great leaders like Karna and Duryodhana previously regarded you as a brave enemy. You will earn disrepute as a person who gave up and surrendered easily, when faced with this battle. Those great leaders will think of you as someone who stepped down from battle due to fear. To your valiant enemies, it will seem a fact that you retreated due to fear, rather than feelings of friendship towards your relatives.

## 2-36

[

avAchya vAdAmshcha bahUn vadiShyanti tavAhitA: |

nindantastava sAmarthyam tatO du:khataram nu kim || 36 ||

]

[tava ahitA:] Your enemies [nindanta:] will insult [tava sAmarthyam] your capability [vadiShyanti cha] and they will speak [avAchyavAdAmshcha bahUn] many unspeakable things. [du:khataram kim nu] Indeed, what can be more sorrowful [tata:] than that?

‘How was this Arjuna able to stand in front of us even for a moment? His strength is only before others’ - Thus, your enemies, the sons of Dhritarashtra will speak repeatedly to insult your strength. This is not supposed to be said of valiant people. What could be more sorrowful for you? Indeed, you know that death is better than listening to those words.

As He says in the next Shloka: For a brave warrior, killing enemies or being killed by the enemies - both lead to glory.

## 2-37

[

hatO vA prApsyasE svargam jitvA vA bhOkShyasE mahIm |

tasmAt uttiShTha kauntEya yuddhAya kr`tanishchaya: || 37 ||

]

[hatO vA] Even if you get killed, [svargam prApsyasE] you will attain heaven. [jitvA vA] If you win the war, [mahIm bhOkShyasE] you will enjoy your kingdom. [tasmAt] Hence, [kauntEya] Arjuna, [uttiShTha] get up [yuddhAya kr`tanishchaya:] with the determination to fight.

Duty is superior to hesitation and inaction – irrespective of the outcome.

If you are killed by your enemy in a righteous war, that is reason enough for you to attain unmatched glory. If you kill your enemies, you shall rule your kingdom without any obstacles. The duty of war is a way to attain unmatched glory, when it is performed without attachment to its outcome. You shall attain such glory.

Hence, make up your mind that the work of war is a means to attain the ultimate goal a person is meant to achieve: [moksha](#Moksha). Get up for that cause. Being the son of Kunti, this alone is the appropriate action for you - that is the opinion expressed here.

In the next Shloka, He describes the manner in which a person intent on attaining [moksha](#Moksha) must conduct war:

## 2-38

[

sukhadu:khE samE kr`tvA lAbhAlAbhau jayAjayau |

tatO yuddhAya yujyasva naivam pApamavApsyasi || 38 ||

]

[sukadu:khE] Happiness and sadness, [lAbhAlAbhau] profit and loss, [jayAjayau] victory and defeat - [samE kr`tvA] count them all equally and [tata:] in this way, [yuddhAya yujyasva] engage in war. [Evam] With this, [pApam na avApsyasi] you will not beget misfortune.

Know the Self to be distinct from the body in the manner described, untouched by all the characteristics of the body. Know it to exist eternally. Knowing this, do not let your intellect be deformed by events caused by the usage of weapons. They are inevitable in battle, accompanied by joy and sorrow, loss and gain, victory and defeat.

Perform this war merely as your duty. Don’t be swayed by attachment to any possible outcome. By performing action this way, you will not beget misfortune - meaning you’re not trapped by sorrow in this world. You shall be free of material attachments and all limitations in the world that inhibit you.

After preaching the true nature of the Self in this way, Krishna starts to describe the pre-requisite to realize the true nature of the Self - Karmayoga, which is a way to attain [moksha](#Moksha).

## 2-39

[

EShA tE\_bhihitA sAnkhyE buddhiryOgE tvimAm shr`Nu |

buddhyAyuktO yayA pArtha karmabandham prahAsyasi ||39 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [EShA buddhi:] this learning [sAnkhyE] about the knowledge of the Self [abhihitA] has been given [tE] to you. [yayA buddhyA yukta:] With this knowledge [karmabandham prahAsyasi] you will overthrow your bonds, which are imposed by your past actions. [shr`Nu] Listen [imAm] to this teaching [yOgE] in the form of actions that are done to attain [moksha](#Moksha).

The word [sankhyA] means ‘intellect’ – the capability to reason logically. The method to realize the Self through the intellect is called [sAnkhyA] over here.

The teaching required to get the nature of the Self has been given to you, starting from (Chap.2#12): ‘There was never a point in time, when I was not present’ and ending with (Chap.2#30): ‘Hence, you do not need to feel sad regarding any of the beings’. The word [yOga] in this Shloka refers to the work we do with the knowledge of the Self. Such work is a predecessor to the realization of the Self. It acts as a means to achieve [moksha](#Moksha).

Outcomes of our actions do not matter when we’re aware of the Self.

In one of the following Shlokas (Chap.2#49), it is said-’Ordinary action that’s driven by desire is far inferior to actions that are done with the knowledge of the Self. That’s [buddhiyOga], the technique of working with the knowledge of the Self for the purpose of attaining [moksha](#Moksha), without attachment towards the outcome’.

Now, listen to the knowledge required in applying this technique. With this knowledge, you shall free yourself by your actions. This means freedom from the bonds and limitations of this world that inhibit you.

The Shlokas following the next one impart knowledge required to carry out action that leads to [moksha](#Moksha). The next Shloka explains the greatness of such action.

## 2-40

[

nEha abhikramanAshOsti pratyavAyO na vidyatE |

swalpam apyasya dharmasya trAyatE mahatO bhayAt || 40 ||

]

[iha] While working without attachment towards the outcome, [abhikrama nAsha: na asti] something that has been started is not destroyed; [pratyavAya: na vidyatE] something that has been started, but is left incomplete doesn’t incur blame. [swalpam api] Even a little [asya dharmasya] of this conduct (of working without attachments) [trAyatE] will save you [mahatO bhayAt] from the great fears of this world.

The technique called [karmayOga] is about working without attachment to outcomes. In such activity, there is no destruction for what has begun. 'Destruction' over here refers to the loss of belief that your action will achieve its desired result at the end.

Even if an action that has begun is terminated without being complete, it's still not useless. In this termination, there is no element of blame either.

When outcomes don’t matter, we can’t do anything wrong.

The conduct of working without attachment is called [[karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)]. Even a small amount of this conduct shall save you from great fear- the fear arising out of attachment to various things in this world.

This opinion has also been stated in one of the following Shlokas (Chap.6#40): ‘There is no destruction for this, either now or in the future’. On the other hand, actions that are attached to worldly, material goals do not yield fruit if abandoned in the middle. Moreover, abandoning such actions also incurs blame.

Some of our intentions make us do things to achieve our material desires. On the other hand, there is the intention to achieve [liberation](#Moksha), which makes us work towards that goal. In the next Shloka, Krishna explains that the intention to achieve [liberation](#Moksha) is superior to thoughts that go into satisfying other desires.

## 2-41

[

vyavasAyAtmikA buddhirEkEha kurunandana |

bahushAkhA hyanantAshcha buddhayO\_vyavasAyinAm || 41 ||

]

[kurunandana] Arjuna, [iha] here, [buddhi:] the intention [vyavasAyAtmikA] that perseveres to determine the nature of the Self [EkA hi] is indeed one. [avyavasAyinAm] Those that do not have such determination [bahushAkhA:] are of many types [anantA: cha] and innumerable.

The Lord says 'Here, the intention that perseveres to determine the nature of the Self is indeed one'. The word 'here' refers to the entire field of conscious activities. In this field, He says 'the intention that perseveres to determine the nature of the Self is indeed one'- meaning, the intention of a person who works to attain [moksha](#Moksha) is an intent that has determination. The determination is to ascertain the true nature of the Self.

On the other hand, actions that are driven by desires are without such resolve. When we are driven by desires, it's just beneficial to know the distinction between the body and the Self. It’s not necessary to realize the true nature of the Self. Even without ascertaining the real nature of the Self, it's possible to ask for desirable things, achieve them and enjoy them- there is nothing to oppose this.

The 'focused intention to achieve liberation' is said to be ‘one’, by virtue of having a single goal. A person who has the determination to achieve liberation would initiate all activity for the one end-result called [moksha](#Moksha). Hence, given the same wisdom behind these activities, there is a single intent that drives all the actions.

As an analogy, take the intention to make money for the sake of money itself. There may be many different activities that can make money. The wisdom driving those activities is the practical awareness of capital. The intention behind all those activities is the same.

People without the determination to achieve liberation are ruled by actions to achieve various outcomes, such as children, wealth, food or a place in heaven. Due to the countless variety of outcomes, the intentions that drive those actions are uncountable as well. Also, they branch out variously in the form of differences and side-effect within the same goal. Hence, the intentions of people who do not have such determination have many branches and are countless.

It doesn’t really matter what drives your action; Do it for the Lord.

This is the summary: Give up all outcomes that are said to be obtained from daily activities. Involve in all activity with the same wisdom – the practical awareness that work is done for the sake of the Lord. Have [moksha](#Moksha) as the only goal. Even in case of actions driven by desire, done in accordance with your occupation, give up the outcomes associated with them. They are to be done according to your capability along with your daily activities, for the purpose of attaining [moksha](#Moksha).

In the next three Shlokas, the Lord criticizes those who perform desire-driven activities with attachment towards their outcomes.

## 2-42 to 2-44

[

yAmimAm puShpitAm vAcham pravadanti avipashchita: |

vEdavAdaratA: pArtha nAnyadastIti vAdina: || 42 ||

kAmAtmAna: svargaparA: janma karma phala pradAm |

kriyAvishEShabahulAm bhOgaishvarya gatim prati ||43 ||

bhOgaishvarya prasaktAnAm tayApahr`ta chEtasAm |

vyavasAyAtmikA buddhi: samAdhau na vidhIyatE || 44 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [avipashchita:] people who know a little, [vEdavAdaratA:] who give importance to statements in the Vedas dealing with desire-driven actions, [nAnyadastIti vAdina:] who say there is nothing else, [kAmAtmAna:] who indulge in their desires, [svargaparA:] who consider heaven as the ultimate goal - [puShpitAm vAcham pravadanti] such people speak in flowery language [janma karma phala pradAm kriyAvishEShabahulAm] about diverse and unfocussed activities that are supposed to give various outcomes like the birth of a child, [bhOgaishvarya gatim prati] with the goal as enjoyment and material wealth.

[vyavasAyAtmikA buddhi:] The intention to determine the nature of the Self [samAdhau na vidhIyatE] is not present in the minds [tayA apahr`ta chEtasAm] of those who are carried away by such speech, [bhOgaishvarya prasaktAnAm] who are interested in enjoyment and wealth.

There are people who speak about results in life. Their words are like flowers, beautiful on the outside. They have certain characteristics: They know a little and speak about paths that bring about enjoyment and wealth; they are interested in those parts of the Vedas that deal with enjoyment; due to their attachment towards enjoyment, they say nothing else exists. They indulge in their desires, and are driven by them. They think enjoyment is the ultimate goal.

After experiencing the high life, they again experience birth and commit various actions - this is where their ideas will lead. Due to ignorance, they preach activities that aim to beget enjoyment and wealth.

There are people who are misled by all this. Their mind is abducted by such preaching and they end up indulging in enjoyment and wealth. The intention to determine the true nature of the Self is absent in such people. Their minds will never have the knowledge required for carrying out actions that lead to [moksha](#Moksha)- actions which lead to the true nature of the Self.

Hence, a person who desires [moksha](#Moksha) must not associate with desire-driven actions.

Now, some questions arise: The Vedas deal with the science of your Self with an affection that’s greater than thousands of parents. Why is it that the Vedas also preach actions that yield minor enjoyments, which further the cycle of re-birth? Is it appropriate to say that the outcomes prescribed in the Vedas are to be given up? Answers to these questions come in the following Shlokas:

## 2-45 to 2-46

[

traiguNya viShayA vEdA nistraiguNyO bhavArjuna |

nirdvandvO nitya sattvasthO niryOgakShEma AtmavAn || 45 ||

yAvAnartha udapAnE sarvata: samplutOdakE |

tAvAn sarvEShu vEdEShu brAhmaNasya vijAnata: || 46 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [vEdA:] the Vedas [traiguNya viShayA:] deal with those who have the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) in abundance. [nistraiguNyO bhava] Be a person who is not drowned by an excess of these three qualities. [nirdvandva:] Be free from the dualities of the material world. [nitya sattvastha:] Be constantly situated in an abundance of the quality of [sattva](#sattva). [niryOgakShEma:] Do not care about protecting what you have and don’t bother to acquire what you don’t. [AtmavAn] Know the nature of your Self.

[vijAnata: brAhmaNasya] A man of wisdom seeking God [yAvAnartha: tAvAn] will find as much use [sarvEShu vEdEShu] in all the Vedas, [yAvAn artha: tAvAn] as one will find use [udapAnE] in a lake, [sarvata: samplutOdakE] that is full of water in every respect.

Three qualities influence all things that are created: [sattva](#sattva) (wisdom, virtue, truth), [rajas](#rajas) (passion, emotion: cause of great activity) and [tamas](#tamas) (ignorance, darkness).

Some of us are associated with abundant amounts of these three qualities. The Vedas deal with this subject: With great compassion, they preach activities that are suitable for those of us with a prominent influence of ignorance ([tamas](#tamas)), for those in whom passion ([rajas](#rajas)) is prominent and for those in whom wisdom and virtue ([sattva](#sattva)) are prominent.

In case the Vedas did not preach the means to achieve goals suitable to our nature, we would get turned away from [moksha](#Moksha), which is the goal of people with wisdom ([sattva](#sattva)). We get turned away due to the influence of passion and ignorance ([rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas)). When passion and ignorance get a hold on us, we wouldn’t know what’s appropriate to achieve our desires and would become helpless. We would be overcome by confusion as to what has to be attained and what not.

That's why the Vedas deal with all the above [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

However, do not be a person influenced by all the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). You are now situated in wisdom ([sattva](#sattva)). Keep progressing in the same way. Do not allow a mix of the three qualities control you. 'Be free from dualities' by donning an attitude of disregard for all material things, standing in wisdom ([sattva](#sattva)) always, not being influenced by the other two qualities.

The world is full of passion and ignorance. Don’t let them control you.

What is the way to achieve this? Let go of the urge to acquire things that don’t contribute to the realization of the Self. Let go of protecting what you have acquired. Be someone who is interested in the quest to find the true nature of the Self.

When you conduct yourself this way, you will rid yourself of the powerful influence of passion and ignorance ([rajas](#rajas)and [tamas](#tamas)) and your wisdom ([sattva](#sattva)) will grow.

Also, everything said in the Vedas is not applicable to everyone. A thirsty person can only drink so much water from a lake as he needs. Even though the lake is full of water, it was built with many purposes in mind. Just as a person will not drink the whole lake, a person desiring [moksha](#Moksha) will only take the part that helps him attain [moksha](#Moksha), not the entire content of the Vedas.

In the next Shloka, The Lord says that only so much can apply to a person desiring [moksha](#Moksha), who is situated in the property of wisdom ([sattva](#sattva)):

## 2-47

[

karmaNyEvAdhikArastE mA phalEShu kadAchana |

mA karma phala hEturbhU: mA tE sangO\_stu akarmaNi || 47 ||

]

[tE adhikAra:] You have authority [karmaNi Eva] only in action, [mA phalEShu kadAchana] never in the outcome of those actions. [mA bhU:] Do not consider yourself to be [hEtu:] the reason for [karma phala] outcomes arising from those actions. [mA tE sanga: astu] May you not be attached [akarmaNi] to inaction.

*The word ‘hEtu’ is translated to ‘the reason for’. The ‘reason for’ something is in two ways: As the cause, or as a motive or purpose. Both ways hold here: Outcomes of actions don’t happen for your purpose. You aren’t the only cause behind them either.*

You have the authority to initiate activity. You are not the one who makes things [happen](#actions_and_happenings).

Your authority lies in action alone. Actions could be routine activities that you do daily, or work done to achieve your desires. Always be situated in the property of wisdom ([sattva](#sattva)) and have a longing for [moksha](#Moksha). Never do you have authority over the outcome associated with actions.

Everything we do while expecting a desired outcome is binding in nature. Actions done without expectation for outcomes, which are done as a way to worship Me are liberating. They will support you in achieving [moksha](#Moksha). Do not consider yourself to be the [cause of the outcome](#actions_and_happenings) of your actions.

While you yearn for [liberty](#Moksha), you are situated in the quality of [sattva](#sattva). Do not consider yourself as the one who makes things [happen](#actions_and_happenings), even though you initiated the action. For instance, even in case of simple activities such as eating, don’t consider yourself to be the cause or the purpose of getting rid of hunger.

Trust the cause of both actions and outcomes to be within the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) or within Me, the Lord of everything. A future Shloka (Chap.3#30) elaborates this. Apply this concept and do your work.

Do not avoid activity.

Do not be attracted towards the concept of not doing anything. Don’t avoid work in the way you said 'I will not fight' (Chap.2#9). Always be associated with activity in the manner described.

Next, the Lord clarifies this same concept-

## 2-48

[

yOgastha: kuru karmANi sangam tyaktvA dhananjaya |

siddhyasiddhyO: samO bhUtvA samatvam yOga uchyatE || 48 ||

]

[dhananjaya] Arjuna, [karmANi kuru] do your activity [yOgastha:] situated in yoga. [sangam tyajtvA] Giving up attachments, [siddhyasuddhyO: samO bhUtvA] having the same attitude towards success and failure. [samatvam] This kind of equanimity [yOga uchyatE] is called yoga.

Involve in activities like this war while being situated in yoga. Give up attachment towards the kingdom, your relatives and other things. Consider success - like a victory in battle and any failure in achievement as being equal.

Here, the consideration that success and failure are equal is called yoga. Yoga is impassioned thought. When you consider success and failure to be equal, you are 'situated in yoga'.

Next, He explains why this is emphasized so many times.

## 2-49

[

dUrENa hyavaram karma buddhiyOgAt dhananjaya |

buddhau sharaNamanvichCha kr`paNA: phalahEtava: ||49 ||

]

[dhananjaya] Arjuna, [karma] ordinary, desire-driven actions [dUrENa hi avaram] are highly inferior to [buddhiyOgAt] actions done with the knowledge of the Self, without attachment to outcomes. [sharaNam anvichCha] Take refuge [buddau] in that knowledge. [phalahEtava:] Those who think that they cause the outcomes [kr`paNA:] are to be pitied.

Performing with an awareness of the Self is called [buddhiyOga]. It is explained as the awareness that lets us give up the final outcome of any activity, along with any success or failure experienced before it’s complete.

When compared to such activities, others are by far inferior. The two types of activities are indeed very distinct. When you are aware of the Self while working, you get rid of all misfortune present in the material world. This path leads to [moksha](#Moksha), the ultimate goal.

The other kind of action (driven by desire) will result in the same material world, leading to sorrow. Hence, take refuge in the knowledge of the Self while performing your actions: Trust and be situated in the awareness of the Self.

'Those who think that they cause the outcomes are to be pitied': Those who work while being attached to its outcome will remain in the material world - they are to be pitied.

Why know the Self?

## 2-50

[

buddhiyuktO jahAtIha ubhE sukr`ta duShkr`tE |

tasmAdyOgAya yujyasva yOga: karmasu kaushalam || 50 ||

]

[buddhiyukta:] A person who works with the awareness of the Self [jahAti] will leave behind [sukr`taduShkr`tE ubhE] both the right and the wrong [iha] in this life itself. [tasmAt] Hence, [yujyasva] focus on action [yOgAya] for the knowledge of the Self. [yOga:] Actions done with the knowledge of the Self [kaushalam] yield maximum prosperity [karmasu] among all actions.

*The word [kaushalam] also means skillfulness. So, you can also read this as ‘Actions done with the knowledge of the Self are the most skillful among all actions’*

Working with an awareness of the Self brings out the best in us – the skill in our actions.

By working while being aware of the Self, a person is freed from the influence of endless rights and wrongs collected since beginning-less time. Hence, focus on your action for the sake of this awareness.

Among all actions that are to be done, those that are done with the awareness of the Self are the best. They bring out the best in us and have the capability to yield maximum prosperity and well-being. This is [Buddhiyoga](#buddhiyOga_a_defn) and it comes with a lot of skill and practice.

## 2-51

[

karmajam buddhiyuktA hi phalam tyaktvA manIShiNa: |

janma bandha vinirmuktA: padam gachChantyanAmayam || 51 ||

]

[manIShiNa: buddhiyuktA hi] Only people who work with the awareness of the Self [karmajam phalam tyaktvA] aren’t limited by the outcome of their actions. [janma bandha vinirmuktA:] They are freed from the bonds of this birth [gachChanti] and reach [anAmayam padam] a state that is free of flaws.

People who work with the awareness of the Self involve in activity, while letting their outcomes go. By working that way, they reach a state that is free of fault. They get freedom from all limitations imposed by birth. This is the predominant message in all the Upanishads.

## 2-52

[

yadA tE mOhakalilam buddhirvyatitariShyati |

tadA gantAsi nirvEdam shrOtavyasya shrutasya cha || 52 ||

]

[yadA] When [tE] your [buddhi:] intellect [vyatitariShyati] crosses over [mOhakalilam] ignorance, [tadA] then, [gantAsi] you gain [nirvEdam] complete indifference to material objects [shrOtavyasya shrutasya cha] as told in the following Shlokas in addition to the previous ones.

As said before, do your work with the awareness of the Self. Your intellect will cross over ignorance. Ignorance is something that gets you addicted to the limited gratification given by sensual pleasures. It prevents you from discerning the truth. This ignorance is caused by attachments towards minor material outcomes.

When your intellect crosses over this ignorance, you will gain complete indifference to material outcomes. As I said previously, let the outcomes go. Do as I am going to say next. You will automatically free yourself of attachment.

In (Chap.2#39), it was said ‘Listen to this teaching in the form of actions, which are performed for the purpose of attaining [moksha](#Moksha)‘. The following Shloka talks about an achievement called yoga. It is a predecessor to realizing the Self and has that special knowledge built into it. It aims to get you to a higher level of being.

## 2-53

[

shrutivipratipannA tE yadA sthAsyati nishchalA |

samAdhau achalA buddhi: tadA yOgamavApsyasi || 53 ||

]

[shruti] Having listened to what I said, [vipratipannA] you have obtained special knowledge. [yadA] When [tE buddhi:] your intellect [nishchlA sthAsyati] stands firm [samadhau] in your controlled mind, [tadA] then [yOgam avApsyasi] you shall attain yoga.

There is nothing which is similar to the Self. It is everlasting and unsurpassed. Your intellect is specially enriched by listening to what I said about the subtle Self. When the intellect is focused on the Self, it stands firm in the mind that is cleaned by performing actions without attachments. With your intellect focused in this way, you shall attain yoga- the realization of the Self.

This is explained as [Karmayoga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga). It’s about working without attachments, a predecessor to realizing the Self. We transform by working in this way, being engaged in cultivating our knowledge. Such a state of engagement is called [sthitaprajna]. It is a state of 'being firm in wisdom' or 'free from confusion'. This state of cultivating true knowledge achieves the realization of the Self. We call it ‘[yoga](#yoga_state_of_being)’.

After being taught in this way, Arjuna asks about the characteristic of being firm in wisdom- a state in which we are free from confusion. It comes from performing actions without attachments and leads to the realization of the Self. He also asks about the conduct of a person who is firm in wisdom.

*Being 'firm in wisdom' is to be engaged in an inquiry into the Self, cultivating true knowledge. The term 'firm in wisdom' is used as the translation for [sthitaprajna]. Other ways of translating the word [sthitaprajna] are: 'one whose consciousness is fully realized', 'one whose consciousness is steadfast', 'one who is free from confusion'. It’s about giving up all the ignorance surrounding the Self and being free from all confusion.*

## 2-54

[

arjuna uvAcha -

sthitaprajnasya kA bhAShA smAdhisthasya kEshava |

sthitadhI: kim prabhAShEta kimAsIta vrajEta kim || 54 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said- [kEshava] ‘O Krishna, [bhAShA kA] what words can be used for the description [sthitaprajnasya] of a person who stands firm in wisdom, [smAdhisthasya] who has attained control over his mind? [sthitadhI:] Being unmoved, [kim prabhAShEta] what does he speak? [kim] How does he [AsIta] be? [kim vrajEta] What does he do?’

To describe someone standing [firm in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat) is to realize the characteristics of that person. What does such a person do, what does he speak, how does he behave?

While describing this person’s special state of being, the Lord explains the qualities of such a person and the way to get there. The Lord describes this state of being next.

## 2-55

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

prajahAti yadA kAmAn sarvAn pArtha manOgatAn |

AtmanyEvAtmanA tuShTa: sthitaprjna: tadOchyatE || 55 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said- [pArtha] Arjuna, [AtmanA] with the mind [tuShTa:] being content [Atmani Eva] in the Self alone, [yadA] when [prajahAti] a person gives up [sarvAn kAmAn] all desires [manOgatAn] that enter the mind, [tadA] then, [sthitaprajna: uchyatE] he is said to be standing [firm in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat).

An experience of the Self is so pleasant that likes and dislikes don’t matter anymore.

‘The mind being content in the Self alone’ – In this state, the mind is joyful in the presence of the Self alone. With that joy, it totally gives up all other desires that come its way. It is said to be [firm in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat), having achieved the highest state of knowledge.

Next, the Lord describes the nature of a person who is one step behind the one who has attained the highest state of knowledge. Not that far behind, though.

## 2-56

[

du:khEShu anudvignamanA: sukhEShu vigataspr`ha: |

vIta rAga bhaya krOdha: sthitadhI: muniruchyatE || 56 ||

]

[anudvignamanA:] A person whose mind is not agitated [du:khEShu] during times of sorrow, [vigataspr`ha:] who is free from attachments [sukhEShu] during times of happiness, [vIta] who is free from the control of [rAga] desires, [bhaya] fear [krOdha:] and anger- [muni:] Such a sage [uchyatE] is said to be [sthitadhI:] situated [firm in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat).

This person is not agitated and saddened when he is separated from something he likes. He is free from attachment even when he is with the things he likes.

He has let go of emotions, fear and anger: **Desire** takes control when we develop attachment towards something we do not have. **Fear** is the anticipation of losing our dear possessions or contacting something we dislike. **Anger** is a distortion in the mind that causes sorrow in another being, who is perceived to be the cause of undesirable things.

The person who has let go of these three and has trained his focus on the Self is said to be situated [firm in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat).

Now the Lord describes the state previous to this one:

## 2-57

[

yassarvatra anabhisnEha: tattat prApya shubhAshubham |

nAbhinandati na dvEShTi tasya prajnA pratiShThitA || 57 ||

]

[nAbhinandati] A person is neither driven by likes [na dvEShTi] nor by dislikes [ya:] when he is [anabhisnEha:] without attachment [sarvatra] in all respects, [prApya] even on obtaining [tattat shubhAshubham] things that he likes or dislikes. [tasya prajnA] His consciousness [prathiShThitA] is steadfast.

This person is neutral and objective even when he is in the midst of everything he likes. He is not drowned by good or bad happenings - such as the happiness on gaining something favorable or the sadness that accompanies a loss. Such a person is [firmly situated in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat) as well.

Next, the Lord describes the state previous to the above:

## 2-58

[

yadA samharatE chAyam kUrmO\_ngAnIva sarvasha: |

indriyANi indriyArthEbhya: tasya prajnA parthiShThitA || 58 ||

]

[iva] In a manner similar to [kUrma:] a tortoise [angAnIva] withdrawing its limbs, [yadA] when [ayam] this person [samharatE] takes away [indriyANi] his sense organs [indriyArthEbhya:] from all their indulgences, [tasya prajnA] his consciousness [prathiShThitA] is steadfast.

Even as the sense organs desire to indulge in things that are sensed by them, a person who pulls them back - like a tortoise pulling its limbs within - steadies his mind upon his Self and is also [situated firm in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat).

Thus, there are four types of people who are engaged in cultivating true knowledge. This engagement can be achieved progressively, as illustrated in the verses above.

Now, the Lord says that staying engaged in this way is tough, He proceeds to describe the means by which it can be achieved.

## 2-59

[

viShayA vinivartantE nirAhArasya dEhina: |

rasavarjam rasOpyasya param dr`ShTvA nivartatE || 59 ||

]

[rasavarjam] With the exception of desire, [viShayA:] sensual objects [vinivartantE] retreat [dEhina:] from somebody [nirAhArasya] who has pulled his sense organs back from those objects. [asya] His [rasO\_pi] desire for sensual objects also [nivartatE] goes away [param dr`ShTvA] upon seeing the pure form of the Self.

Sense-organs experience sensual objects. Someone who retracts his sense organs from sensual objects will see those experiences retreating from him – that includes all experiences that can retreat. The desire for sensory objects is an exception. It remains without retreating.

Even this desire retreats upon seeing the nature of the Self. The experience of the Self is superior to any happiness provided by our sense organs.

## 2-60

[

yatatO hyApi kauntEya puruShasya vipashchita: |

indriyANi pramAthIni haranti prasabham mana: || 60 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [api] even if [vipashcita:] a person who knows this [yatata:] tries hard, [puruShasya] his [pramAthIni] powerful [indriyANi] sense organs [haranti] will hijack [mana:] his mind [prasabham] by force.

Sensory desires won’t retreat until we see the Self. In the presence of these desires, their powerful influence abducts our sense organs by force. This happens even in those who have all the required knowledge and want to be engaged in realizing the Self.

Thus, mastery over the sense organs depends on realizing the Self. Realizing the Self requires mastery over the sense organs. In this cycle, obtaining the ultimate knowledge about the Self is very tough.

## 2-61

[

tAni sarvANi samyamya yukta AsIta matpara: |

vashE hi yasyEndriyANi tasya prajnA pratiShThitA || 61 ||

]

[yukta:] The focused person [samyamya] balances [tAni sarvANi] all of them and [AsIta] needs to stay [matpara:] devoted to Me. [indriyANi yasya vashE hi] Only a person with control over his sense organs [tasya prajnA pratiShThitA] has [steadfast consciousness](#sthitaprajna_xlat).

The person who wishes to get out of the cycle must control his sense organs - which is a difficult thing to do, due to his desire for sensual objects. He must focus his mind on Me and be content.

I am a very favorable refuge for all conscious beings. All flaws in the mind are cleared entirely when it indulges in My thought. Thus purified, the mind gets free of its desire for sensual objects and brings the sense organs under its control.

In this way, a mind gains control over the sense organs and qualifies to realize the Self. As said in the [vishnupurAna], 6-7-74: ‘Like a bright fire combines with the wind to burn down dry wood, Vishnu is situated in your consciousness and destroys all the flaws of His devotees’

This Shloka concludes with the statement- ‘Only a person with control over his sense organs has [steadfast consciousness](#sthitaprajna_xlat)‘.

It isn’t possible to experience the Self without placing ourselves in the refuge of the Lord.

In the next two Shlokas, the Lord says that without placing the mind in Him, a person who tries to control his sense organs on his own will see his efforts end in vain.

## 2-62 to 2-63

[

dhyAyatO viShayAn pumsa: sangastEShUpajAyatE |

sangAt sanjAyatE kAma: kAmAt krOdhObhijAyatE || 62 ||

krOdhAt bhavati sammOha: smmOhAt smr`tivibhrama: |

smr`tibhramshAt buddhinAsha: buddhinAshAt praNashyati || 63 ||

]

[pumsa:] The one who [dhyAyata:] immerses his mind in [viShayAn] sensual objects [upajAyatE] will develop [sanga:] attachment [tEShu] with them. [sangAt] From attachment [sanjAyatE] arises [kAma:] desire. [kAmAt] From desire, [krOdha:] anger [abhijAyatE] is born. [krOdhAt] From anger, [sammOha:] delusion [bhavati] happens. [sammOhAt] Due to delusion, [smr`ti vibhrama:] thought and understanding are destroyed. [smr`tibhramshAt] Since thought and understanding are destroyed, [buddhinAsha:] the intellect perishes. [praNashyati] The person is wasted, [buddhinAshAt] once his intellect is gone.

A person who does not focus his mind on Me wouldn’t have lost his desire for sensual objects yet. Even when he controls his sense organs, he will definitely indulge in thoughts about sensual objects. This indulgence comes from the influence of infinite actions. He has committed these actions since beginning-less time, all the while being driven by the desire for outcomes.

When he indulges in thoughts about sensory objects, he will grow a strong attachment towards them again. From that attachment, desire is born - the ripening of attachment is called desire. Desire is a state in which a person is unable to stay without experiencing things that stimulate the sense organs.

From this desire, anger is born. There will be a time when a person is denied something he desires. Then, he feels that others are responsible and throws his anger at them. It’s a feeling like ‘Due to them, I don’t have what I like’.

Anger results in delusion- being insensitive to what must be done and what must not. Due to this delusion, a person may do anything at all - the awareness involved in controlling his sense organs and other activities is lost. Due to loss of such understanding, the intellect perishes.

The focus that he brought about to gain realization of the Self is destroyed. Due to the loss of such intellect, he falls back to material things and is wasted.

## 2-64

[

rAga dvESha viyuktaistu viShayAn indriyaishcharan |

AtmavashyairvidhEyAtmA prasadam adhigachChati || 64 ||

]

[tu] On the other hand, [vidhEyAtmA] a person who has conquered his mind [viShayAn charan] deals with material objects [indriyai:] using organs [rAga dvESha viyuktai:] that are free from desire and hatred. [Atmavashyai:] This person keeps his organs under his control. [adhigachChati] Such a person attains [prasadam] tranquility.

The Lord continues - As I said before, I am a very favorable refuge for all conscious beings. A person places his mind in my refuge and is liberated from all faults, being free of desire and hatred. He deals with material objects using organs that are under control. That means he is present in this world while having no regard for material objects.

He conquers his mind and attains tranquility- the state where he has complete clarity of thought.

## 2-65

[

prasAdE sarvadu:khAnAm hAnirasyOpajAyatE |

prasannachEtasO hyAshu buddhi: paryavatiShThatE || 65 ||

]

[asya prasAdE] In this state of tranquility, [sarvadu:khAnAm hAni:] the destruction of all sorrow [upajAyatE] happens. [hi] Indeed, [buddhi:] the knowledge of the Self [paryavatiShThatE] will shine in a person [prasanna chEthasa:] whose thoughts are clear.

Just as this person's mind attains tranquility, any sorrow associated with material attachment disappears. The ability to distinguish the Self is established in a person whose thoughts are clear, when he is free from flaws that block his realization of the Self. This way, in the tranquility of one's mind, all sorrows are destroyed.

## 2-66

[

nAsti buddhirayuktasya na chAyuktasya bhAvanA |

na cha abhAvayata: shAnti: ashAntasya kuta: sukham || 66 ||

]

[ayuktasya] A person who is not focused on the Lord [buddhi: nAsti] does not have the intellect to look into the Self. [ayuktasya] A person who is not focused on the Lord [bhAvanA cha na] doesn’t even have an idea about the Self. [abhAvayata:] A person who does not have an idea about the Self [shAnti: na] does not attain peace. [ashAntasya] When one does not have peace, [kuta: sukham] how can joy exist?

A person who doesn’t place his mind in My refuge tries to control his organs by his own efforts. Such a person will never realize the Self. He will never distinguish it from all the objects of the material world and has no idea about the nature of the Self.

Without distinguishing the Self, he will not attain peace from the constant nagging of sensual objects. Without peace, how can a person driven by material desires ever attain supreme and endless joy?

Similarly, the fate of a person who doesn’t keep his sense organs under control is explained-

## 2-67

[

indriyANAm hi charatAm yanmanO\_nuvidhIyatE |

tadasya harati prajnAm vAyurnAvamivAmbhasi || 67 ||

]

[yat mana:] A mind that [indriyANAm anu charatAm] follows the organs of the body [anuvidhIyatE] enslaves a person to his organs. [tat] Such a mind [harati] abducts [asya prajnAm] the person’s consciousness [iva] like [vAyu:] the wind [nAvam] takes a boat [ambhasi] on the sea.

The phrase 'a mind that follows the organs of the body' is the behavior of a person who deals with this material world according to the feelings of his body.

Though the person's intellect may be dedicated to realize the Self in its pure form, this sort of mind takes his consciousness away. It pushes him to be inclined towards sensual objects- Just as a boat that sails in the sea is driven forcefully by undesirable winds.

## 2-68

[

tasmAt yasya mahAbAhO nigr`hItAni sarvasha: |

indriyANi indriyArthEbhya: tasya prajnA pratiShThitA || 68 ||

]

[tasmAt] Thus, [mahAbAhO] Arjuna, [yasya indriyANi] the one whose organs [nigr`hItAni] are controlled [sarvasha:] in every way [indriyArthEbhya:] while being in the midst of sensory objects- [tasya prajnA] his consciousness [prathiShThitA] is steadfast.

As told before, I am an auspicious abode. The person who keeps his mind in Me - in the way I described - controls his organs while they are among sensory objects. This person alone is consciously steadfast in realizing the Self.

The next Shloka describes the state of a person who has his organs under control in this way- a person whose mind is cheerful.

## 2-69

[

yA nishA sarvabhUtAnAm tasyAm jAgarti samyamI |

yasyAm jAgrati bhUtAni sA nishA pashyatO munE: || 69 ||

]

[samyamI] A person with control over his organs [jAgarti] is awake [yA nishA tasyAm] in the space that’s dark [sarvabhUtAnAm] for all beings. [yasyAm] The space in which [bhUtAni] ordinary beings [jAgrati] are awake, [sA nishA] it is dark [pashyatO munE:] for a virtuous person intent on realizing the Self.

‘The space that’s dark for all beings’- The ‘space’ is the knowledge of the Self. In that space, all beings are in the dark. When it comes to the knowledge of the Self, only the person having control over his organs and focus in his mind is awake- meaning he realizes the Self.

‘The space in which ordinary beings are awake’- This space has the awareness of stimuli such as sound and light, in which all beings become alert. For the focused person who has realized the Self, these stimuli look like darkness.

## 2-70

[

ApUryamANam achalapratiShTham

samudram Apa: pravishanti yadvat |

tadvat kAmA yam pravishanti sarvE

sa shAntim ApnOti na kAma kAmI || 70 ||

]

[yadvat] The manner in which [Apa:] waters [pravishanti] enter [samudram] the ocean, [ApUryamANam] which is complete by itself [achala pratiShTham] and stands unmoved - [yam] the person, whom [sarvE kAmA:] all desires [pravishanti] enter [tadvat] in the same manner [sa: shAntim ApnOti] will attain peace, [na kAma kAmI] not the person who is driven by desire for sensory enjoyments.

The waters of many rivers enter the ocean, which remains whole and complete by itself. The ocean stays the same. It does not make any special difference to the ocean, whether a river joins it or not.

In the same manner, all desires enter a person who has control over his organs. For him, the effect of sensory perceptions such as sound will remain in the sense organs themselves. Such a person, who remains satisfied in the realization of his Self alone, who is not agitated by the presence of sensual perceptions or the lack of them- he alone attains peace. Not the person who is driven by desire.

A person who is under the control of sensory perceptions isn’t going to attain peace.

## 2-71

[

vihAya kAmAn ya: sarvAn pumAnshcharati nispr`ha: |

nirmamO nirahankAra: sa shAntim adhigachChati || 71 ||

]

[ya: pumAn] The person who [sarvAn kAmAn vihAya] frees himself of all desires [charati] and goes about his actions [nispr`ha:] without attachments, [nirmama:] without the feeling of 'this is mine', [nirahankAra:] without feeling that the body is the Self- [sa:] this person [shAntim adhigachChati] attains peace.

'Desires' are sensory perceptions that we crave for - perceptions such as sound and taste. The person who goes about his actions and frees himself of all such cravings shall see his Self and attain peace. He does not get attached to any material experiences and doesn’t have a feeling of 'this is mine' towards them. He does not regard something that is not the Self as the Self - he is not under the misconception that his body is his Self.

## 2-72

[

EShA brAhmI sthiti: pArtha nainam prApya vimuhyati |

sthitvA asyAm antakAlE\_pi bahmanirvANamr`chChati || 72 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [EShA] this is [brAhmI sthiti:] a state, which leads you to realize your Self. [na vimuhyati] You will not get carried away by material things [Enam prApya] after attaining this state. [asyAm sthitvA] If a person is in this state [antakAlE\_pi] even at his final moment, [r`chChati] he realizes [nirvANam brahma] the Self, full of joy.

The 'state of being' in which you work without attachment is the foundation for gaining eternal knowledge of the Self. This state of being is a property of the person who is [free of confusion](#sthitaprajna_xlat).

You will not get carried away by material things after attaining this state of being, performing actions without attachment. Even if you achieve this state at the end of your lifetime, you will attain the Self. You will realize the Self as having joy itself as its characteristic.

Thus, in the second chapter, Arjuna was taught the knowledge of the eternal Self. Before this, he did not know the real nature of the Self. He also didn’t know that action in war can achieve the realization of the Self. With the misconception that the body is the Self, he was about to withdraw from the war.

As a foundation to gain knowledge and get rid of the misconception, Lord Krishna taught him the technique of [Karmayoga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)- performing actions without attachment. It is a means to achieve [freedom from confusion](#sthitaprajna_xlat).

In summary: To resolve Arjuna's confusion, the second chapter described the knowledge required to realize the eternal Self. It also gives the knowledge required to work without attachments. The aim of this knowledge is to be [firm in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat).

# Chapter 3

The Lord is the goal of those who seek [liberation](#Moksha). The Lord has been described as a repository of an infinite amount of endless virtues, repelling every kind of misfortune. Attaining the Lord is all about supreme devotion, variously called by terms such as worship and meditation.

The Lord has been described as ‘The Self that relieves every Self of its misfortune’ in [ChAndOgya], 8-7-1.

In fact, working without being driven, achieving supreme skill in our work, realizing the Self, its relation to the Lord, devotion to the Lord and attaining the Lord are equivalent – they are presented as a sequence.

The nature of the Self is beyond the states of being awake, asleep or in deep sleep. It was stated that the Self does not have a form that we can perceive. [ChAndOgya], 8-12-2 states that it shines brightly in its own form. It is said in the [kaThOpanishat] as well: In the quest to realize the Self, a person will worship the Lord, get to know Him and will break free of happiness and sorrow.

The content of the previous chapter is also stated in the [kaThOpanishat]: The Self is not born and doesn’t die. It is subtle even in comparison to the most fundamental particle. The wise person knows it to be great and limitless, so he doesn’t worry.

The [kaThOpanishat] also says- this Self is not attained by speaking about it, by thinking about it or even by hearing its characteristics repeatedly. The Self is attained by the person who has been chosen by the Lord. It reveals itself to this person. The Lord chooses those who choose the Lord. This is devotion.

[kaThOpanishat], 1-3-9 says- The person who has knowledge as the guiding force and keeps his mind under control will attain great heights and reach the Lord’s abode.

In the next four chapters, the Lord talks about realizing the Self and the methods to achieve that realization.

## 3-1 to 3-2

[

arjuna uvAcha -

jyAyasE chEt karmaNastE matA buddhi: janArdana |

tatkim karmaNi ghOrE mAm niyOjayasi kEshava || 1 ||

vyAmishrENaiva vAkyEna buddhim mOhayasIva mE |

tadEkam vada nishchitya yEna shrEya: aham ApnuyAm || 2 ||

]

[janardana] O Krishna, [tE matA chEt] if in your opinion, [buddhi:] the use of knowledge to perform without desire [jyAyasE] is better than [karmaNa:] ordinary actions, [tat kim] then why [niyOjayasi mAm] do you urge me [ghOrE karmaNi] to be involved in gruesome acts?

[vyAmishrENaiva] With contradictory [vAkyEna] statements, [mOhayasIva] it seems to me, that you are deluding [mE buddhi:] my intellect. [tat] Hence, [Ekam vada] tell me one thing, [yEna] by which [shrEya: ApnuyAm] I can attain excellence [nishchitya] definitely.

Arjuna asks Lord Krishna:

If your opinion is that knowledge is better than action, why are you urging me to perform these gruesome actions? Let’s elaborate Arjuna’s question:

Should I employ my organs in activity? Or pull them back?

On one hand, [it was told](#_50) that focused meditation is the means to realizing the Self. Proficiency in working without being driven by desire is the means to achieve this focus.

On the other hand, the advice [was to avoid the indulgence](#_59) of our organs and the mind in sensory perceptions such as touch and sound. This was the means to achieve the knowledge required to realize the Self.

If indeed, ceasing the indulgence of the sense organs is the way to realize the Self, then I would focus only on meditation. That would be the way to get rid of the effects of all my past actions. Why do you urge me to perform gruesome deeds that involve indulgence of all the sense organs, which works against the realization of the Self?

It feels like I am deluded by mixed and contradictory statements. On the one hand, I need to stop indulging in sensual perceptions to gain knowledge about the Self. On the other hand, the directive to work is opposite to that. This is a mixed message. Hence, tell me one statement that is not mixed- implementing which I will certainly attain excellence.

## 3-3

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

lOkE\_smin dvividhA niShThA purA prOktA mayAnagha |

jnAnayOgEna sAnkhyAnAm karmayOgEna yOginAm || 3 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord said-

[anagha] Flawless Arjuna, [asmin lOkE] in this world, [dvividhA niShThA] there are two types of practices. [purA prOktA mayA] I have said this long ago. [sAnkhyAnAm] For people who want to reason out the knowledge of the Self, [jnAnayOgEna] it's via contemplation. [yOginAm] For diligent people, [karmayOgEna] it's via accomplishing deeds without being driven by desire.

Lord Krishna says- You have not grasped what was said before. What I said before is that the world is full of different people, who are entitled to different things. I described the two types of practices- knowledge and action- without any mix-up: These two practices are to be followed by people who are qualified to perform them. Indeed, not everyone who desires [moksha](#Moksha) is directly qualified to pursue the knowledge of the Self.

However, everyone is definitely entitled to work without attachments, doing it as My service. They get rid of their flaws by performing such actions. Their organs lose all their agitation. Then, they qualify to realize the Self.

You reach the goal by being active and offering your activity as service to the Lord.

It is said in Chap.18#46: ‘Any human being attains the goal by worshipping the Lord with his own work - The Lord, by whom all this is pervaded, from whom all beings get their ability to commence action’

In this way, it is explained that actions done just as a service to the Lord will lead us to our goal of [moksha](#Moksha). In the previous chapter, Chap.2#47 said ‘You have the authority only in action’- Working without being driven by desire moves our intellect beyond the delusions and desires arising from association with material objects.

Focusing your thought without being affected by this world is another way to achieve the goal.

The characteristics of a person who is standing [firm in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat) are described starting in Chap.2#55: ‘When a person gives up all desires that enter the mind, then, he is said to be standing [firm in wisdom](#sthitaprajna_xlat)‘. The technique of contemplation was described. This technique is called [[jnAnayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn)]. It is for people who can reason out the knowledge of the Self through their intellect alone. People with such focused intellect are called [sAnkhyA:]. The word [sankhyA] means intellect. These people can focus on the knowledge of the Self alone without wavering.

In summary: People are always entitled to do their work without being driven by desire – even people whose intellect is still turned by material objects. Others whose intellect remains unaffected are qualified to contemplate using that intellect. Both of them are different paths to achieve [moksha](#Moksha).

Thus, nothing contradictory or mixed-up was said.

The next Shloka says that the exclusive practice of contemplation is very difficult for all people – even those in whom the desire for [moksha](#Moksha) has taken birth.

## 3-4

[

na karmaNAm anArambhAt naiShkarmyam puruShO\_shnutE |

na cha saMnyasanAdEva siddhim samadhigachChati || 4 ||

]

[karmaNAm anArambhAt] By avoiding the initiation of actions, [puruSha:] A person [na ashnutE] will not attain [naiShkarmyam] freedom from the influence of his deeds. [saMnyasanAt Eva cha] Moreover, just by renunciation of the actions he has begun, [na samadhigachChati] one does not attain [siddhim] the goal of [moksha](#Moksha).

If you just avoid initiating the work that you need to do, you do not attain freedom from the influence of your deeds- meaning, you wouldn’t qualify to focus your thought on the Self. You wouldn’t qualify by abandoning the activity that you’ve started, either.

Liberation is achieved by performing actions as worship to the Supreme Lord, without being driven by desire for outcomes.

Without such actions, you will not reach the goal of [moksha](#Moksha). When you don’t worship Lord Govinda with actions that are free from desire, the influence of your activity shackles you. These shackles accumulate indefinitely over time. You would not let go of your flaws, you wouldn’t rid your organs of agitation and you would not qualify to focus your thought on the Self.

This idea is elaborated in the next Shloka:

## 3-5

[

na hi kashchit kShaNamapi jAtu tiShThatyakarmakr`t |

kAryatE hyavasha: karma sarva: prakr`tijairguNai: || 5 ||

]

[na kashchit] Nobody [tiShThati] can stay [akarmakr`t] without doing anything [kShaNamapi jAtu] even for a moment, [hi] indeed. [sarva:] Everyone [avasha:] is compelled [kAryatE] to create [karma] activity [prakr'tijai: guNai:] due to the qualities born out of worldly matter.

You cannot exist in this world without activity.

Indeed, no person in this world can stay without doing something, even for a moment, even if the person decides not to do anything. Everyone is driven towards activity – this is inevitable.

Such activity is in-line with the qualities of [sattva, rajas and tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas) that you possess. These qualities arise from worldly matter. Each quality is nurtured according to the actions committed by you since your eternal past.

Thus, by working without being driven by the desire for outcomes- as explained before- you are freed from the influence of past deeds. You bring the qualities of [sattva, rajas and tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) under control. With a pure mind, you are fit to pursue the Self.

Without this, a person who begins the pursuit of realization would practice in vain-

## 3-6

[

karmEndriyANi samyamya ya AstE manasA smaran |

indriyArthAn vimUDhAtmA mithyAchAra: sa uchyatE || 6 ||

]

[ya:] The one who [samyamya] controls [karmEndriyANi] organs that are involved in activity (hands, legs, mouth...), [vimUDhAtmA] while being ignorant of the Self [smaran AstE] and keeps thinking about [indriyArthAn] things that stimulate the sense organs- [sa:] Such a person [uchyatE] is said to [mithyAchAra:] practice in vain.

*About the word [karmEndriya]- There are two types of organs:*

*1. [jnAnEndriaya] Organs of perception: Ears, skin, eyes, nose, tongue*

*2. [karmEndriya] Organs of work: Hands, legs, organs of speech and the two excretory organs*

Restraint and sacrifice are pretense when you still yearn for ‘what could have been’.

Without losing the influence of past deeds, a person wouldn’t have conquered his senses and his mind. When such a person sets out to realize the Self, he is still drawn towards sensual objects. He keeps thinking about those objects and turns away from the Self. Instead of realizing the Self, his purpose is diverted in other ways; his actions are also diverted towards other things.

That's why such a person is said to practice in vain. Having started out to gain knowledge of the Self, he turns in the opposite direction and is wasted. That is the opinion expressed here.

## 3-7

[

yastu indriyANi manasA niyamyArabhatE arjuna |

karmEndriyai: karmayOgam asakta: sa vishiShyatE || 7 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [tu] on the other hand, [ya:] the one who [ArabhatE] initiates [karmayOgam] actions without attachment [karmEndriyai:] through the organs of work, [asakta:] without being driven by outcomes, [niyamya] controlling [indriyANi] those organs [manasA] with the mind - [sa:] such a person [vishiShyatE] is distinguished and superior.

Do your activities to realize your Self – instead of having your attachments agitate you.

Consider all the work you have been doing to attain your goals - be they your duties or any other actions. Do the same work while controlling your organs with your mind, tending them towards realizing the Self, without being driven by attachments. Take those very organs, which naturally tend towards activity and apply them to work without being driven by outcomes.

Then, it’s impossible for you to fall back to ignorance. In this way, you are superior to someone who believes in giving up the world to find the Self.

## 3-8

[

niyatam kuru karma tvam karma jyAyO hyakarmaNa: |

sharIra yAtrApi cha tE na prasidhyEt akarmaNa: || 8 ||

]

[tvam karma kuru] Do your activity- [niyatam] it is inevitable. [karma] Activity [jyAya:] is superior to [akarmaNa:] inaction. [api] Even [sharIrayAtrA] the journey through this body [na prasidhyEt] is not possible [tE] for you, [akarmaNa:] when you are inactive.

The word [niyatam] is used here to mean 'invariably accompanied with'. Everyone who is associated with matter is invariably accompanied by activity. Such is the relation between the person and activity. Thus, activity is certainly available to everyone, due to the influence of innumerable actions committed in the past. Activity is easy and isn’t associated with the danger of ignorance. Hence, certainly perform action.

The word ‘inactivity’ is used here to mean 'the mere practice of contemplation without involving our organs in action'- see (Chap.3#4), where it says ‘By avoiding actions, a person cannot get rid of the influence of his past deeds’. Definitely, action is better than mere contemplation on the Self.

Even for a person who is able to contemplate on the Self as an intellectual activity, the pursuit is extremely difficult - that’s because he does not have the experience of being inactive. It isn’t possible to control this method. This pursuit is also associated with the danger of falling into ignorance.

Hence, being with activity is definitely better than merely striving for knowledge.

While imparting the knowledge of the Self in its true form, it is explained later (Chap.5#14) that the Self is not the doer when we perform an action – by its very nature, it doesn’t make the outcome happen. Thus, the knowledge about the true nature of the Self is included inside actions that are performed without attachment to outcomes. In this way, these actions are superior.

The statement that activity is superior to inaction holds true indeed, even for a person who is able to focus on the Self. Suppose this person were to give up all activity, pursuing the knowledge of the Self alone. That’s not entirely possible since the practice of contemplation itself happens as an activity inside his body and that is definitely not inactive.

Till the realization of the Self is complete, you need to be associated with a body.

Worship the Lord with wealth accumulated through just means. Conduct your journey in this life inside your body, with the balance coming from this worship. In the [ChAndOgya upanishad] (7-26-2), it is said- ‘If what we eat is pure, the content of our body will be pure. When the content is pure, our [consciousness is firm](#sthitaprajna_xlat)‘. Further on, in (Chap.3-13), it is said: ‘The person who cooks for his own sake will suffer guilt’.

Thus, even if an intellectual in the pursuit of the Self wanted to avoid activity, the journey through the life of his body would be impossible without any activity. This person needs to perform worship and other duties, till his goal of realizing the Self is met.

The realization of the Self comes from working without being driven by outcomes - by knowing the fact that the Self is [not the doer](#actions_and_happenings). The ability to work is provided readily by nature- it is easily available. In summary, working without being driven by outcomes is superior, even for a person who is able to meditate on the Self as a purely intellectual activity.

Hence, without doubt, work without being driven by outcomes.

Often, our activities themselves cause agitation, don’t they?

Next, a question: If this is indeed so and we need to be in action, accumulating wealth and so on, the accumulation of wealth would be associated with the feeling that 'I am the cause' and 'This is mine'. Such feelings cause our organs to be agitated and we fall back under the influence of our past deeds. Isn't that so? The next Shloka answers this question.

## 3-9

[

yajnArthAt karmaNO\_nyatra lOkO\_yam karma bandhana: |

tadartham karma kauntEya mukta sanga: samAchara || 9 ||

]

[karmaNa:] Other than actions [yajnArthAt] done for the purpose of worship, [anyatra] all other actions [karma bandhana:] are limiting (binding) in nature [ayam lOka:] for the people of this world. [kauntEya] Arjuna, [samAchara] perform [karma] actions [tadartham] for the sake of worship, [mukta sanga:] being free from all attachments and addictions.

It’s true that activity needs a purpose. Make the Lord’s worship as your purpose.

*The word ‘yajna’ is the procedure of ‘worship’. To worship is ‘to adore’ and ‘revere’. The Lord is to be adored and revered by any procedure. Anything else that is adored and revered is a part of Him. Working with such adoration is called ‘worship’.*

Work and prosper to worship – this method makes the Lord as the purpose of all your activities. As opposed to this, actions done solely for personal gratification will bind and limit a person in this world.

Hence, work and prosper for the purpose of worship. In this process, be free of the attachment that results from doing things for personal gratification. When you work to worship the Lord, you are free from attachment and the Lord is gratified with your actions. He will free you from the influence of endless actions committed over time and grant you the realization of the Self and freedom from agitation.

The following Shlokas state that you need to take nourishment from the balance that comes out of worship. Take care of your body with such nourishment and achieve your goals. Nurturing the body with things other than this balance is a mistake.

## 3-10

[

saha yajnai: prajA: sr`ShTvA purOvAcha prajApati: |

anEna prasaviShyadhvam ESha vO\_astu iShTa kAmadhuk || 10 ||

]

[prajApati:] The Lord of all beings [sr`ShTvA] created [prajA:] living beings, [saha yajnai:] along with various forms of worship [purA] long ago [uvAcha] and said: [prasaviShyadhvam] Prosper [anEna] by these forms of worship. [ESha] May these forms of worship [astu] be [iShTa kAmadhuk] the fulfiller of your likes and desires.

The 'Lord of all beings' here refers to Narayana, who is the ruler of everything, the cause of the creation of the universe, who pervades it entirely, who is the supreme abode of all beings. He created all beings long ago, at the time of creation.

At the time of creation, the Lord knew that many beings were helpless under the influence of their innumerable deeds. In the singularity before creation, there was no way to distinguish things with names. They were dissolved in the Lord himself and were unable to realize their goals. They were as if without consciousness.

The compassionate Lord willed to bring them to life. He created them along with the forms of worship that are required to adore the Lord. He said- ‘Prosper and grow with the various forms of [worship](#yajna). Let them (the forms of worship) give you the ultimate goal of [moksha](#Moksha), and also satisfy other desires that are supportive to this goal.’

How does this mechanism work?

## 3-11

[

dEvAn bhAvayatAnEna tE dEvA bhAvayantu va: |

parasparam bhAvayanta: shrEya: param avApsyatha || 11 ||

]

[bhAvayata] By adoring [dEvAn] the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) [anEna] via these forms of worship, [tE dEvA:] let those [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) [va: bhAvayantu] nourish you. [parasparam bhAvayanta:] By adoring each other, [avApsyatha] you will obtain [param shrEya:] ultimate superiority.

Whatever your purpose, whomever you work for - it’s the Lord’s worship and He is the enjoyer.

These forms of worship are a means to adore the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers). Lord Krishna continues - These [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) are [My body](#universe_as_his_body). They have Me in themselves. Perform worship.

In Chap.6#24, I have said ‘I alone am the enjoyer of all forms of worship and I'm the controller who gives the benefits of worship’.

I pervade the Self in every [god](#gods_and_other_powers). May those [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) be adored with your worship and give you what you expect, such as food and drink. By adoring each other in this way, you attain the highest goal- [moksha](#Moksha).

## 3-12

[

iShTAn bhOgAn hi vO dEvA dAsyantE yajnabhAvitA: |

tairdattAnapradAyaibhyO yO bhunktE stEna Eva sa: || 12 ||

]

[yajnabhAvitA:] Pleased by worship, [dEvA:] the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) [dAsyantE hi] will eventually give [va:] you [iShTAn bhOgAn] the enjoyment you wish for. [ya:] The person who [bhuMktE] enjoys [tai: dattAn] the benefits given by them [Ebhya: apradAya] without giving it back [sa: stEna Eva] is definitely a thief.

'Pleased by worship'- Being adored through worship performed previously, the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), in whom I am present, will give you the enjoyment you wish for- That enjoyment, which is wished by people who strive for the ultimate goal of [moksha](#Moksha). They fulfil your expectations for the worship you perform.

The person who employs the expected outcomes for pleasing himself is indeed a thief. Such a person considers them his own and avoids giving anything back. Considering something that belongs to someone else as our own is called theft.

If we keep being possessive about things that are meant for someone else, we’d be unfit to attain the ultimate goal. We would end up suffering guilt as well.

This is elaborated in the following Shloka:

## 3-13

[

yajnashiShTAshina: santO muchyantE sarvakilbiShai: |

tE tvagham bhunjatE pApA yO pachanti AtmakAraNAt || 13 ||

]

[santa:] Virtuous people [yajnashiShTAshina:] who consume the balance that remains from worship [muchyantE] get free of [sarva kilbhiShai:] all faults. [yO pApA:] The kleptomaniacs who [pachanti] enjoy the outcomes [AtmakAraNAt] for their own sake [tE tu agham bhunjatE] beget nothing but misfortune.

When you acquire wealth solely for the worship of the Supreme Lord who pervades the Self in every one, you make the wealth bear fruit. You worship the Lord with it and exist in your body using the balance that remains from worship. You get freedom from all faults that you’ve collected over an infinite period of time, which stop you from realizing the true nature of your Self.

Wealth is given by the all-pervading Lord to perform His worship. Those who consider it their own and consume it for their own benefit are kleptomaniacs. They beget misfortune and are turned away from realizing the Self.

Everything happens for the Lord’s worship

In the following Shlokas, the Lord illustrates that 'worship' is the root of all prosperity in this world, both from the worldly point of view and from the point of view of the scriptures. Hence, He says, it is necessary to perform worship and it’s a mistake not to perform it.

## 3-14 to 3-16

[

annAt bhavanti bhUtAni parjanyAt anna sambhava: |

yajnAt bhavati parjanyO yajna: karma samudbhava: || 14 ||

karma bhahmOdbhavam viddhi brahmAkShara samudbhavam |

tasmAt sarvagatam brahma nityam yajne pratiShThitam || 15 ||

Evam pravartitam chakram nAnuvartayatIha ya: |

aghAyurindriyArAmO mOgham pArtha sa jIvati || 16 ||

]

[bhUtAni] Bodies of conscious beings [bhavanti] are made [annAt] from food. [anna] Food [sambhava:] is created [parjanyAt] using rain water. [parjanya:] Rain [bhavati] is a result of [yajna] a method of [worship](#yajna). [yajna:] Such worship [samudbhavam] is a result of [karma] activity.

[viddhi] Know that [karma] actions [brahmOdbhavam] result from the environment. [brahma akShara samudbhavam] The environment comes alive as your body by virtue of the indestructible Self. [tasmAt] Thus, [sarvagatam] the ubiquitous [brahma] environment [nityam pratiShThitam] is always involved in [yajne] a method of worship.

[iha] Over here, [ya:] the one who [na anuvartayati] does not follow [pravartitam chakram] the continuous cycle [Evam] in this way [aghAyu:] spends a lifetime collecting faults. [indriyArAma:] He wanders where his sense organs take him [mOgham] and wastes [jIvati] his life away.

*To comprehend this Shloka, think about all activities of nature (including your body) as a procedure to worship.* [*Worship*](#yajna) *is done to please the Lord. The Lord created everything for his own enjoyment. Hence, anything that happens in the environment is for His pleasure and is a method of worship - including sunshine, rain, the growth of food, nourishment and so on.*

All living beings survive by consuming food. Food is created using rain water- this fact is known to everyone. The fact that rain water is a result of a method of worship is stated in the scriptures such as [brahma purANa], 16-4: 'The Sun has fuel that burns. Rain happens due to the Sun'.

Activity happens in the environment, not for our purpose. The Self must engage in worship.

Any method of worship results from activity. An example of such activity is to earn or acquire materials. This activity pans out in a series of transactions [involving all things that make the activity happen](#actions_and_happenings).

Activity happens in the environment. In this Shloka, the word [brahma] is used to denote the body, which is a contribution of nature. Our environment is an attribute of the Lord, as said in [muMDaka], 1-1-16: ‘The environment, along with all things that are distinguishable in it arise from the Supreme Lord’. Also, in (Chap.14#3), it is said ‘the entire universe is my womb’.

The word [akShara] in this Shloka denotes the Self. This Self, being satisfied with food and water, instructs the body to work. In this way, the body is the vehicle of activity. This possibility arises in the presence of the Self.

In summary, all actions relate to the body and are enabled by the Self. The Self must engage in worship. Worship is the origin of all actions.

The cycle kept in motion by the Lord runs like this: Bodies of conscious beings comes from food; Food comes due to rain; Rain results from a method of worship; Worship results from activity, put together by the transactions of the doers; activity comes from bodies of conscious beings. The bodies come from food - This is the cycle, which runs in the form of a cause-and-effect chain.

People who do not acknowledge and follow this cycle while actually being in it earn a lot of guilt. They don’t nurture their bodies with the residue of worship. They spend a lifetime gathering and finding fault. These people continue to look for contentment in the sense organs. They do not look for contentment in the Self. Sense organs restrict their field of play.

With the body and mind nurtured by things other than the residue of worship, the properties of [rajas (passion)](#rajas) and [tamas (ignorance)](#tamas) are abundant. They are turned away from the realization of the Self and immerse themselves in experiencing material things alone. This applies to those who are able to contemplate, as well as to the rest who are eligible to work without being driven by outcomes.

In this way, they are said to waste away life without achieving [moksha](#Moksha), even while focusing their thoughts on the Self.

The next Shloka explains that only a truly free person isn’t bound to initiate any actions. Such a person can see his Self without the need to achieve or strive for anything.

## 3-17 to 3-19

[

yastu Atma ratirEva syAt Atma tr`ptashcha mAnava: |

AtmanyEva cha santuShTa: tasya kAryam na vidyatE || 17 ||

naiva tasya kr`tEnArthO nAkr`tEna iha kashchana |

na chAsya sarvabhUtEShu kashchit artha vyapAshraya: || 18 ||

tasmAt asakta: satatam kAryam karma samAchara |

asaktO hi Acharan karma paramApnOti pUruSha: || 19 ||

]

[yastu mAnava:] The person who [Atmarati: Eva] is always inclined towards the Self, [Atma tr`ptashcha] satisfied in the Self alone, [Atmani Eva santuShTa:] and who enjoys being in the Self alone - [tasya kAryam na vidyatE] he is not bound to perform any actions.

[tasya kr`tEna] Activity [artha: naiva] does not fulfil his wish. [iha kashchana na] there is no consequence over here, [akr`tEna] if he does not perform something. [asya] To him, [kashchit arthavyapAshraya: naiva] benefit-driven relationships do not exist.

[tasmAt] Hence, [satatam] always [samAchara] perform [kAryam karma] your activity, [asakta:] without being driven by attachments or addictions. [Acharan hi] Only by performing [karma] actions [asakta:] without being driven by attachments, [pUruSha:] a person [param ApnOti] will attain the realization of the Self.

A person who is focused on the Self need not do anything special to achieve the Self. The Self is automatically visible within, by his own nature. This person naturally revels in the Self, is inclined towards the Self and is satisfied by the Self; not by other things like food or entertainment; he isn’t arrogant because he [knows the Self](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn), or because he [works without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn). His refuge, nourishment and consumption are all in the Self alone.

Due to this, anything done by him for the purpose of achieving the Self is of no added benefit. If he stays without doing anything to achieve the Self, there is no loss- he can see the Self without any effort or strife. Being disinterested in anything other than the Self, he does not have a dependency in the form of ‘this is useful to me’, towards any inanimate object. He does not need to do anything to achieve this independence. He is truly free.

He does not indulge in accomplishments, since he does not need any accomplishment to realize the Self. Even for those who are involved in accomplishing things, the best action is [karmayOga] - working without attachment towards its outcome. It's easy to practice, is free of fault and has the knowledge of the Self embedded in it.

Due to this reason, keep working without any attachment until the Self is realized. Consider your action merely as a duty - 'something to be done'. The person who practices this form of action - without believing that he is the cause of the [outcome](#actions_and_happenings) - will attain the supreme goal ([moksha](#Moksha)) and realize the Self.

## 3-20

[

karmaNyaiva samsiddhim AsthitA janakAdaya: |

]

[janakAdaya:] Janaka and others [AsthitA:] have obtained [samsiddhim] the realization of the Self [karmaNyaiva] by performing actions without attachments towards outcomes.

Even those who are able to contemplate on the Self find that activity is the preferred way to realize the Self. Due to this, even great and knowledgeable persons like Janaka chose the path of action and realized the Self.

To realize the Self, we saw that a person who is not directly eligible to [pursue the Self intellectually](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) must [work without attachment towards outcomes](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga). Then, we saw that such work is better even for someone who is directly eligible to pursue the Self intellectually. Now, the Lord says that even for the rest, it is appropriate that they work without attachment.

## 3-20 to 3-21

[

lOkasangrahamEvApi sampashyan kartum arhasi || 20 ||

yadyad Acharati shrEShTha: tattadEvEtarO jana: |

sa yat pramANam kurutE lOkastad anuvartatE || 21 ||

]

[api] At the very least, [sampashyan] consider [lOkasangraham] the people of the world, who must be shown the correct path [karma Eva kartum arhasi] and work without attachment towards outcomes.

[yat yat] Whatever [shrEShTha:] the champion [Acharati] does, [itarE jana:] other people [tat tat Eva] do the same. [yat] Whatever [sa: pramANam kurutE] stand he takes, [lOka:] the world [anuvartatE] follows [tat] that.

Even if you look at it from the perspective of the people of this world, you must initiate and involve in activity. A ‘champion’ is a person who has complete knowledge of various sciences and is famous for his deeds and accomplishments.

People with lesser knowledge will do whatever he does. People who feel incomplete follow his activities. They follow him when he advocates something and when he takes a stand.

Thus, the champions, famous for their distinguished learning, must involve in their profession to assure the people of this world. Otherwise those champions would be responsible for the damage suffered by people. This guilt would make them fall away from the pursuit of the Self.

## 3-22

[

na mE pArtha asti kartavyam triShu lOkEShu kinchana |

na anavAptam avAptavyam vartE Eva cha karmaNi || 22 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [na mE] I have no [kinchana kartavyam] duties at all [triShu lOkEShu] in any of the three worlds. [na] There is nothing that [anavAptam] I do not possess, [avAptavyam] neither is there anything that I must obtain. [vartE Eva cha] Even then, I am always involved [karmaNi] in performing action.

Though the Lord isn’t bound to any duty or purpose, He stays active to reassure us.

I, Krishna, am the master of everything; I have everything that I desire; I know everything; My purpose is always fulfilled; I take any form, either that of a [god](#gods_and_other_powers) or of an ordinary human; I act independently according to My will in the entire universe.

There are absolutely no duties imposed on Me. Even then, I am always in action to reassure all the people of the world.

## 3-23 to 3-24

[

yadi hi aham na vartEyam jAtu karmaNi atandrita: |

mama vartma anuvartantE manuShyA: pArtha sarvasha: || 23 ||

utsIdEyurimE lOkA: na kuryAm karma chEdaham |

sankarasya cha kartA syAm upahanyAm imA: prajA: || 24 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [jAtu karmaNi atandrita: na vartEyam] if I am not attentive in my actions at any time, [manuShyA:] all people [anuvartantE hi] will definitely follow [mama vartma] my behavior [sarvasha:] in every way.

[chEt aham] If I [karma na kuryAm] do not perform actions, [imE lOkA:] these worlds [utsIdEyu:] will be destroyed. [sankarasya cha kartA syAm] I will be the cause of the resulting mess [upahanyAm] and the destruction of [imA: prajA:] these people.

I am the master of everything; My intentions are always fulfilled. Only by my will is the universe born, nourished and destroyed. This birth of mine is in the form of a man and is favorable to the people of this world. I do everything out of my own free will.

Even then, as the son of the extremely virtuous Vasudeva, suppose I am not diligent in activities that fit My clan. Other people, who are virtuous but feel incomplete would know Me as the son of a virtuous person and follow Me. They would believe whatever I do is right. They would not be diligent in performing their duties. They would default, not realizing the Self, remaining without achievement.

If I don’t perform actions according to My position, virtuous people would perceive that as ‘the right thing to do'. They would emulate My behavior and certainly perish due to inaction. In this way, by not doing My duties, I would be responsible for the destruction of virtuous people.

In the same way, you too are the son of the virtuous Pandu and the brother of Yudhishtira. If you give up your activities, people with limited knowledge who follow you would disregard their rights and give up their actions. They will be destroyed. Thus, a person who is known to be a champion must always stay in action.

## 3-25 to 3-26

[

saktA: karmani avidvAmsO yathA kurvanti bhArata |

kuryAt vidvAn tathA asakta: chikIrShur lOka sangraham || 25 ||

na buddhi bhEdam janayEt ajnAnAm karmasanginAm |

jOShayEt sarva karmANi vidvAn yukta: samAcharan || 26 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [yathA] just as [avidvAmsa:] people without complete knowledge of the Self [kurvanti] do their work [karmaNi saktA:] while being attached to their actions, [tathA] in the same way, [vidvAn] the person who has realized the Self [kuryAt] must work [asakta:] without attachments, [lOkasangraham chikIrShu:] with an intent to show the right way to the world.

[na janayEt] Don’t cause [buddhi bhEdam] conflict of intellect [ajnAnAm] among people who don’t know about the Self, [karmasanginAm] who are attached to actions. [vidvAn] A person with knowledge [yukta: samAcharan] must be focused on working without attachments, as the means to realize the Self. [jOShayEt] In this manner, the person must initiate delight [sarvakarmANi] in all actions.

People without complete knowledge of the Self have not attained perfection. They have a relationship with their actions and it cannot be broken. To realize the Self, they [work without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) to outcomes.

A person who has realized the Self would be famous for his excellence. He must also work in the same way, even though he isn’t interested in worldly pleasures. He does this to show the right way to the people of the world through his actions.

We realize our Self by being active while acknowledging that we don’t make things happen.

People who haven’t realized the Self are unable to pursue that knowledge directly. Due to the influence of past deeds, they are bound to activity. Those who desire [moksha](#Moksha) are qualified to [work without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) to outcomes. A person who knows the Self must not cause confusion by preaching a way to achieve moksha without the need for activity.

What must he do then? As said previously, such a person must work without attachment to outcomes as well. He is aware that such activity leads to the realization of the Self - without the need to contemplate. He must instill delight in all activity.

Delight in your activity. It is part of the Lord’s play.

People who have realized the Self and those who haven’t – when both of them work without attachment to outcomes, then what's the difference between them? In the next Shloka, the Lord explains the difference. He also shows a way to realize that the Self is not the doer over here. This will help in the practice of [working without attachments](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn).

## 3-27 to 3-28

[

prakr`tE: kriyamANAni guNai: karmANi sarvasha: |

ahankAra vimUDhAtmA kartAham iti manyatE || 27 ||

tattva vittu mahAbAho guNakarma vibhAgayO: |

guNA guNEShu vartantE iti matvA na sajjatE || 28 ||

]

[ahankAra vimUDhAtmA] A person who, due to ignorance, thinks of his body as himself, [iti manyatE] keeps telling himself - [kartA aham] I am the doer [karmANi sarvasha:] of all actions - [prakr`tE: guNai: kriyamANAni] while these actions are actually an effect of the [qualities of nature](#satva_rajas_tamas).

[hE mahAbAho] Arjuna, [tattva vittu] the person who knows the factual [guNakarma vibhAgayO:] distinctions among [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and actions [na sajjatE] is not attached to them, [iti matvA] since he believes that [guNA guNEShu vartantE] the [qualities of nature](#satva_rajas_tamas) will anyway make the corresponding actions happen.

Without knowing the Self, we believe that we are our body.

A person who is confused about the Self keeps telling himself ‘I do my actions’, whenever the [three qualities of nature](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) make [these actions happen](#actions_and_happenings). Such confusion comes to a person when he thinks of himself as his body, instead of recognizing the Self inside. Without knowing the Self, he believes that he’s the one who [makes things happen](#actions_and_happenings) in the environment.

Activity in the environment is an effect of the [three qualities of nature](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects): *sattva* (wisdom, virtue, truth), *rajas* (passion, emotion: cause of great activity) and *tamas* (ignorance, darkness). When a person can distinguish these [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and their [effects](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), he realizes that those qualities will make their effects happen anyway. When he recognizes that he’s not the one who [makes things happen](#actions_and_happenings), he doesn’t get attached to them.

## 3-29

[

prakr`tE: guNasammUDhA: sajjantE guNakarmasu |

tAn akr`tsna vidO mandaN kr`tsnavit na vichAlayEt || 29 ||

]

[akr`tsnavidO mandAn] People without complete knowledge of the Self [guNasammUDhA:] are deluded under the influence of [the three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). [guNakarmasu sajjantE] They are attached to actions, which are an effect of the association with those qualities. [kr`tsnavit] A person who knows [tAn na vichAlayEt] must not mislead them.

Without complete knowledge, those who set out to realize the Self are still mixed up with the environment. Being confused by the [qualities of the environment](#satva_rajas_tamas), they are attached to activities linked to these qualities. They don’t know the true form of the Self, as something that’s distinct from the environment. Hence, they are unable to pursue knowledge directly. They are qualified only to [work without attachments](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn).

If we know that the environment makes things happen, why should we involve in activity at all?

Those without complete knowledge are vulnerable. A person who is whole and complete must not mislead them. Being vulnerable, they follow someone superior. That person would have risen by [working without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) and would be beyond desires. Upon seeing his superiority, they may move on and deviate from their activity.

That’s why a person who realizes the nature of the Self, who is considered superior, must stay active - while practicing the fact that the Self doesn’t make things happen. This way, he demonstrates that the technique of [working without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) is a path by itself to realize the Self. He inspires those without complete knowledge to be active.

Even in the realization that the Self doesn’t make things happen, be active and inspire others.

It has been stated already (Chap.3#21) that the path of activity is the way to go, even for person who is capable of realizing the Self directly. Such a person must [work without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) for the benefit of the world.

The nature of the Self is different from any of the things we experience around us. With the knowledge of the Self, we realize that [the three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) make things [happen](#actions_and_happenings). These happenings are not in the nature of the Self. Due to association with [the three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), it has obtained a particular body that involves in making things [happen](#actions_and_happenings).

In the next Shloka, it is stated that you must perform your activities while planting the responsibility of making things happen in Lord Krishna. The Self is like His body, being fully under His control. He is the true owner of the Self and everything else.

## 3-30

[

mayi sarvANi karmANi saMnyasyAdhyAtma chEtasA |

nirAshIr nirmamO bhUtvA yudhyasva vigata jvara: || 30 ||

]

[yudhyasva] Fight [vigata jvara:] without grief, [saMnyasya] dedicating [sarvANi karmANi] all actions [mayi] in Me, [adhyAtma chEtasA] being aware of your relationship with me, [nirAshI:] being uninterested in outcomes, [nirmama:] without feeling 'it is mine'.

Dedicate your activity to the Lord.

In this Shloka, the Lord says - ‘dedicate all actions in Me’. The phrase 'in Me' refers to the Supreme Lord, who is present in every being.

Dedicate all actions to the Supreme Lord while keeping Him in your mind. Have no attachment to outcomes and don’t be possessive. Do all activity without grief or any other kind of pain. When you are aware of the true nature of the Supreme Lord and the Self, your mind is focused in Him. The 'true nature' of the Lord and the Self is known from the scriptures. The Lord is described as:

‘The One who pervades all conscious beings and rules over them; One who is in everybody; One who is the 'doer' of actions’ [yajurAraNyaka, 3-11-21-23]

‘One who is inside the Self, who is distinct from the Self, one whom the Selfdoes not realize, one for whom the Self is like a body, one who controls the Self, is also within you. He is without death; He is the Self in your Self.’ [br’hadArAnyaka, 3-7-23]

The above references show us that the Lord is the trigger of all activity. That He pervades the Self; that He controls it; that the Self is the Lord's body; that it is the Lord who stimulates the Self.

‘I am at the heart of everything. Knowledge, memory and the ability to reason come from Me.’ (Chap.15#15)

‘The Supreme Lord sits at the heart of every being, spinning all beings, mounting them in the mechanism of the environment’ (Chap.18#61).

The Lord has said- Your Self belongs to Me, as though it were My body. Hence, consider Me as the trigger of all activity. Offer your activities completely to Me, the Supreme Lord. Do those activities as a means to worship Me alone. Do not desire other outcomes. Do not have the feeling that 'these actions are mine'. Fight without any ill-feelings.

Everything happens by the will of The Lord, for his pleasure alone.

Think of it this way: The Supreme Lord, who controls everything, is the owner of your Self. The Lord causes the performance of His own work using the Self and his own instruments, only to please Himself.

With this thought in mind, don’t have any possessive feelings like 'these are my actions'. Be free from anxieties like ‘How can I be liberated, given that I am bound to infinite actions and sins committed since beginning-less past?’ The Lord Himself, being worshiped by your activity, will free you. Hence, do your work cheerfully without worrying about any personal benefits they seem to bring.

The following scriptures also state that the Lord is the supreme controller and that everything exists for His use:

‘He is the supreme Lord to all the Lords; The Owner of owners’ [shvEtAshvatara, 6-7]

‘The Lord of the Universe’ [nArAyaNIya, 11-3]

Next, the Lord confirms this as the essence of all the Upanishads:

## 3-31

[

yE mE matamidam nityam anutiShTanti mAnavA: |

shraddhAvanta: anasUyanta: muchyantE tE api karmabhi: || 31 ||

]

[yE mAnavA:] People who [nityam anutiShTanti] constantly practice [idam mE matam] [this principle of mine](#principle_of_the_lord), [shraddhAvanta:] those who believe in it, [anasUyanta:] and those who do not find fault in this principle - [tE api] all of them [karmabhi: muchyantE] will be free from the influence of their actions.

We are bound to our limitations due to actions we’ve committed since eternity.

Even if we don’t live this all the time, it is still sufficient to simply accept His existence.

There are people who master the scriptures and recognize that [My principle](#principle_of_the_lord) is their essence. They practice My principle diligently and will be free of all this bondage. Others who believe in [this principle](#principle_of_the_lord) but don’t practice it will be free as well. Yet others who do not resent and find fault in [this principle](#principle_of_the_lord) will also be free.

The phrase ‘all of them’ in this Shloka signifies that they are all different types of people – those who practice, those who simply believe and those who don’t resent. All of them will lose their misfortune and will end up practicing [this principle](#principle_of_the_lord) soon. They all attain [moksha](#Moksha).

In the next Shloka, The Lord explains the flaw in those who resent [The Lord's principle](#principle_of_the_lord), do not believe in it and those who have no intention of following it.

## 3-32

[

yE tu Etat abhyasUyantE nAnutiShThanti mE matam |

sarvajnAna vimUDhAn tAn viddhi naShTAn achEtasa: || 32 ||

]

[yE tu] On the other hand, those who [abhyasUyantE] resent [Etat] this view, [mE matam nAnuthiShThanti] who do not follow [My principle](#principle_of_the_lord) - [tAn viddhi] know them [sarvajnAna vimUDhAn] to be ignorant of all knowledge. [achEthsa:] They are lackluster characters, [naShTAn] who are eventually wasted away.

On the other hand, there are people who do not believe that everyone's Self is subordinate to Me; they don’t believe that their Self is like My body. There are those who do not believe that I am the basis for their existence and deny that I am the ultimate cause of everything. People who do not live in this context, who do not believe in it and resent this principle - know them to be ignorant of all knowledge. They are wasted. Intelligence and thought enable the recognition of things in their true form. Devoid of this, they are lackluster beings.

When you deny that The Lord is the basis of your existence, you live a myth.

For those of us who are bound to this world, the feeling of 'I am the doer' comes due to the predominance of [the three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Consider [everything that happens](#actions_and_happenings) to be at the disposition of The Lord and [work without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) to outcomes. This is easy and everyone is entitled to it.

Actions done in this way are free of fault and do not bind us. They have the true knowledge of the Self embedded in them. These actions don’t need the support of any other technique. This technique is recommended even to those who are capable of meditating on the Self. Other techniques will anyway require activity, since we are endowed with a body. Pure meditation that doesn’t involve any activity is not possible.

It was already stated that people who are famous must specially follow the technique of [working without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn). Next, in the remainder of this chapter, The Lord says that it isn’t possible to gain the knowledge of the Self in any other way. Any technique that avoids activity is ridden with flaws.

## 3-33

[

sadr`sham chEShTatE swasyA: prakr`tE: jnAnavAnapi |

prakr`tim yAnti bhUtAni nigraha: kim kariShyati || 33 ||

]

[jnAnavAnapi] Even a knowledgeable person [chEShTatE] behaves [swasyA: prakr`tE: sadr`sham] according to his [nature](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). [bhUtAni] All beings [prakr`tim yAnti] follow their [respective natures](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). [nigraha: kim kariShyati] In this situation, what can restraint do?

Consider a person who knows the scriptures, which describe the Self in a particular way, stating that you must always restrain yourself and focus on the Self. Such a person is also drawn by the influence of actions committed in the past.

That's because all beings that are attached to inanimate matter are drawn by the influence of [the three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). These qualities are the result of deeds committed since eternity. Under such an influence, what can restraint do? Just knowing about ‘restraint’ as prescribed in the scriptures doesn’t help by itself.

Next, it is explained how a person falls under the influence of [the three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and gets trapped.

## 3-34

[

indriyasya indriyasyArthE rAga dvEShau vyavasthitau |

tayOrna vasham AgachChEt tau hi asya paripAthinau || 34 ||

]

[rAga dvEShau] Attachment and hatred [vyavasthitau] are an inseparable part of [indriyasya] the sense organs, [indriyasyArthE] when they are among sensory stimuli, like sights and sounds. [tayO: vasham na AgachChEt] Do not come under their control, [tau hi] since they [asya paripAthinau] are the downfall of a person.

Sound, touch and other stimuli bring awareness by activating the senses. Organs of activity give us the experience of doing- for example, the organs of speech give us the experience of speaking. The craving to experience them is desire, which is inevitable. This 'craving' is a result of the influence of our deeds committed since ancient times.

When the desired experience is blocked, it inevitably results in ill-feelings like hatred. Desire and hatred together bring us under their control. They use us to achieve their effects, even if we have embarked on the journey to realize the Self, even if we have restrained our sense organs. Once under their control, we divert from the path of realizing the Self and will be destroyed.

Even when you believe in the Lord, desire and hatred are inevitable. Beware of them.

Once you have started on the path to realize your Self, do not get destroyed by desire and hatred. So, beware of desire and hatred- enemies that are very difficult to conquer; they can derail your practice.

## 3-35

[

shrEyAn swadharmO viguNa: paradharmAt swanuShThitAt |

swadharmE nidhanam shrEya: paradharmO bhayAvaha: || 35 ||

]

[swadharma:] Your natural conduct, [viguNa:] even though lacking in great qualities, [shrEya:] is better [paradharmAt] than performing something that's alien to your nature, [swanuShThitAt] even if it's performed well. [nidhanam] Death [swadharmE] while performing your duty [shrEya:] is desirable. [paradharma:] Duties alien to your nature [bhayAvaha:] are scary.

Working without attachment is your natural duty and is easily possible. It is preferred, even though it may feel worthless. That's because such actions are free from fault.

On the other hand, the process of realizing the Self by meditation is a struggle for someone who is in this environment. Though it may seem glorious, it has a high chance of divergence. It can only be practiced during a limited period of time.

Work according to your nature. Don’t be anxious about your goal. Your work will continue.

While working without attachments, if a person passes away before realizing the Self in his current life, this practice continues unperturbed in his next life.

For a person who is in touch with this world, it isn’t possible to realize the Self all by himself. Such an attempt is alien to his nature and is scary.

*Earlier in this chapter, Chap.3#12 and the following Shlokas stated that the body is not owned or controlled by us. Thinking that we can control it is alien to our being. This is revisited in Chap.18#47 too.*

## 3-36

[

arjuna uvAcha -

atha kEna prayuktO\_yam pApam charati pUruSha: |

anichChannapi vArShNEya balAdiva niyOjita: || 36 ||

]

Arjuna said: [atha] In that case, [vArShNEya] O Krishna, [kEna prayukta:] what is it that inspires [ayam puruSha:] this man [pApam charati] to do harm and feel guilt, [anichChannapi] even against his wishes, [balAt niyOjita iva] as if he is controlled by force?

Even after knowing this, why are we ever-anxious about outcomes? Why do we feel regret and guilt?

Arjuna addressed Krishna: In that case, even though a person has started on the path to realizing the Self, even though he does not wish to indulge in material things, what is it that forcibly drives him to go after worldly objects, going wrong in the process?

## 3-37

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

kAma ESha krOdha ESha rajOguNa samudbhava: |

mahAshanO mahA pApmA viddhi Enam iha vairiNam || 37 ||

]

Lord Krishna said: [kAma: ESha:] One reason is desire, [ESha: krOdha:] the other reason is anger. [rajOguNa samudbhava:] They arise out of the quality of [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas). [mahAshana:] Desire is insatiable - it eats a lot out of you. [mahA pApmA] It makes you wrong and causes guilt. [Enam iha vairinam viddhi] Know it as your enemy here.

A person who has embarked on the journey to realize the Self is still in contact with the material world. This world is pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and is subject to creation and destruction. [The quality of rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas) triggers desire. This makes a person yearn for experiences that stimulate his sense organs. This quality is accumulated due to activity committed over [beginning-less time](#beginningless_time).

It is an insatiable enemy, which pulls a person towards the experiences of the material world. This desire turns into anger when the desired experience is blocked. Anger is directed towards people who are perceived to block the experience. This will compel a person to act against other people.

Recognize desire as the cause of regret and guilt. It blocks your destiny. Look beyond desire.

Desire, which arises from the quality of passion, is quite common; it is the one that blocks the realization of the Self.

## 3-38

[

dhUmEnAvriyatE vahni: yathAdarshO malEna cha |

yathA ulbEna Avr`tO garbha: tathA tEna idam Avr`tam || 38 ||

]

[yathA] Just as [vahni:] fire [AvriyatE] is hidden [dhUmEna] by smoke, [cha] and as [Adarsha:] a mirror [malEna] is covered by dust, [yathA] just as [garbha:] a womb [Avr`tO] is concealed [ulbEna] by the membrane surrounding the embryo, [tathA] so also, [idam] all consciousness [Avr`tam] is covered [tEna] by this thing called desire.

Like a fire covered by smoke, like a mirror covered by dust, like a womb concealed by a membrane surrounding the embryo, this 'desire', as described in the above Shlokas, surrounds all beings.

In the next Shloka, Lord Krishna describes the way in which desire conceals things.

## 3-39

[

Avr`tam jnAnam EtEna jnAninO nitya vairiNA |

kAmarUpENa kauntEya duShpUrENa analEna cha || 39 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [jnAnam] the knowledge [jnAnina:] of a conscious person [Avr`tam] is hidden [EtEna] by this [nitya vairiNA] constant enemy [kAmarUpENa] called desire, [duShpUrENa] by the longing for things that you aren’t supposed to own [analEna cha] and by the tendency never to be satisfied.

At the core of a conscious being is knowledge. The knowledge of the Self is hidden by a constant enemy called desire, which gets us entangled in worldly pleasures. This desire clings to us due to two factors: Desire for things that we aren’t supposed to own and never being satisfied with what we have, never saying 'enough'.

What does this 'desire' use, to stay attached to a conscious being and overpower the independence of the Self? The next Shloka explains...

## 3-40

[

indriyANi manO buddhirasya adhiShThAnam uchyatE |

Etai: vimOhayatyESha: jnAnam Avr`tya dEhinam || 40 ||

]

[indriyANi manO buddhi:] The organs of the body, the mind and the intellect [uchyatE] are said to be [adhiShThAnam] the standing place [asya] of this desire. [Etai:] Through the body, mind and intellect, [ESha:] this desire [jnAnam Avr`tya] conceals the knowledge of the Self [dEhinam vimOhayati] and bewilders the owner of the body.

Desire uses the organs of the body, the mind and the intellect to invade the Self and control it. The body, mind and intellect are said to be the abode of desire. They tend to get attached to the material world, building up desire.

In this way, desire hides the Self, conceals its knowledge and confuses a person. Desire makes a person turn away from realizing the Self and turns him towards the sensual world.

## 3-41

[

tasmAt tvam indriyANyAdau niyamya bharatarShabha |

pApmAnam prajahi hyEnam jnAnavijnAana nAshanam || 41 ||

]

[bharatarShabha] Arjuna, [tasmAt] thus, [Adau] at the beginning of your enterprise, [tvam indriyANi niyamya] establish control over your organs. [prajahi] Get rid of [Enam] this source of wrong-doing, [jnAnavijnAna nashanam] which is responsible for hiding the knowledge of the Self and the realization of its true nature.

For a person who intends to realize the Self by meditation, this enemy called desire makes him turn towards worldly attractions. It makes him turn away from the Self. Due to the nature of your association with this world, you are still inclined towards the activities of your sense organs. Hence, bind your organs to work without desire for outcomes – right at the beginning of your quest to realize the Self and attain [moksha](#Moksha).

Abandon desire in this way. Otherwise it will destroy knowledge, wisdom and the realization of the true nature of the Self.

In the next Shloka, the Lord explains the main obstacles to realize the Self.

## 3-42

[

indriyANi parANyAhu: indriyEbhya: param mana: |

manasastu parA buddhi: yO buddhE: paratastu sa: || 42 ||

]

[indriyANi] The organs of the body [Ahu:] are said to be [parANi] powerful obstacles in the quest for the Self. [indriyEbhya: param] More powerful than these organs [mana:] is the mind. [manasastu parA] A more powerful obstacle than the mind [buddhi:] is the intellect, which is capable of totally wrong decisions. [ya:] Who is [buddhE: parata:] a more powerful obstacle than the intellect? [sa:] It is this thing called desire, mentioned before.

It is said that our external organs are prominent obstacles to realizing the Self. Indeed, when your sense organs indulge themselves in the stimuli of this world, knowledge of the Self cannot grow.

The mind is even more powerful than these organs. Even when you restrain your external organs, if your mind is preoccupied with worldly objects, knowledge of the Self remains hidden.

Even when the mind is restrained from all such preoccupations, if the intellect decides against it, there is no way you can realize the Self.

Even when the intellect is in the right direction, 'desire', which is born out of the quality of [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas), will bring the organs and the mind under its control. It will force them to indulge in worldly things.

Thus, it will stop the person from realizing the Self. In this way, desire is a more powerful obstacle than the intellect.

## 3-43

[

Evam buddhE: param buddhvA samstabhyAtmAnam AtmanA |

jahi shatrum mahAbAhO kAmarUpam durAsadam || 43 ||

]

[mahAbAhO] Arjuna, [Evam] in this way, [buddhvA] knowing [buddhE: param] this to be even more powerful than the intellect, [samstabhya] having supported [AtmAnam] your mind [AtmanA] with intellect born out of your Self, [jahi] abandon [kAmarUpam shatrum] this enemy called desire [durAsadam] which is, indeed, very difficult to destroy.

To look beyond desire, work without being driven by outcomes.

In this way, know that the enemy called 'desire' is a greater obstacle than the intellect in your quest of knowledge. With your intellect, let your mind persevere to [work without desire for outcomes](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga). In this way, forsake the tough enemy called desire and destroy its ill-effects on you.

# Chapter 4

As long as a person is associated with the material world, it isn’t possible to stay away from activity – even though he may seek [liberation](#Moksha). This was explained by the Lord in the third chapter. Hence a person needs to be active without being driven by outcomes. The path of activity is recommended even for a person who is able to focus on the Self. In particular, a person who is recognized as superior has special responsibility to stay active in this way.

In the fourth chapter, the Lord starts by saying that He imparted this knowledge to the initial beings of this world – right at the beginning – to uplift everyone. Reinforcing the need to be active, the Lord demonstrates that such activity has knowledge embedded in it. He describes the characteristics of such activity and its variety. He goes on to say that the main point of activity is knowledge. Along the way, he describes the true nature of His birth.

## 4-1 to 4-3

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

imam vivasvatE yOgam prOktavAn aham avyayam |

vivasvAn manavE prAha manur ikShvAkavE\_bravIt || 1 ||

Evam paramparA prAptam imam rAjarShayO vidu: |

sa kAlEnEha mahatA yOgO naShTa: parantapa || 2 ||

sa EvAyam mayA tE\_dya yOga: prOkta: purAtana: |

bhakO\_si mE sakhA chEti rahasyam hyEtad uttamam || 3 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said [aham] I [prOktavAn] preached [imam avyayam] this eternal [yOgam] method [vivasvatE] to the brilliant one, the Sun. [vivasvAn] The Sun, as the originator of the human race, [prAha] conveyed this [manavE] to Manu. [manu:] Manu [abravIt] conveyed it to [ikShvAkavE] Ikshvaku.

[parantapa] Arjuna, [Evam] in this way, [rAjarShaya:] [kings who were also sages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajarshi) [vidu:] knew this, [paramparA prAptam] having obtained the knowledge from previous generations. [mahatA kAlEna] Over a long period of time, [sa: yOga:] this method [naShTa:] was lost [iha] in this world.

[sa: Eva] The very same [purAtana:] ancient [yOga:] method [mayA prOkta:] has been told by me [tE] to you [iti] since [mE bhakta:] you are my devotee [sakhA cha] and my friend. [Etat hi] This is indeed [rahasyam] hidden knowledge [uttamam] of excellent nature.

The Lord says- ‘I’ve been teaching this method for millions of years’

The Lord says- In the previous chapter, I described [the method](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) of working without attachment. I didn’t describe it merely to have you make war.

Right at the beginning of the current manvantara (a period spanning 4,320,000 human years), I preached this method to Vivasvan. I did that for the benefit of the world- To enable people to achieve [moksha](#Moksha), the ultimate goal.

Vivasvan conveyed this to Manu. Manu, in turn, conveyed it to Ikshvaku. In this way, it was passed on from generation to generation. It was known by [kings who were sages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajarshi).

Though the method has remained unchanged since ancient times, knowledge of this method was lost due to the weakness of its listeners. I have taught you this very method in detail. I taught this due to your friendship, due to your devotion and due to the fact that you surrendered and approached me.

It's not possible for anyone other than Me to know this method and speak about it, since it is knowledge of the highest order. It is hidden in the Upanishads.

Continuing this conversation, Arjuna now asks to know the real nature of the Lord's incarnation in its true form.

## 4-4

[

arjuna uvAcha -

avaram bhavatO janma param janma vivasvata: |

katham Etat vijAnIyAm tvam Adau prOktavAn iti ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said- [bhavatO janma] Your birth [avaram] is recent. [vivasvata: janma] The birth of Vivasvan [param] was long ago. [katham vijAnIyAm] How can I understand [Etat] the fact, [tvam Adau prOktavAn iti] that You are the person who said this at the beginning?

Does the Lord take birth?

Arjuna asks- Going by the passage of time, Your birth is recent, in the same period as the rest of us. The birth of Vivasvan happened a long time ago- 28 sets of four-yugas ago, as calculated by the records.

*Yuga is a period of time. There are four yugas: [kr`ta] or [satya] with 1,728,000 years, [trEta] with 1,296,000 years, [dvApara] with 864,000 years and [kali] with 432,000 years.*

*A kalpa is 14 sets of 71 yuga-cycles, or 4.3 billion years.*

The statement that you were indeed the person who spoke at the beginning of this period sounds impossible. How can I grasp this fact in its real sense?

Of course, it can be explained that the Lord spoke to Vivasvan in some other birth. Great people can remember their deeds from a previous birth. So, there is no impossibility or contradiction over here. Moreover, while conversing, it's not that Arjuna was unaware of Krishna being the Lord of the universe. In fact, Arjuna himself says ‘You are the ultimate creator, the ultimate refuge and the ultimate in purity. You are a person who is eternal, divine, the ultimate master- this has been told by all the sages including Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa. You have told me the same.’ (See Chap.10#4 to Chap.10#13).

In Yudhishthira’s Rajasuya, Bhishma and others proclaimed again and again: ‘Krishna himself is the ultimate cause for the creation and destruction of the universe. All the conscious and unconscious beings exist for Krishna's purpose only ([bhArata. sabhA]. 38-26)

This means the whole world is under Krishna's control.

Arjuna's question can be detailed this way- Arjuna knows that the son of Vasudeva is indeed the Lord. Yet, he asks as though he doesn’t know.

This is the clarification he seeks: Is the birth of the Lord in human form an illusion?

The Lord is supreme and there’s nothing He needs. Why does he need to take birth in this world?

Consider this: The Lord destroys all troubles and is the abode of all auspicious qualities. He is the controller of everything and He knows everything. His purpose is always fulfilled and He has everything He desires. He has now been born among mortals, who are bound to their actions. Is this birth real? If so, what is the nature of this birth? What constitutes the body that is born? What's the cause of this birth? When is this birth going to happen? What's the goal of such a birth?

Arjuna sought clarifications to all these doubts with his question.

## 4-5

[

bhagavAn uvAcha -

bahUni mE vyatItAni janmAni tava cha arjuna |

tAnyaham vEda sarvANi na tvam vEttha parantapa || 5 ||

]

[bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord said- [bahUni mE janmAni] Many of my births [vyatItAni] have gone by; [tava cha] So have yours, [arjuna] Arjuna. [aham vEda] I know [tAni sarvANi] about all of them, [na tvam] while you don’t [vEttha] know, [parantapa] O destroyer of enemies.

The Lord says ‘Many of my births have gone by’- With this statement, the reality of the Lord's birth is told. By stating the similarity ‘so have yours’, the Lord invites us to a deeper understanding.

Next, the nature of the Lord's incarnation, the Lord's body in its actual form and the cause of the Lord's birth are explained.

## 4-6

[

ajOpi san avyayAtmA bhUtAnAm IshvarOpi san |

prakr`tim svamadhiShThAya sambhavAmi Atma mAyayA || 6 ||

]

[ajOpi san] Even though I am without birth, [avyayAtmA] even though I don’t wear-out, [bhUtAnAm IshvarOpi san] even though I am the lord of all beings, [sambhavAmi] I come into being (as an incarnation) [AtmamAyayA] by my own will, [prakr`tim svam adhiShThAya] residing in my own nature.

The Lord says- I take birth by My own will, retaining all of my characteristics

I come into being in various incarnations by My own will, while retaining My own qualities- I do not lose My quality of being free from birth; I don’t lose my nature of never wearing-out; I retain my characteristic of being the Lord of all beings. I reside in My nature of being the ultimate Lord.

The phrase ‘My nature’ has been used to mean ‘The Lord’s own qualities’. He says ‘I come into being over here by My own will, in My own form, retaining all the qualities of being the ultimate Lord’

The qualities of the Lord are described in these scriptures:

He is the color of the Sun, beyond darkness - [puruShasUkta]

He is unaffected by passions that wear out – [sAma vEda]

The radiant person inside the Sun - [ChAndOgya]

The ever-lasting person who can be grasped with a pure and clear mind [taittarIya]

All time periods originated from the one whose form is electric [taittarIya]

Whose purpose is always fulfilled, who has the universe within himself. He is all actions, all desires, all smells, all tastes [ChAndOgya]

His form is like gold [br’hadArAnyaka]

In this Shloka, the word [mAya] means ‘knowledge’, the miracle of awareness. It is said in [yaska nighantu dharmavarga 22]: ‘He knows the virtue and vice of all beings by His knowledge. His knowledge gives rise to His ‘will’- meaning, He consciously chooses a form as per His intention.

He says ‘I come into being in various forms- both human and powerful forms- by My own will, retaining all My auspicious qualities, being the destroyer of all misfortune, without giving up My essential nature of being the Lord of all beings’

It is said in the [purushasUkta]: ‘Though He is without birth, He is born in many forms’. This means He is not born like other mortals. He is born of His own will in a form that He chooses. Other parts of this chapter explain it as well: ‘Many of My births have gone by, so have yours, Arjuna. I know about all of them’ (Chap.4#5); ‘That’s the time when I make Myself come into being’ (Chap.4#7); ‘My birth and actions are divine. Know it as it really is’ (Chap.4#9)

Next, He explains time at which His birth happens-

## 4-7

[

yadA yadA hi dharmasya glAnirbhavati bhArata |

abhyutthAnam adharmasya tadAtmAnam sr`jAmyaham || 7 ||

]

[yadA yadA] Whenever [dharmasya glAnirbhavati] principles are subverted [abhyutthAnam] and there is increase in [adharma] vice, [aham AtmAnam] I make Myself [sr`jAmi] come into being [tadA] at that point in time.

My birth is not time-bound. The Vedas lay down principles that apply to the four professions (study, administration, trade and service) and the four stages in life (student, householder, retreat, renunciation). These principles are part of ‘dharma’. When they are subverted and factors that are opposed to them get the upper hand, I Myself come into being. I come into being by My own will, in the manner described before.

Next, He describes the purpose of his birth

## 4-8

[

paritrANAya sAdhUnAm vinAshAya cha duShkr`tAm |

dharma samsthApanArthAya sambhavAmi yugE yugE || 8 ||

]

[sambhavAmi] I take birth [yugE yugE] in the various [yugas](#yugas) [paritrANAya] for the protection [sAdhUnAm] of virtuous people, [vinAshAya] for the destruction [duShkr`tAm] of malice [cha dharma samsthApanArthAya] and to establish My principles.

Virtuous people are those who are inclined to stand for My principles, as described in the previous Shloka. They are called Vaishnavas and are the best among my followers. They exist in my refuge.

I form Myself, so that My followers can grasp and worship Me.

My name, actions and form cannot be expressed by speech or thought. Without seeing Me, My followers would neither carry their body nor nourish it. They feel that passing a moment without seeing Me is like the passing a thousand cycles of creation. They would lose strength in their limbs if they don’t see Me. I take birth to protect them, by showing Myself and by interacting with them. My birth is also to destroy those who are opposed to My followers.

To establish the principles laid down in the Vedas, I enable people to worship Me by showing Myself in a form that can be worshipped.

To accomplish these goals, I create Myself over the ages in the form of a human, a power or even something else.

In this Shloka, the phrase ‘various yugas’ conveys the meaning that the Lord has no preference for any particular [yuga](#yugas), such as [kr`ta] or [trEta]

## 4-9

[

janma karma cha mE divyam Evam yO vetti tattvata: |

tyaktvA dEham punarjanma naiti mAmEti sa: arjuna || 9 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [mE] my [janma karma cha] birth and deeds [divyam] are beyond the influences of this world. [ya:] Whoever [vetti] knows this fact [Evam] in this way, [tattvata:] in its real sense, [sa: naiti] will not end up [punarjanma] in another birth. [mAmEti] He will attain Me.

My birth is not subject to the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) embedded in nature- Unlike ordinary beings, who accumulate these qualities through their deeds and are born according to them. I retain all My auspicious qualities even when I am born- I am the Lord of everything, I know everything, My purpose is always fulfilled. I take birth with the intention of protecting the virtuous and with the intention of letting all beings take refuge in Me. My birth and deeds are beyond the influences of this world. A person who realizes this unique nature of my birth and deeds will not be born again after discarding his present body. This person will attain Me.

By knowing the real nature of My birth and deeds, which are beyond the influence of the world, all obstacles to take refuge in Me are destroyed. The person will take refuge in Me in his present life itself, as described before- having Me as the only desire, having Me alone in his consciousness. He will attain Me without fail.

## 4-10

[

vIta rAga bhaya krOdhA: manmayA mAm upAshritA: |

bahavO jnAna tapasA pUtA madbhAvam AgatA: || 10 ||

]

[bahava:] Many people [mAm upAshritA:] have taken refuge in Me, [vIta rAga bhaya krOdhA:] discarding desire, fear and anger. [manmayA:] They fill Me in their minds. [jnAna tapasA pUtA:] They have been purified by pursuing My knowledge single-mindedly [madbhAvam AgatA:] and have attained My qualities.

Many have been purified by pursuing the knowledge about the real nature of My birth, without getting distracted. They have reaped the benefits described previously. This is what the scriptures say: ‘Learned people know the nature of His birth’ [puruShasUkta].

In summary, The best among the wise will know the real nature of the Lord’s birth, as told in this chapter (Shlokas 5 to 9 above).

## 4-11

[

yO yathA mAm prapadyantE tAn tathaiva bhajAmyaham |

mama vartmAnuvartantE manuShyA: pArtha sarvasha: || 11 ||

]  
[yO] Whoever [mAm prapadyantE] surrenders and takes refuge in Me [yathA] in any way, [bhajAmi tAn] I will adore them [tathaiva] in the same way. [pArtha] Arjuna, [manuShyA:] people [anuvartantE] will follow [mama vartma] My path [sarvasha:] in every way.

I am easily grasped in any form you expect.

To protect those who want to take refuge in Me, I take the form of a man, a power or something else. That’s not the only thing I do. I also adore those who want to surrender and take refuge in Me. I show myself in a way that’s according to their expectation, as they picture Me in their mind.

There’s no need to elaborate the ease with which a person can experience Me. It’s very simple- All people who intend to follow Me will follow My path and experience Me. I am not expressible by speech or thought, even to those who practice the rigor of following Me. Yet, they will experience Me with sense organs such as their eyes- in all places and in all ways that they expect. In this way, they will follow Me.

Now, having completed the description of His incarnations, He explains that knowledge is embedded in all actions that are done without attachments (i.e., in [Karmayoga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga)). In the next Shloka, He says that people who practice such actions are rare.

## 4-12

[

kAnkShanta: karmaNAm siddhim yajanta iha dEvatA: |

kShipram hi mAnuShE lOkE siddhirbhavati karmajA || 12 ||

]

[iha] Here, [yajantE] people worship and adore [dEvatA:] various gods or other powers, [kAnkShanta:] desiring [karmaNAm siddhim] accomplishment in their actions. [hi] That’s because [mAnuShE lOkE] in this world of humans, [karmajA siddhi:] the accomplishment arising out of actions [kShipram bhavati] happens very quickly.

*The phrases ‘gods’ and ‘other powers’ are used to refer to people or forces of nature that seem to have the power to grant us what we desire. They could be parents, teachers, natural phenomena, corporate structures or influential people. Often, we try to please them to achieve what we want.*

All people desire to achieve the outcome of their actions. For this, they worship and adore gods and various powers. In reality, I am the one who resides in all gods and all powers, the basis for their existence. I am the one who ultimately enjoys all worship. Yet, nobody comes to Me by instinct. Why is it so?

Though the Lord is so easy to grasp, we remain focused on other short-term accomplishments.

That’s because in this world of humans, the accomplishment of action happens very quickly – accomplishments such as gaining wealth, the birth of a child, or having food.

The phrase ‘world of humans’ indicates the material world. People in the material world lack knowledge, since the influence of their infinite deeds committed over infinite time has not worn out yet. This lack of knowledge makes them go after results that can be obtained quickly – results such as comfort, wealth, children and food. For these, they work to please the various powers. They don’t work as prescribed [before](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) – they cannot stay without attachment to outcomes and cannot work to worship Me. They cannot be indifferent to the material world and focused on achieving [moksha](#Moksha).

Next, He describes the way in which the obstacles to start [working without attachments](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) can be removed.

*Since the link between the Shlokas at the beginning of this chapter is a bit difficult to follow, let’s draw an outline over here: In Shloka #4, Arjuna asks Krishna about the nature of his incarnation. Then Krishna replies: ‘I retain all My qualities in My incarnations. My actions are unaffected by the material world. Those who know Me in this way will attain My qualities. They will surrender to Me and experience Me as per their expectations. On the other hand, people try to please the various powers that they perceive, in order to get worldly outcomes. That’s because these outcomes satisfy their desires quickly. In reality, I am the enjoyer of all worship. People who work without being driven by desire, purely as worship towards Me are rare.*

*What does it mean to perform such actions? Take My work of creation, for instance-*

## 4-13

[

chAturvaNyam mayA sr`ShTam guNa karma vibhAgasha: |

tasya kartAram api mAm viddhi akartAram avyayam || 13 ||

]

[chAturvarNyam] The four characteristics [mayA sr`ShTam] were created by Me, [vibhAgasha:] classifying [guna] qualities [karma] and the associated work. [viddhi] Know [mAm] Me [tasya kartAram] as the one who caused it. [api akartAram] Even then, I am not the doer, [avyayam] I remain unchanged.

The four characteristics- [brAhmaNa] spirituality, [kShatriya] administration, [vaishya] trade, [shUdra] service- are prominent in all beings, right from Lord Brahma down to the lowest germ in this world. This whole world was created by Me, going by the distribution of [qualities (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*)](#satva_rajas_tamas) and the division of work according to the qualities.

The verb ‘create’ is illustrative over here. Lord Krishna is also the protector and destroyer of the universe. In this Shloka, He said- ‘Know that I caused all of this. Know also, that I am not the doer.’

How come? He answers this in the next Shloka:

## 4-14

[

na mAm karmANi limpanti na mE karma phalE spr`hA |

iti mAm yO\_bhijAnAti karmabhirna sa badhyatE || 14 ||

]

[karmANi] Actions [mAm na limpanti] do not stick to Me. [na mE] I don’t have [spr`hA] attachment [karma phalE] towards the outcome of actions. [iti mAm yO\_bhijAnAti] The person who knows Me in this way [sa: na badhyatE] will not be bound [karmabhi:] by actions.

Activities such as creation don’t stick to Me- They do not bind Me. They are not sponsored by Me either. The diversity of creation, like the various gods and humans, happens due to the deeds committed by the created beings – deeds that are virtuous or otherwise. Thus, I’m not the one who made this variety of creation happen, with the disparity of wisdom among its various beings.

Given that the Lord is supreme, is He the One who traps us in short-term gratification?

Conscious beings and material objects are part of the Lord’s creation. Conscious beings experience matter using organs and bodies created for that purpose. Their experience happens according to their past deeds. Such deeds were driven by attachment towards experiences and results. These conscious beings have attachment to various deeds, such as the creation of something. I don’t have this attachment.

The Lord doesn’t trap us. We are trapped by our own expectations.

Sutrakara says it in this way: [vaiShamyanaighr`NyO na sApEkShatvAt]: ‘The Lord does not have any prejudice or mercilessness. They arise out of expectations that we have from our actions.’ [vEdAnta sUtra] 2-1-34

Bhagavan Parashara says: ‘In the act of creating the world and its variety of different conscious beings, the Lord is only the cause. The influence of past deeds is the instrument behind this variety and inequality. Other than the cause, the conscious being doesn’t expect anything else. The conscious being is driven by the strength of its own deeds, committed in the material world since ancient times [vishNu purANa] 1-4-51,52.

*The essence of these references follows-*

The Lord just initiates the creation of this variety of conscious beings. The reason for differentiation among various beings (like gods, humans, animals) is the influence of their past deeds. Hence, other than the Lord as the ultimate cause of all creation, a conscious being does not need anything external to obtain various forms. The influence of its own past deeds is enough to make it assume various forms.

Whoever knows me in this manner is not bound by his deeds. This person knows Me as the initiator of activities such as creation. At the same time, he knows that I don’t make the result of creation happen, that I don’t have attachment in their results. Such a person is freed from all obstacles in the way of working without attachments- he will be free from the influence of past deeds, which cause attachment towards the outcome of activity.

*In summary, the Lord is not merciless or biased in the creation of varied conscious beings. The act of creation also does not stick to him as something that He has done. Nothing here contradicts the fact that He is the Lord of everything and controls everything. It’s just that He does not exercise his control indiscriminately. He permits things to happen according to the influence of the past deeds of a conscious being.*

## 4-15

[

Evam jnAtvA kr`tam karma pUrvairapi mumukShubhi: |

kuru karmaiva tasmAt tvam pUrvai: pUrvataram kr`tam || 15 ||

]

[Evam jnAtvA] Knowing this, [karma kr`tam] work was performed [mumukShubhi:] was practiced by people who wanted [moksha](#Moksha) [pUrvai: api] generations ago. [tasmAt] Hence, [tvam] you [kuru] practice [pUrvataram] this ancient and well-established [karma Eva] way of working as well, [pUrvai: kr`tam] just as your fore-fathers had done before you.

People who sought [moksha](#Moksha) knew me in this way during ancient times. They were freed from fault and worked without attachments, in the manner [described before](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga). In the same way, know My true form and abandon your faults too. Like Vivasvan and Manu, practice the ancient technique of working without being driven by desire- as I’ve already described previously.

In the next Shloka, He says that it’s very difficult to know the true nature of activity, the elaboration of which follows later.

## 4-16

[

kim karma kim akarmEti kavayO\_pyatra mOhitA: |

tattE karma pravakShyAmi yat jnAtvA mOkShyasE ashubhAt || 16 ||

]

[kim karma] What is activity? [kim akarma] What’s being free from activity? [atra] In this regard, [kavaya: api] even learned people [mOhitA:] are confused. [tE pravakShyAmi] I will tell you [tat karma] that kind of activity, [yat jnAtvA] knowing which, [mOkShyasE] you will be freed from [ashubhAt] the unpleasant.

Given that we’re trapped by our experience, where does activity figure?

What’s the nature of work done by a person who wants to achieve [moksha](#Moksha)? What does it mean to be free from activity?

Being free from activity is to know the true nature of the Self. The Self initiates activity. Even the wise are confused about the activities to pursue and the knowledge embedded in such activity.

I will now tell you about these activities and the knowledge embedded in them. By knowing them and practicing them, you will be freed from the bonds of the world. This knowledge and practice will lead you to work towards [moksha](#Moksha). That itself is the ultimate reward.

Be active without being driven by desire. Be liberated from the burden of expectations.

Why is this so difficult to realize? He explains this in the next Shloka.

## 4-17

[

karmaNO hyapi bOddhavyam bOddhavyam cha vikarmaNa: |

akarmaNashcha bOddhavyam gahanA karmaNO gati: || 17 ||

]

[hi] Indeed, [karmaNa: api] the nature of activity [bOddhavyam] must be known. [vikarmaNa:] The wide variety of activity [bOddhavyam] must be known [cha] too. [akarmaNa: cha] Even being free from activity [bOddhavyam] must be known. [karmaNa: gati:] The consequences of actions [gahanA] are extremely difficult to understand.

Indeed, we must know the activities that lead to [moksha](#Moksha). We must know the variety of different actions too – actions that we do daily, actions that are prescribed to us, actions that arise out of desire and actions that gather worldly items to satisfy these desires. We must know about being free from activity, which is the same as realizing the true nature of the Self.

It’s difficult to discern the course of activities done to achieve moksha.

Variety in activity is perceived due to their different outcomes – prescribed, routine, desire-driven and accumulation. Look beyond this variety and aim at a single outcome called [moksha](#Moksha). All knowledge points to the same fact – it is the ultimate goal.

It is already stated in Chap2#41, that ‘The intellect, which perseveres to determine the nature of the Self is singular’. It’s not elaborated further over here.

In the next Shloka, He teaches about being free from activity and about being active.

## 4-18

[

karmaNyakarma ya: pashyEt akarmaNi cha karma ya: |

sa buddhimAn manuShyEShu sa yukta: kr`tsna karma kr`t || 18 ||

]

[ya:] The person who [pashyEt] sees [akarma] freedom from activity [karmaNi] in action [cha ya:] and who sees [karma] action [akarmaNi] in the freedom from activity [sa:] –This person [buddhimAn] is intelligent. [sa:] He is [yukta:] eligible for moksha, [kr`tsna karma kr`t] having performed all activities.

When we know the true nature of the Self, we realize that it isn’t bound by activity. Things [happen](#actions_and_happenings).

Awareness of the Self brings the ‘freedom from activity’ mentioned here. This is distinct from merely doing our activities. The Shloka says ‘a person sees freedom from activity in action and sees action in the freedom from activity’- What does this mean?

A person sees his own activities take the form of awareness, when he works with the true nature of the Self. He also sees this knowledge in the form of activity – since the knowledge of the Self is embedded in action. He frames every work in the true nature of the Self, accomplishing both the activity as well as the knowledge to be gained from it.

In this way, an intelligent person inquires into the Self with his activities. He knows the entire essence of the scriptures. He alone has realized everything specified in the scriptures. He deserves [moksha](#Moksha).

Activity is an inquiry into the nature of the Self.

How do we realize the knowledge embedded in our activity while experiencing this world? This is answered in the next Shloka.

## 4-19

[

yasya sarvE samArambhA: kAma sankalpa varjitA: |

jnAnAgni dagdha karmANam tamAhu: paNDitam budhA: || 19 ||

]

[yasya] A person whose [sarvE samArambhA:] every initiative [kAma sankapla varjitA:] is separated from desire and expectation [jnAnAgni dagdha karmANam] has burnt his actions in the fire of knowledge. [budhA:] Scholars [Ahu:] say that [tam paNDitam] he is a wise person.

Here, ‘a person’ is someone who desires [Moksha](#Moksha). The phase ‘every initiative’ includes every activity, whether it’s routine, to gain material items or in pursuit of interests. Every action is an initiative that is ‘separate from desire’, done without attachment towards outcomes. Every action is also ‘separate from expectation’- meaning that such a person performs without equating himself with the environment and its [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), without focusing on them.

The Self is distinct from the environment. Awareness of the Self will separate actions from expectations. Awareness of the Self is like a fire. A wise person who works in this way is said to have destroyed his past deeds in this fire. This awareness is contained within activities that aren’t driven by desires or expectations. This is the opinion of scholars.

In this way, we saw knowledge in activity. This very fact is elaborated next.

## 4-20

[

tyaktvA karma phalAsangam nityatr`ptO nirAshraya: |

karmaNyabhipravr`ttO\_pi naiva kinchit karOti sa: || 20 ||

]

[tyaktvA] Having abandoned [karma phalAsangam] attachment towards outcomes, [nityatr`ptO] being eternally content, [nirAshraya:] having no dependence [karmaNyabhipravr`tta: api] even while in the midst of action, [sa:] he [naiva kinchit karOti] does not make anything [happen](#actions_and_happenings), indeed.

The person who works and abandons all attachment to outcomes is ‘eternally content’. Such a person is content in the eternal Self and is ‘without dependence’ - without the illusion that an unstable environment is his refuge. This person performs in the midst of the large variety of actions. Yet, he doesn’t make anything [happen](#actions_and_happenings).

Activity without attachment is the realization of the Self.

Under the guise of activity, he is involved in the pursuit of knowledge itself. That is the meaning here. In the next Shloka, again, knowledge that’s contained in activity is clarified.

## 4-21

[

nirAshIr yatachittAtmA tyakta sarva parigraha: |

shArIram kEvalam karma kurvan nApnOti kilbiSham || 21 ||

]

[nirAshI:] Without being driven by desire, [yatachittAtmA] keeping the mind and the consciousness under control, [tyakta sarva] having given up all [parigraha:] possessions, [kEvalam shArIram karma kurvan] merely doing the work that comes from having a body, [kilbiSham na ApnOti] he is not bound to his deeds.

A person who merely does the work that comes from having a body doesn’t accumulate fault and is not bound to the material world. Such work is described here:

The phrase ‘without being driven by desire’ is about leaving all attachment towards outcomes. The phrases ‘with the mind and consciousness under control’ and ‘having given up all possessions’- they are about having only one purpose, which is to realize the Self. In this purpose, there is no attitude of possessiveness towards the world, or towards things present in the world.

This person is not obstructed by the temptation to cease activity and contemplate. He will realize the Self, merely by working without being driven by attachments (as mentioned before).

## 4-22

[

yadr`chChA lAbha santuShTO dvandvAtItO vimatsara: |

sama: siddhAvasiddhau cha kr`tvApi na nibadhyatE || 22 ||

]

[yadr`chChA lAbha santuShTa:] Being satisfied with whatever comes by, [dvandvAtIta:] being beyond dualities in perception (dualities such as heat and cold), [vimatsara:] being free from ill-feelings like selfishness, greed, envy, jealousy and hostility, [siddhau asiddhau cha sama:] viewing both achievement and non-achievement of results equally, [na nibadhyatE] he is not bound, [kr`tvApi] even though he keeps performing actions.

This person’s state of being is described here. The phrases ‘he is satisfied with whatever comes by for the sustenance of the body’ and ‘he is beyond the dualities in perception’ convey that he tolerates the inevitable feelings such as heat and cold in this world, till the goal of [moksha](#Moksha) is reached.

The phrase ‘he is free from ill-feelings’ says that he has no ill-feelings towards others. He knows that the cause of any undesirable [happening](#actions_and_happenings) lies in his own deeds.

Lastly, the phrase ‘he views both achievement and non-achievement of results equally’ talks about balance. Such a person has balanced feelings in activities like war, whatever be the outcome reached – victory or otherwise. This person will not come back to worldly issues, even while involving in activity, even without [contemplating on the Self](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn).

## 4-23

[

gatasangasya muktasya jnAnAvasthita chEtasa: |

yajnAya Acharata: karma samagram pravilIyatE || 23 ||

]

[jnAnAvasthita chEtasa:] Placing his consciousness in the knowledge of the Self, [yajnAya Acharata:] performing actions for the sake of worship, [karmasamagram] all the past deeds [muktasya] of a person who is free from all possessions [pravilIyatE] will be destroyed without exception.

By focusing his mind on the awareness of the Self, he will lose attachment towards any other subject. He will be free from all possessions. However, the past has a binding effect. By dedicating his existence to [worship](#yajna) the Lord with his activity, as described before, he destroys the effects of his past deeds. None of his past deeds are retained.

Such activity is associated with a focus on knowing the real nature of the Self, which is detached from the environment. In this way, the knowledge embedded in activity was explained. Next, this knowledge is described by stating that all activities and their accessories are associated with an aim to reach the Supreme Lord.

## 4-24

[

brahmArpaNam brahma havi: brahmAgnau brahmaNA hutam |

brahmaiva tEna gantavyam brahma karma samAdhinA || 24 ||

]

[brahmArpaNam] With the implement of contribution, which is the work of the Lord, [brahma havi:] the offering, which is the work of the Lord, [brahmaNA hutam] is offered by a person, who is the work of the Lord, [brahmAgnau] in the fire, which is the work of the Lord. [brahmaiva tEna gantavyam] The Lord is certainly reached by [brahma karma samAdhinA] a person who firmly believes that every activity has the Lord embedded in it.

All activities burn something provided by the Lord, for the purpose of the Lord. This is worship.

The firm belief that all actions have the Lord as their basis, that all actions are pervaded by the Lord is explained here.

*Every time we work, we intend to make a contribution to others or to ourselves. For the explanation here, consider our activity to be analogous to making a contribution or offering to the fire.*

While making an offering during worship, the contribution is being offered to the Lord. The ladle that is used to make the offering is the implement which helps us in our work. By virtue of being a work of the Lord, it is the same as the Lord. The ladle used in contributing the offering to the Lord is itself pervaded by the Lord.

In this way, the contribution, the tool used in the work, the fire into which the contribution is made and the doer himself – all these are pervaded by the Lord. In this way, all actions have the Lord embedded in them.

The person who firmly believes that all actions are pervaded by the Lord will certainly reach the Lord. He will gain the knowledge of the Self with the Lord embedded in it – The Self that’s pervaded by the Lord.

In summary, a person who desires [moksha](#Moksha) works with the firm belief that every activity is pervaded by the Lord. With this belief, his activity leads him to realize the true nature of the Self. This will lead the person to know the Self without needing an [exclusive pursuit of knowledge](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn).

In this way, after teaching the knowledge that’s embedded in activity, The Lord goes ahead to describe the different methods of working without being driven by outcomes.

*The translation here has made a few interpretations. [brahmakArya] in the commentary has been translated to ‘work of the Lord’, which could either mean ‘The Lord is the cause of it’, or it could mean ‘being performed for the Lord’. Though they mean two different things, both are valid meanings. Also, phrases like [tat brahma] – ‘it is the Lord’ – have been translated to ‘it is the same as the Lord’. While reading this, equate it to ‘being pervaded by the Lord’. Of course, the whole universe is pervaded by the Lord. This firm belief while working will lead us to realize the Self and reach the Lord.*

How do I worship with activity?

## 4-25

[

daivamEvAparE yajnam yOgina: paryupAsatE |

brahmAgnau aparE yajnam yajnEnaiva upajuhvati || 25 ||

]

[aparE yOgina:] Others who practice [karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) [daivam yajnam Eva] worship the Lord Himself, [paryupAsate] dedicating their hearts and minds. [aparE] Some others [yajnam] worship [yajnEnaiva] with the tools meant for worship, [upajuhvati] making offerings [brahmAgnau] in the fire of the Lord.

Among people who work without being driven by outcomes, some worship and render service to the Lord. They achieve excellence through worship alone. Yet others perform by giving offerings in the sacred fire of the Lord, using implements such as a ladle and offering various things meant for worship. They achieve excellence by reasoning that ‘The Lord is the contribution’ and ‘The Lord is the implement’. Their life is about serving, offering and worshipping the Lord.

## 4-26

[

shrOtrAdIn IndriyANyanyE samyamAgniShu juhvati |

shabdAdIn viShayAn anyE indriyAgniShu juhvai || 26 ||

]

[anyE] Others [juhvati] sacrifice [shrOtrAdIn indriyANi] their organs such as hearing [samyamAgniShu] in the fire of self-control. [anyE] Yet others [juhvati] sacrifice [shabdAdIn] stimuli such as sound [indriyAgniShu] in the fire of the sense organs.

Others apply themselves to the art of restraining the sense organs such as the ears and the eyes. Yet others involve in the practice of removing the inclination of the sense organs towards stimuli such as sound.

## 4-27

[

sarvANIndriya karmANi prANa karmANi chAparE |

Atma samyama yOgAgnau juhvati jnAna dIpitE || 27 ||

]

[aparE] Yet others [juhvati] sacrifice [sarvANi indriya karmANi] all the actions of their organs [prANa karmANi cha] and involuntary actions to sustain life [Atma samyama yOgAgnau] in the fire of self-control, [jnAna dIpitE] which shines with the brilliance of knowledge.

Worship is to remove the pre-occupation with the material world.

Yet others burn all activities of their sense organs, as well as involuntary actions such as breathing, in the control of the mind. This ‘control of the mind’ is like a fire that shines bright with the light of knowledge. They strive to free the mind from its pre-occupation with voluntary actions of their organs, as well as involuntary actions such as breathing.

## 4-28

[

dravya yajnAstapO yajnA: yOga yajnAstathAparE |

svAdhyAya jnAna yajnAshcha yataya: samshita vratA: || 28 ||

]

[aparE] Others [dravya yajnA:] worship using material things, [tapOyajnA:] some worship through penance, [tathA yOgayajnA:] and some worship by reaching a destination. [svAdhyAya jnAna yajnA: cha] Yet others worship by studying the scriptures and understanding the meaning contained in them. [yataya: samshita vratA:] All of them are dedicated and have firm focus.

Working, offering something, breathing, self-control: each one is a form of worship.

Other people commit themselves to work without being driven by outcomes. They practice the [worship](#yajna) of the divine Lord by offering material things, which are earned in a just manner. Some do it by donating things, some others by performing [yAga] - ceremonies in which contributions are gifted to others. Some do it through [hOma] - offerings in fire. All these are methods to worship using material things.

Yet others practice devotion through penance- for example, by fasting in various ways. Some do it by reaching a certain destination– a place of worship (The word [yOga] is used in this Shloka to indicate this particular variety of [karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga), accomplished by reaching a place of worship). Some of them apply themselves to a study of the scriptures, while some focus on realizing the meaning contained in there.

All of them are dedicated people. They are said to have firm focus.

## 4-29 to 4-30

[

apAnE juhvati prANam prANE apAnam tathAparE |

prANApAna gatI ruddhvA prANAyAma parAyaNA: || 29 ||

aparE niyatAhArA: prANAn prANEShu juhvati |

]

[aparE prANAyAma parAyaNA:] Others who pursue the regulation of their breath [niyatAhArA:] regulate the intake of food [apAnE juhvati prANam] and give their breath as an offering in the process of exhalation. [tathA] Yet others [prANE apAnam] offer their breath in the process of inhalation. [aparE] Others [prANApAna gatI ruddhvA] restrict the rate of inhalation and exhalation [prANEShu prANAn juhvati] and offer the activities needed for sustenance of life to those activities themselves.

Others who practice [[karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga)] achieve excellence through the technique of breath control – [prANAyAma]. These people are of three types: [pUraka], [rEchaka] and [kumbhaka].

People who give up the intake of breath in its outflow, as an offering are called [pUraka]. Those who give up the outflow in the intake are called [rEchaka]. Those who restrict the rate of intake and outflow of breath are called [kumbhaka]; they leave life-sustaining activities in their breath itself.

All of them regulate their intake of food as well.

## 4-30 (cont.) to 4-31

[

sarvEpi EtE yajnavidO yajna kShapita kalmaShA: || 30 ||

yajna shiShTAmr`ta bhujO yAnti brahma sanAtanam |

]

[EtE sarvEpi] All these people [yajna vida:] know about worship. [yajna kShapita kalmaShA:] By worshiping, they have been rid of their faults. [yajna shiShTAmr`ta bhuja:] They sustain their bodies using the residue of worship. [yAnti brahma sanAtanam] They will reach the ever-present Lord.

The previous Shlokas described various kinds of people who work without being driven by attachments. The description started with people who [worship](#yajna) with material things and went on to describe those who practice the technique of breath-control. All of them involve in activities that suit them best. All of them know the forms of worship that are done as part of daily life. By practicing these forms of worship with devotion, they have been rid of their faults.

In turn, these forms of worship lead to the great ways of worship mentioned in the Shlokas starting with ‘The Lord created living beings along with various forms of worship’ (Chap.3#10). All these people support the existence of their bodies using the residue of worship. In this way, they work without being driven by attachments. All of them reach the ever-present Lord.

## 4-31 (cont.)

[

nAyam lOkO\_sti ayajnasya kutO\_nya: kurusattama || 31 ||

]

[kurusattama] Arjuna, [ayam lOka: nAsti] even this material world is not [ayajnasya] for a person without worship. [anya: kuta:] How can he achieve anything else?

A person who doesn’t recognize worship is living a myth and is doomed to fail.

When a person doesn’t practice worship in daily life, he doesn’t find a place in this material world itself. The great forms of worship follow the practice of worship in daily life. Such a person is not successful in upholding his righteousness, nor does he achieve goals like wealth and desires, which are related to the material world.

How can he achieve the ultimate goal of [Moksha](#Moksha), which is different from all this? The goal of [Moksha](#Moksha) is shown to be superior to all other goals. The phrase ‘this material world’ signifies all the goals we experience naturally.

## 4-32

[

Evam bahuvidhA yajnA vitatA brahmaNO mukhE |

karmajAn viddhi tAn sarvAn Evam jnAtvA vimOkShyasE || 32 ||

]

[Evam] In this way, [bahuvidhA:] many varieties of [yajnA:] worship [vitatA:] were elaborated [brahmaNO mukhE] as ways in which we can realize the Self. [viddhi] Know [sarvAn] them all [karmajAn] to be born out of activity. [Evam jnAtvA] Knowing this, [vimOkShyasE] you will attain [Moksha](#Moksha).

In this way, the Lord explained many ways of working without being driven by attachments. He presented them as the means to attain the true nature of the Self. Know that all of them are born out of activity- know them to occur in our daily activities and in activities that are prescribed to us. You will attain [Moksha](#Moksha) by knowing this and following this path of activity, as described.

Activity has knowledge woven into it. In this way, knowledge in action was explained. Next, The Lord says that knowledge is indeed the main point of activity.

## 4-33

[

shrEyAn dravya mayAt yajnAt jnAnayajna: parantapa |

sarvam karmAkhilam pArtha jnAnE parisamApyatE || 33 ||

]

[parantapa] Arjuna, [jnAnayajna:] the knowledge embedded in worship [shrEyAn] is more significant [dravya mayAt yajnAt] than worship that’s full of material offerings. [pArtha] Arjuna, [sarvam karma] every activity, [akhilam] without exception, [parisamApyatE] culminates [jnAnE] in knowledge.

In each activity, recognize the Self and its relationship with the Lord,

Activity can be seen in two faces: One that is full of material things and another that is full of knowledge. Among these, the form that is full of knowledge is by far the more significant. Every activity culminates in knowledge, along with everything else that’s included in it.

*The phrase ‘everything else’ in the commentary here includes all the happenings and experiences that we receive with activity.*

This knowledge is available in all endeavors. Practice and recognize it in all activity. When it is practiced in this way, in time, it will lead us to the ultimate goal of [Moksha](#Moksha).

## 4-34

[

tadviddhi praNipAtEna pariprashnEna sEvayA |

upadEkShyanti tE jnAnam jnAnina: tattva darshina: || 34 ||

]

[tat viddhi] Know this [praNipAtEna] by surrendering, [pari prashnEna] by cross questioning, [sEvayA] by rendering service and by listening to a teacher. [jnAnina:] Those who know [tattva darshina:] and show the way [upadEkShyanti] will preach [jnAnam] this knowledge [tE] to you.

The Lord continues- I described the Self, starting with ‘Know that the Self is indestructible’ (Chap.2#17), ending with ‘This learning about the knowledge of the Self has been given to you’ (Chap.2#39). By continuously working with this knowledge, your maturity will progress over time. Gain clarity on this subject from wise people regularly, in accordance with the maturity you achieve. Do this by giving yourself to those who know, by questioning them and by serving them. They will see your intention and teach the knowledge to you, being inspired by your eagerness to know.

Next, He describes this knowledge of the Self – in its true form, how it would look once it is realized.

## 4-35

[

yat jnAtvA na punarmOham Evam yAsyasi pAndava |

yEna bhUtAnyashEShENa drakShyasi AtmanyathO mayi || 35 ||

]

[pAndava] Arjuna, [yat jnAtvA] after knowing this, [Evam mOhan na yAsyasi] you will never be confused in this way again. [yEna] With this knowledge, [drakShyasi] you will see [bhUtAni ashEShENa] all beings, without exception [Atmani] within your Self, [athO mayi] and then in Me.

The Lord tells Arjuna: You are deluded right now, thinking that your body is your Self and falling for the resultant feeling of possessiveness. You will not get deluded after knowing the true nature of the Self.

With this knowledge, you will see all beings– including those we call as humans and gods– within your Self. That’s because all beings, when detached from the material environment, have a form that consists of knowledge alone. That includes you. In this way, all beings are equivalent. The nature of the Self is always the same when it is freed from the limitations of associating with the environment. This fact is stated again in (Chap.5#19): ‘Freed from all these limitations, the Self is equivalent in nature to the Lord. Hence, they are situated within the Lord’.

In this way, you will see all beings in Me without any exception. Due to the fact that the Self in each being is equivalent in nature to the Lord, it is totally flawless, as said in (Chap14#2): ‘Having gained this knowledge, they achieve My characteristics’.

It is also stated in [muMDaka upanishad 3-1-3]: ‘Having gained this knowledge, a person will give up his good and bad deeds, become flawless and achieve the ultimate equality’. In this way, the various scriptures illustrate that the Self, when freed from everything that has a name, attains a form that’s equivalent to the Lord.

When freed from the material environment, the Self in every being is alike and equivalent in nature to the Lord.

## 4-36

[

api chEdasi pApEbhya: sarvEbhya: pApakr`ttama: |

sarvam jnAnaplavEnaiva vr`jinam santariShyasi || 36 ||

]

[api chEt] Even if [asi] you are [pApakr`ttama:] the most miserable [pApEbhya:] among all those who have done wrong, [santariShyasi] you will cross over [sarvam vr`jinam] all the misery [jnAnaplavEna Eva] by the boat of knowledge alone.

Even if you have done more wrong than all other wrong-doers, you will cross over the entire sea of your past wrong-doings by the knowledge of the Self alone. It’s like crossing the ocean in a ship.

## 4-37

[

yathaidhAmsi samiddhOgni: bhasmasAt kurutE\_rjuna |

jnAnAgni: sarvakarmANi bhasmasAt kurutE tathA || 37 ||

]

[Arjuna] Arjuna, [yathA] just as [samiddhOgni:] a well-burning fire [EdhAmsi bhasmasAt kurutE] annihilates fuel, [tathA] in the same way, [jnAnAgni:] the fire of knowledge [sarvakarmANi bhasmasAt kurutE] will burn down all your past actions.

Awareness of the Self and the Lord liberates us from our flaws.

A well-burning fire turns an entire mass of solid fuel into ashes. The knowledge of the Self is similar to that fire. It burns down the entire list of endless deeds committed since eternity, which have stuck to the Self till now.

## 4-38

[

na hi jnAnEna sadr`sham pavitramiha vidyatE |

tatsvayam yOgasamsiddha: kAlEnAtmani vindati || 38 ||

]

[na vidyatE iha] There is nothing in this world, [jnAnEna sadr`sham] which is equal to knowledge [pavitram] in its flawlessness. [yOgasamsiddha:] A person who has attained maturity by working without being driven by attachments [tat vindati] will find that knowledge [Atmani swayam] in his own Self, [kAlEna] over time.

There is nothing else in this world that’s similar to the knowledge of the Self. It is unmatched in its purity or in its power to purify. In this way, the knowledge of the Self will destroy all wrongs. Having accomplished the practice of working every single day without being driven by attachments - as described before – over time, a person automatically obtains this knowledge in his own Self.

In the next Shloka, the Lord describes the same concept in a more elaborate manner.

## 4-39

[

shraddhAvAn labhatE jnAnam tatpara: samyatEndriya: |

jnAnam labdhvA parAm shAntim achirENAdhigachChati || 39 ||

]

[shraddhAvAn] A person who trusts, [tatpara:] is eagerly engaged [samyatEndriya:] and has his sense organs under control [labhatE jnAnam] will obtain knowledge. [labdhvA jnAnam] Having obtained this knowledge, [achirENa adhigachChati] he will quickly attain [parAm shAntim] the ultimate composure.

A person receives this knowledge by instruction. He eagerly grows the instructed awareness with dedication, focusing the mind to consolidate this knowledge. He restrains his sense organs from other subjects.

Such a person quickly realizes the true nature of the Self, along with the maturity associated with such realization. After realizing this knowledge, he will gain ultimate composure without delay.

## 4-40

[

ajnashcha ashraddadhAnashcha samshayAtmA vinashyati |

nAyam lokO\_sti na parO na sukham samshayAtmana: || 40 ||

]

[ajnashcha] A person without this knowledge, [samshayAtmA] who has suspicion in his mind [ashraddadhAnashcha] and is not dedicated [vinashyati] will perish. [ayam lOka: nAsti] He is not eligible for anything in this world [na para:] nor in any other world.

A person who doesn’t have this knowledge or its instruction and is not dedicated wouldn’t make haste to consolidate the awareness that has been preached. Such a person is suspicious about this knowledge and will be wasted. This world is not for such a person, who is suspicious about the knowledge of the Self, as explained already. Neither is any other world suited for him. To elaborate, even material goals related to a person’s duties, wealth or desires in life will not be achieved – let alone [moksha](#Moksha).

All objects of human pursuit are achieved by working with awareness. Goals resulting from such awareness are complete with the conviction that the Self within us is separate from our body. Hence, when a person is suspicious about the Self, he does not experience even a little happiness.

## 4-41

[

yOga saMnyasta karmANam jnAna sanChinna samshayam |

Atmavantam na karmANi nibadhnanti dhananjaya || 41 ||

]

[dhananjaya] Arjuna, [karmANi] activities [na nibadhnanti] do not limit [yOga saMnyasta karmANam] a person who is free from possessiveness towards his work. [jnAna sanChinna samshayam] With the knowledge of the Self, such a person is rid of doubts [Atmavantam] and stays focused on the Self.

By working without being driven by attachments, as described before, a person is free from all feelings of possessiveness towards his work. The knowledge of the Self is embedded in such work. With this knowledge, he gets rid of all doubts concerning the Self. He is totally focused on the Self with a very determined mind to support that focus. The endless deeds committed since ancient times, which collectively cause our worldly limitations, do not cling to him.

## 4-42

[

tasmAt ajnAna sambhUtam hr`tstham jnAnAsinAtmana: |

Chitvainam samshayam yOgamAthiShTha uttiShTha bhArata || 42 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [tasmAt] that’s why [ChitvA] you must cut off [Enam samshayam] this suspicion, [hr`tstham] which has taken its place in your heart [ajnAna sambhUtam] due to ignorance. [Atmana: jnAnAsina] Cut it off using the knowledge of the Self as a sword. [yOgam AtiShTha] Having done this, follow the path of working without being driven by attachments [uttiShTha] and get up.

Doubts and suspicions come from ignorance. Get rid of it by working without attachments.

Doubts and suspicions have taken their place inside you, due to your ignorance. Cut off these doubts about the Self, using the sword of knowledge – I’ve instructed this knowledge about the Self and the path of working without being driven by attachments. Get up to follow it.

# Chapter 5

The fourth chapter described activities that aren't driven by attachment. Such activities stand out by the knowledge embedded in them. It was said (Chap.4#33) that these activities are pervaded by knowledge. Before that, in the third chapter (see Chap.3#8), it was said that activity is the way to go- even for those who are capable of exclusive contemplation. Realization through activity is preferred to contemplation. This is due to the purity and knowledge contained in such activity. Moreover, these activities don’t require any other prerequisites or accessories.

This chapter explains that [working without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) is a quicker technique to realize the true nature of the Self, in comparison to exclusive contemplation. It also gives the method to internalize and apply the concept of ‘I am not the doer’- a concept that’s embedded in such work. Finally, it describes the knowledge that arises out of this method

## 5-1

[

arjuna uvAcha -

saMnyAsam karmaNAm kr`ShNa punaryOgam cha shamsasi |

yachChrEya EtayOrEkam tanmE brUhi sunishchitam || 1 ||

]

Arjuna says: [kr`ShNa] O Krishna, [shamsasi] You recommend [karmaNAm saMnyAsam] giving up actions. [puna:] You also [yOgam cha] recommend determined and skillful action, without being driven by attachments. [EtayO:] Among these two paths, [yat shrEya:] which one is preferred? [tat mE brUhi sunishchitam] Tell that to me clearly.

Arjuna said to Krishna: You recommend giving up the activities of our organs and focusing on knowledge (Chap.2#55). Then, you recommend activities that are free of attachments.

Isn't it easier to realize the Self by contemplation, instead of doing all kinds of activities?

To elaborate: In the second chapter, it was said that the starting point for a person who wishes to achieve [moksha](#Moksha) is to work without being driven by desire. By working in this manner, we get rid of our faults, after which we are able to contemplate our Self. Then, in the third and fourth chapters, it is said that activity is preferred even for a person who is able to contemplate exclusively. Further, You said that [activity without attachments](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) – purely done as worship to the Lord – in itself is the way to realize the Self, without having to contemplate exclusively. In this way, You advocated such activity.

Tell me which one of these is preferred: Contemplating the Self while giving up activity? Or working without being driven by attachments? Which is the easier and quicker way to realize the Self?

## 5-2

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

saMnyAsa: karmayOgashcha nishshrEya sakarau ubhau |

tayOstu karma saMnyAsAt karmayOgO vishiShyatE || 2 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said- [ubhau] Both techniques- [saMnyAsa:] giving up actions [cha] and [karmayOga:] working without being driven by attachments - [nishshrEya sakarau] lead to [moksha](#Moksha). [tayOstu] Among them, [karmayOga:] work that’s not driven by desire [vishiShyatE] stands out [karma saMnyAsAt] in preference to giving up work itself.

The Lord said – Liberation is achieved by either technique – by contemplating without any activity, or by activity that's not driven by attachments. The latter is available even for a person who is able to contemplate exclusively. These techniques do not need any other support or accessories.

Among them, [working without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) is definitely preferred.

How come? This is explained in the next Shloka.

## 5-3

[

jnEya: sa nitya saMnyAsI yO na dvEShTi na kAnkShati |

nirdvandvO hi mahAbAhO sukham bandhAt pramuchyatE || 3 ||

]

[mahAbAhO] Arjuna, [ya:] The person who [na kAnkShati] is not addicted to desires [na dvEShTi] and is not carried away by hatred – [sa:] he [nirdvandva:] has overcome dualities. [nityasaMnyAsI jnEya:] it is to be known, that he stays beyond desire. [sa: hi] He alone [sukham pramuchyatE] is easily freed [bandhAt] from the limitations of this world.

Working without being driven is the quickest way to look beyond desires

The person who practices the technique of working without attachment is satisfied with the experience of the Self. This experience is embedded in the technique. He does not yearn for anything else. In the same way, he does not hate anything either. In this way, he tolerates all dualities (such as hot and cold, joy and sorrow). He is the one who has given up all worldly things – he alone is known to pursue the knowledge of the Self. That is equivalent to [contemplation](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn). He alone will be freed from worldly limitations with ease – due to his diligence in working without being driven by attachments.

In the next Shloka, the Lord says that the techniques of [contemplation](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) and [activity](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) are mutually independent. They do not need each other to achieve their results.

## 5-4

[

sAnkhya yOgau pr`thak bAlA: pravadanti na panditA: |

Ekam apyAsthita: samyak ubhayOr vindatE phalam || 4 ||

]

[bAlA:] Naïve people [pravadanti] say that [sAnkhya yOgau] the two techniques – Knowing by contemplation and the technique of working independent of desire - [pr`thak] are different in terms of the results they yield. [panditA: na] Learned people do not say that. [samyak Asthita:] A person who properly practices [ubhayO: Ekam api] any one among the two [phalam vindatE] will obtain the result.

Naïve people proclaim the difference between the [knowledge of the Self](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) and the technique of working without being driven. They are naïve in the sense that they do not know reality in its true form. They haven't learnt it and definitely don’t know everything. They have a misconception that working without attachment merely enables a person to contemplate the Self. They are mistaken that contemplation is the only way to realize the true nature of the Self.

In reality, both techniques yield the same result – the realization of the true nature of the Self. Practicing any one of them will yield that realization.

In the next Shloka, He elaborates the same thing:

## 5-5

[

yatsAnkhyai: prApyatE sthAnam tat yOgairapi gamyatE |

Ekam sAnkhyam cha yOgam cha ya: pashyati sa pashyati || 5 ||

]

[yat sthAnam prApyatE] The state of Self-realization gained [sAnkhyai:] by people who [contemplate exclusively](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) [yOgairapi tat gamyatE] is also reached by people who [work without being driven](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn). [ya: pashyati] The one who sees [sAnkhyam cha yOgam cha] both of them [Ekam] as one [sa pashyati] is the person who realizes.

Those who contemplate exclusively will reach the state of Self-realization at the end of their quest. The same Self-realization is obtained by people who work without being driven by desire. In this way, a wise person sees these two options of [[jnAnayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn)] and [[karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)] as being the same – by virtue of having the same destination.

Next, he explains the specialty of each technique.

## 5-6

[

saMnyAsastu mahAbAhO du:kham Aptum ayOgata: |

yOgayuktO munir brahma na chirENa adhigachChati || 6 ||

]

[mahAbAhO] Arjuna, [saMnyAsa: tu] giving up everything else to contemplate exclusively [du:kham] is extremely difficult [Aptum] to achieve [ayOgata:] without activity. [yOgayukta:] A person who works without being driven by desire, [muni:] who has the intention to realize the Self, [adhigachChati] will realize [brahma] the true nature of the Self [na chirENa] without delay.

It isn't possible to give up everything else in [exclusive contemplation](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn), without working independent of desire. On the other hand, a person who is intent on realizing the Self, who is focused on [working without being driven by desires](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) – will easily realize the Self without delay.

A person who attempts to contemplate the true nature of the Self exclusively would experience extreme difficulty. Due to this difficulty, he would take a very long time to realize the Self.

## 5-7

[

yOgayuktO vishuddhAtmA vijitAtmA jitEndriya: |

sarva bhUtAtma bhUtAtmA kurvannapi na lipyatE || 7 ||

]

[yOgayukta:] A person who has dedicated himself to work without being driven by desire [vishuddhAtmA] purifies himself, [vijitAtmA] conquers his mind [jitEndriya:] and keeps his organs under control. [sarvabhUta Atma bhUtAtmA] He considers the Self that’s present in all beings as being equal to his own Self [na lipyatE] and is not stuck to anything, [kurvannapi] even though he keeps doing his work.

A person who is dedicated to working independent of desire isn’t stuck to his deeds, even though he is involved in doing them. What is the state of such a person? How come the deeds don’t stick to him? That is explained here.

The Self in every person is identical. It doesn’t make anything [happen](#actions_and_happenings).

Such a person works free from the influence of desire. His activities are done purely as worship to the Lord, as described in the scriptures. With that, his mind is purified – it is not under the control of various desires. In this way, he gains control over himself. He has conquered his mind easily, by keeping it engaged and focused on his own work. With this, he easily keeps his organs under control.

He dedicates himself to an inquiry into the true nature of the Self, which is the author of actions. Due to this dedication, he realizes that the Self within himself is of the same nature as the ‘Self’ that’s present in everyone. The non-uniform effects of nature result in the variety of beings that we see. These cannot indicate that a different form of the Self exists in everyone. When the Self is freed of the influence of nature, it has identical form inside everybody. This is elaborated in one of the next Shlokas (Chap.5#19).

Being in this state, this person does not get stuck with the idea that something that’s not the Self, is actually the Self. In this way he quickly realizes the Self. Thus, activity is easier and faster than contemplation and is definitely preferred.

Now listen to what’s needed to apply the technique of working without being driven.

## 5-8 to 5-9

[

naiva kinchit karOmIti yuktO manyEta tatvavit |

pashyan shr`Nvan spr`shan jighran ashnan gachChan svapan shvasan || 8 ||

pralapan visr`jan gr`hNan unmiShan nimiShannapi |

indriyANi indriyArthEShu vartanta iti dhArayan || 9 ||

]

[tatvavit] A person who knows the nature of the Self, [yukta:] who has dedicated himself to worship to the Lord with activity [dhArayan] will consider that [indriyANi] his organs [vartanta] will remain among [indriyArthEShu] things that stimulate them, [manyEta] and knows that [naiva kinchit karOmi] ‘I do not do anything’ [pashyan] while seeing, [shr`Nvavn] hearing, [spr`shan] touching, [jighran] smelling, [ashnan] eating, [gachChan] moving around, [svavpan] sleeping, [shvasan] breathing, [pralapan] talking, [visr’jan] letting go, [gr`hNan] holding, [unmiShan] when his eyes are open [nimiShan api] and when they are shut.

In this way, a person who knows the Self will consider that all organs of the body will be among the objects sensed and perceived by them. This includes sensory organs such as the ears, organs of action such as those associated with speech and organs involved in involuntary activities. This person knows that ‘I do not make anything happen’.

The illusion that we make things happen is a result of our past deeds.

The belief that ‘I am the one who makes it happen’ arises out of the association with our organs and actions required to sustain ourselves. This association is a result of our past deeds. It is not our inherent nature. Our innate characteristic is that of pure knowledge and knowledge alone.

## 5-10

[

brahmaNyAdhAya karmANi sangam tyaktvA karOti ya: |

lipyatE na sa pApEna padma patram ivAmbhasA || 10 ||

]

[ya:] The person who [AdhAya] places [karmANi] all deeds [brahmaNi] in nature itself [karOti] and works [sangam tyaktvA] while giving up all attachments [sa: na lipyatE] is not bound by [pApEna] any fault, [padma patram ambhasA iva] like a lotus leaf in water.

The word [brahma] here refers to this world, our environment. It’s in line with Chap.14#3, where the word [brahma] is used to mean the world: ‘The entire world is My womb’.

A person who works while giving up all attachment to results, with the firm opinion that ‘I am not the one who makes things happen’ will know that the various forms and shapes of our organs are the effects of Nature. He places his actions in Nature itself, according to Chap.5#8 – ‘while seeing, hearing, touching’

The word ‘Nature’ refers to the environment around us, which in turn is a manifestation of our sense organs.

In this way, he isn’t stuck to faults that cause limitations. He isn’t under the impression that the environment (his body) is his Self, even while being associated with the environment. He is like a lotus leaf in water. Even though the leaf is in water, the water does not stick to it – the leaf doesn't get wet.

## 5-11

[

kAyEna manasA buddhyA kEvalairindriyairapi |

yOgina: karma kurvanti sangam tyaktvA Atma shuddhayE || 11 ||

]

[yOgina:] People who worship Me with their activities [karma kurvanti] do their work [kAyEna] using their bodies, [manasA] their minds, [buddhyA] their intellect [kEvalai: indriyairapi] or just with their organs, [sangam tyaktvA] while giving up attachments [Atma shuddhayE] to purify the Self.

People who [work without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) are free of the desire for outcomes while working via their body, their mind, their intellect and their organs. In addition, they give up the expectation that good deeds will make good things happen. They carry out their work to purify the Self. This ‘purification’ is about getting rid of the limitations imposed by actions, whose effects have stuck to the Self from ancient times.

## 5-12

[

yukta: karma phalam tyaktvA shAntim ApnOti naiShThikIm |

ayukta: kAmakArENa phalE saktO nibadhyatE || 12 ||

]

[yukta:] A person who is intent and engaged [karma phalam tyaktvA] will give up the attachment to outcomes [ApnOti] and will obtain [naiShThikIm shAntim] the joy of experiencing the Self in its pure form. [ayukta:] A person who does not do this [phalE sakta:] is attached to the outcome of his activities. [kAmakArENa] Being driven by desire, [nibadhyatE] he is tied down to the stimuli of this world.

A person is tuned to the realization of the Self alone, when he isn't moved by any outcome other than the experience of the Self. He will work only to purify the Self. All other outcomes don't matter to him. He will attain eternal joy – the enduring bliss of experiencing the Self.

A person who doesn't work in this way is interested in all kinds of outcomes other than the realization of the Self. He has turned away from the goal of realizing his Self. Inspired by desire, he is attached to the outcomes of his activities. While doing his work in this way, he will be bound by his actions always. He will always be attached to the stimuli of this world.

In summary, it is said here that the purpose of your activity is only to relieve the Self of its binding. Don't be driven by expectations regarding the outcomes of your actions. Give up your actions in nature, which has taken the form of your organs.

Next, The Lord talks about giving up ‘doer-ship’ in the environment itself, a part of which is your body.

## 5-13

[

sarva karmANi manasA saMnyasyAstE sukham vashI |

navadvArE purE dEhI naiva kurvan na kArayan || 13 ||

]

[saMnyasya] Having given up [sarva karmANi] all actions [navadvArE pure] in the city with nine gates (the body) [manasA] using the mind, [dEhI] the Self, which is the owner of the body [vashI] will control his organs [sukham AstE] and stay content [naiva kurvan na kArayan] without committing any action directly or indirectly.

*Actions​ are ‘committed’ when we work with the feeling of ‘I am the doer’, being driven by some desire.* *All that work is done by our body. This Shloka describes our body as a city - it's a complex ecosystem with specialized parts, It has nine opening 'gates' - two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, one mouth and the two excretory organs.*

While working, the feeling that ‘I am the doer’ is due to the relationship with our body. That is in turn due to the actions of our Self, committed since ancient times.

When our mind is enlightened by this fact, we know that attachments are not in our true nature. The Self leaves all actions in the city with nine gates. With this, the Self stops struggling to stay within the refuge of the body. Realizing that it owns the body out of circumstance and not by nature, the Self remains content without committing the actions of the body.

In the next Shloka, the Lord clearly describes the state of being of the Self.

## 5-14

[

na kartr`tvavm na karmANi lOkasya sr`jati prabhu: |

na karma phala samyOgam svabhAvastu pravartatE || 14 ||

]

[prabhu:] The Self [na sr`jati] does not create [kartr`tvam] the impression of making things happen, [lOkasya] an impression associated with this material world. [karmANi na] Neither does it create the actions of this material world, [na karma phala samyOgam] nor the impression that outcomes are inseparably linked with these actions. [svabhAvastu] The nature of this material world [pravartatE] prevails.

Happenings and asymmetry belong in the environment.

By its very nature, the Self is free of the influence of actions. It does not manufacture the impression of making things happen, which is associated with this world of humans, [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), animals and inanimate things. Neither does it make the actions of this world, nor the outcomes that are apparently linked to the actions – both of which are not within its inherent nature. Then who is it that creates them?

He says ‘It naturally prevails’: Here, the word ‘naturally’ refers to the notions created by nature. Various actions committed since ancient times have generated our association with our bodies and the nature around us. This generates an opinion that our body itself is our Self. Under the influence of this opinion, the impression that ‘I make things happen’ is born, along with the attachment to our deeds. It is not born out of the inherent nature of the Self.

## 5-15

[

nAdattE kasyachit pApam na chaiva sukr`tam vibhu: |

ajnAnEna Avr`tam jnAnam tEna muhyanti jantava: || 15 ||

]

[vibhu:] The omnipresent Self [nAdattE] does not take up [kasyachit pApam] anyone’s sinful deeds. [na chaiva] Nor does it take up [sukr`tam] any virtuous deeds. [jnAnam] The inherent knowledge in the Self [Avr`tam] is concealed [ajnAnEna] by ignorance. [tEna] Due to this, [jantava:] the various beings [muhyanti] are misled into believing that the body is their Self.

It is stated here, that ‘the Self does not take over the sins and virtuous deeds of anyone’. To elaborate, it cannot remove the sins of people whom we love, such as our children. Neither does it take away the virtuous deeds of those we dislike. The word ‘omnipresent’ has been used to describe the Self over here, meaning that the Self is not confined to a certain space. Being confined in a body, or having various relationships (either good or bad) is not a part of its natural state. All this is made up by notions created out of past deeds.

The Self is pure knowledge, covered over by ignorance. This makes the variety of this world.

How did these notions, which drive against the basic nature of the Self, come into being? The answer has been stated in this Shloka: ‘The inherent knowledge in the Self is concealed by ignorance’. What this sentence says is: We're constrained to experience the results of our actions, because the knowledge inherent within the Self is concealed by the influence of our actions – which we have committed since ancient times. This influence is unfavorable to the realization of the Self. In this way, the true nature of the Self - a form that is pure and infinite knowledge, is concealed by the influence of ancient actions committed by us.

Due to this influence, it gets associated with a particular body at a given point in time, resulting in mistaken notions about the Self. We derive perceptions, judgements and desires out of the results of our actions, in line with these mistaken notions about ourselves. Due to these notions, an impression of the Self arises, which is not at all our inherent nature. From that, the deeds that we commit arise – these are driven by our desires and they add on to the influence of our ancient actions.

Next, the Lord links up the statements in Chap.4#36 (‘You will cross over all the misery by the boat of knowledge alone’), Chap.4#37 (‘In the same way, the fire of knowledge will burn down all your past actions’), Chap.4#38 (‘There is nothing in this world, which is equal to knowledge in its flawlessness’) and praises the appropriateness of the message contained in them.

## 5-16

[

jnAnEna tu tad ajnAnam yEShAm nAshitam Atmana: |

tEShAm Adityavat jnAnam prakAshayati tatparam || 16 ||

]

[jnAnam] Knowledge [Adityavat prakAshayati] shines like the sun [tEShAm] in people [yEShAm] whose [tat ajnAnam] ignorance [nAshitam] is destroyed [Atmana: jnAnEna] by the knowledge of the Self. [tatparam] This knowledge is their ultimate goal.

All beings who exist in this way are plagued by ignorance and doubt, generated by actions committed since eternity. A few of them get guidance about the nature of the Self, like it was described. By knowing the Self in this way, they practice in abundance daily and gain comprehension. With limitlessly pure knowledge, their ignorance and doubt are destroyed. The supreme knowledge that's inherent in them isn't constrained anymore. It shines by itself in its true form, like the brightness that’s inherent in the sun.

The word ’their’ reinforces the multiplicity of Selves that have got rid of their ignorance. The description of multiple Selves started in Chap.2#12: ‘At any point in time, it has never been that we did not exist'. It is clarified further over here. This multiplicity couldn't have been a mistaken illusion. That’s because in this Shloka, the word ‘their’ is about people who have lost their ignorance.

By saying ‘their knowledge shines like the sun', this Shloka makes a distinct relationship between the Self and its knowledge. It illustrates that knowledge is associated with the Self its very nature. It’s an association between everything that has to be known and the knower. Like the relationship between brilliance and the brilliant sun.

In this way, worldly pursuit constrains our knowledge. In the state of [moksha](#Moksha), this knowledge is unlimited and unconstrained.

## 5-17

[

tat buddhaya: tadAtmAna: tanniShThA: tatparAyaNA: |

gachChanti apunarAvr`ttim jnAna nirdhUta kalmaShA: || 17 ||

]

[jnAna nirdhUta kalmaShA:] While being deprived of the state of ultimate knowledge, while being flawed, [tat buddhaya:] those who have dedicated their intellect, [tadAtmAna:] who dedicate their thoughts​ [tanniShThA:] to fully believe in the goal, [tatparAyaNA:] considering their goal to be supreme - [apunarAvr`ttim gachChanti] they will reach that state, from which they will not fall again.

Those who have dedicated their intellect to realize the Self, who have focused their thoughts and mind on the Self, who dedicate themselves to work towards the realization of the Self, who believe that the realization of the Self is the ultimate goal to achieve – they realize the Self – this is a state of being, from which there is no possibility to fall back. They have reached a state where their Self is situated in its true form.

When ignorance is gone, we see all beings as being equal, equally related to the Lord.

## 5-18

[

vidyA vinaya sampannE bhAhmaNE gavi hastini |

shuni chaiva shvapAkE cha panditA: sama darshina: || 18 ||

]

[panditA:] People who know the true nature of the Self [sama darshina:] see equality [vidyA vinaya sampannE] in a person who is endowed with knowledge and humility, [bhAhmaNE] in someone who is just a Brahmin, [gavi] in a cow, [hastini] in an elephant, [shuni chaiva] even in a dog [shvapAkE cha] and even in a person who eats the meat of a dog.

People who know the true nature of the Self will see equality in various beings, by virtue of the Self having a form that’s pure and infinite knowledge. The various beings have unequal, disagreeable or incongruous forms – such as a person with knowledge and humility, or a mere Brahmin, or a cow, or an elephant, or even a dog or a person who eats the meat of a dog. These various forms are due to the effects of nature. It does not arise out of the nature of the Self. By virtue of having a form that’s pure and infinite knowledge, the Self is equivalent in everyone. People who have realized the true nature of the Self know this.

## 5-19

[

ihaiva tairjita: sarga: yEShAm sAmyE sthitam mana: |

nirdOSham hi samam brahma tasmAt brahmaNi tE sthitA: || 19 ||

]

[sarga:] This material creation [jita:] has been conquered [ihaiva] here itself, [tai:] by those [yEShAm mana:] whose minds [sAmyE sthitam] are situated in this equality. [nirdOSham] When devoid of faults, [brahma] the Self [samam hi] is indeed whole and complete. [tasmAt] Thus, [tE brahmaNi sthitA:] they are all situated in the Lord.

The phrase ‘here itself’ means ‘while being in the endeavor to achieve’.

While still being in the endeavor to realize the Self and achieve [Moksha](#Moksha), the material world is conquered when the mind is situated in the equality of the Self in every being. The phrase ‘When devoid of faults’ denotes a state of being in which we are free from the limitations of this material world.

In this state, the Self in each of us is whole and complete – the Self, in its pure form, devoid of the association with the material world, is equal to the Lord. ‘Being situated in the equality of the Self’ is the same as being situated in the Lord. In this way, they conquer the material world (*in other words, they are no longer controlled by the material world*).

In summary, people who strive to recognize the equality of the Self in everyone are already liberated. They know that the Self in everyone has a form that’s pure and infinite knowledge,

The next Shloka describes the manner in which a person who [works without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) exists and matures the knowledge that manifests in the form of equality.

## 5-20

[

na prahr`ShyEt priyam prApya na udvijEt prApya chApriam |

sthira buddhir asammUDhO brahmavid brahmaNi sthita: ||20 ||

]

[na prahr`ShyEt] He doesn’t​ get excited [priyam prApya] on obtaining something he likes [na udvijEt cha] and doesn’t​ get agitated [apriyam prApya] on getting something he does not like. [sthira buddhi:] His intellect is firm [asammUDha:] and he does not get confused. [brahmavit] He knows the nature of the Self and the Lord. [brahmaNi sthita:] He is situated in the quest for the Self.

Due to notions created due to our past deeds, the situations in which we find our body turn out to be pleasant or unpleasant. You must not get excited, or get agitated over these experiences.

How is this possible? Through a firm intellect – focus your intellect on the Self. By this, you will be free of the confusion that the ever-changing body and the unchanging Self are the same. How is that possible? Know the nature of the Self and the Lord through instruction. Be dedicated to the practice of realizing the Self.

To summarize: Get instruction about the true nature of the Self from people who know the facts. Be dedicated to the realization of this Self. Give up the impression that the body is your Self. Be situated in the discovery of the unchanging Self – an experience that is fulfilling. Do not get excited, or get agitated over pleasant and unpleasant experiences in the ever-changing environment.

## 5-21

[

bAhya sparshEShu asaktAtmA vindatyAtmani ya: sukham |

sa brahmayOga yuktAtmA sukham akShayam ashnutE || 21 ||

]

[ya: sukham vindati] The one who derives fulfillment [Atmani] in the Self, [asaktAtmA] while remaining disinterested [bAhya sparshEShu] in external stimuli - [sa: brahmayOga yuktAtmA] he will have focus in the quest for the Self and the Lord [ashnutE] and will enjoy [akShayam] un-ending [sukham] joy.

As said before, the person who derives fulfillment in the Self will attain joy. He isn’t interested in experiencing material enjoyments that are not related to the Self. He throws away the tendency to be swayed by the environment. His mind stays focused on the quest for the Self and the Lord. He will attain unlimited joy in the experience of the Self.

The joy in the Self is beyond any enjoyment dictated by our preferences and aversions.

In the next Shloka, He explains that it’s easily possible to give up the enjoyment offered by the material world.

## 5-22

[

yE hi samsparshajA bhOgA du:khayOnaya Eva tE |

Adyantavanta: kauntEya na tEShu ramatE budha: || 22 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [yE samsparshajA bhOgA:] those enjoyments that are born out of stimuli supplied to the sense organs [tE du:khayOnaya Eva] will inevitably lead to difficulties. [Adyantavanta:] They have a beginning and an end. [budha:] The person who knows their true nature [na ramatE] will not indulge [tEShu] in them.

Enjoyments that result when our organs come in contact with the material world will ultimately lead to difficulties. They have a beginning and an end – they are always experienced only for a limited period of time. The person who knows their true nature does not indulge in them.

## 5-23

[

shaknOti ihaiva ya: sODhum prAk sharIra vimOkShaNAt |

kAma krOdhOdbhavam vEgam sa yukta: sa sukhI nara: || 23 ||

]

[sharIra vimOkShaNAt prAk] Before separating from the body, [ya:] the person who [shaknOti] is able to [sODhum] overcome [vEgam] the rush [kAma krOdhOdbhavam] born out of desire and anger, [ihaiva] while still being in this material world [sa: yukta:] is the focused one. [sa: sukhI nara:] He is a fulfilled person.

While being in this world before separating from the body, still working to achieve the goal, a focused person is someone who is able to overcome the rush caused by desire and anger. He is able to do this, since he knows the joy that’s present in the experience of the Self. He deserves to experience the Self. He alone will enjoy the pure experience of the Self, after he is separated from his body.

## 5-24

[

yO antassukhO antarArAma: tathA antarjyOtirEva ya: |

sa yOgI brahma nirvANam brahma bhUtO\_dhigachChati || 24 ||

]

[ya:] The person who [antassukha:] is content with his Self, [antarArAma:] who delights in his Self, [tathA ya:] and the one who [antarjyOti: Eva] is illuminated from the inside [sa: brahma bhUta: yOgI] works without attachment while being situated in his Self. [brahma nirvANam adhigachChati] He will attain the infinite joy present in the Self and the Lord.

The person described over here has given up all indulgence in external stimuli. He is ‘content with his Self’ – he has the experience of the Self alone as his fulfillment. He ‘delights in his Self'’ – The Self is a source of pleasure for him, instead of deriving pleasure as dictated by his [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). He is someone who is ‘illuminated from the inside’ – he is situated in the knowledge of the Self alone.

Such a person works purely as worship to the Lord, free from attachments, while being situated in the Self. He will attain the infinite joy present in the Self and the Lord.

## 5-25

[

labhantE brahma nirvANam r`Shaya: kShINa kalmaShA: |

Chinna dvaidhA yatAtmAna: sarva bhUta hitE ratA: || 25 ||

]

[r`Shaya:] Those who are committed to the realization of the Self [Chinna dvaidhA:] are free of the dualities of this world. [yatAtmAna:] They have focused their mind exclusively on the Self. [sarva bhUta hitE ratA:] They delight in the affection among all beings, [kShINa kalmaShA:] get rid of all faults that come in the way of realizing the Self [brahma nirvANam labhantE] and obtain the infinite joy present in the Lord.

The phrase ‘free of the dualities of this world’ means that people who are committed to the realization of the Self are not bound by the dualities of this world like cold and heat. They have controlled their mind to focus on the Self alone. They consider all beings to be like themselves and delight in their affection. They are the ones who see and are inclined towards realizing the Self. By living in this state, they get rid of all faults that obstruct the realization of the Self. They attain the infinite joy present in the Lord.

Next, He says that it’s very easy for people with these characteristics to realize the Self.

## 5-26

[

kAma krOdha viyuktAnAm yatInAm yatachEtasAm |

abhitO brahma nirvANam vartatE vijitAtmanAm || 26 ||

]

[brahma nirvANam] The joy of experiencing the Self and the Lord [vartatE] stays [abhita:] with [kAma krOdha viyuktAnAm] people who disengage from desire and anger, [yatInAm] who strive to realize the Self, [yatachEtasAm] who have gained control over their consciousness [vijitAtmanAm] and who have conquered their mind.

The joy of experiencing the Self and the Lord is in the hands of people who are free from the effects of desire and anger. They are committed in their quest to realize the Self. They have conquered their own mind and have gained control over their consciousness.

Next, He summarizes the technique of working without being driven by desire, which was described till now. It is the preferred technique to realize our goal.

## 5-27 to 5-28

[

sparshAn kr`tvA bahirbAhyAn chakShushchaiva antarE bhruvO: |

prANApAnau samau kr`tvA nAsAbhyantara chAriNau || 27 ||

yatEndriya manO buddhi: munirmOkSha parAyaNa: |

vigatIchChA bhaya krOdhO yassadA mukta Eva sa: || 28 ||

]

[muni:] A person having the intention to realize the Self, [mOkSha parAyaNa:] who has [moksha](#Moksha) as his only goal, [bAhyaN sparshAn] keeps external stimuli [bahi: kr`tvA] outside [chakShu: chaiva] and the eyes focused [bhruvO: antarE] in-between the eye-brows. [samau kr`tvA] Balancing [prAna apAnau] inhalation and exhalation [nAsAbhyantara] through the nose, [yatEndriya manO buddhi:] he takes charge of his organs, mind and his intellect. [vigatIchChA bhaya krOdha:] He is beyond desire, fear and anger. [ya:] Such a person [sa: sadA mukta Eva] stays liberated from this material world.

‘Keep external stimuli outside’ is to conquer all activities of the external organs, so they aren’t dictated by desire and anger anymore. A person whose organs, mind and intellect are incapable of being out of the journey to realize the Self is freed from desire and anger.

This person has the intention to realize the Self and his only goal is to attain [moksha](#Moksha). He is already in the state of liberation. He sits erect in a position suitable for concentrating on the Self, focusing the eyes between the eye-brows, where the nose starts, balancing inhalation and exhalation. Even when he is in the journey to reach the goal, he is already liberated – Similar to his state of being when he actually achieves the goal of [moksha](#Moksha).

In this technique of [working without being driven by desire](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), our routine and necessary activities themselves can easily be employed to realize the Self. The Lord explains this next.

## 5-29

[

bhOktAram yagna tapasAm sarva lOka mahEshvaram |

suhr`dam sarva bhUtAnAm jnAtvA mAm shAntimr`chChati || 29 ||

]

[shAntimr`chChati] He will attain peace by [mAm jnAtvA] knowing me, [yajna tapasAm bhOktAram] the enjoyer of worship and prayer, [sarvalOka mahEshwaram] the Lord of all the worlds, [sarva bhUtAnAm suhr`dam] a friend and ally of all beings.

Worship the Lord to experience the joy of the Self

The Lord says ‘You will attain fulfillment by knowing Me. I am the one who enjoys worship and prayer, who is the Lord of all worlds, who is a friend and ally of all beings. You shall attain contentment trough activities that aren't driven by desire, done only to worship Me’.

The Lord is supreme among all those who control us, as said in [shvEtashvatara 6-7]. Such a Lord is also the friend and ally of everyone. Knowing Him, knowing that [working without being driven by desire](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) is the way to worship Him, a person will stay contented over here. Such people devote themselves to adore and worship the Lord as a friend.

# Chapter 6

Till now, The Lord spoke about [working without attachments](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga), along with the methods that help in its practice. Now, He explains the method to keep practicing the realization of the Self. It is accomplished by [activity](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) and [contemplation](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn). Once again, He explains that [working without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) has [contemplation](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) built into it. This is to emphasize the fact that [such activity](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) doesn’t need additional methods to realize the Self.

## 6-1

[

anAshrita: karma phalam kAryam karma karOti ya: |

sa saMnyAsI cha yOgI cha na nirAgnirna chAkriya: || 1 ||

]

[ya:] The person who [karma karOti] does the work​ [kAryam] that's to be done [anAshrita: karma phalam] without depending on the outcome to drive him [sa: saMnyAsI] is the one who has renounced outcomes. [sa: yOgI] He works without being driven. [na nirAgni:] He is not without fire, [na cha akriya:] neither is he idle.

A person who isn’t driven by outcomes does his work as activity, even without the expectation that good deeds will do him good in return. This person works with an attitude- ‘I do this to worship the Supreme Lord​, who is the Self within every Self and our friend forever'. This person works with the activity itself as the goal, not anything else that's achieved.

He has renounced all compulsions and is [focused on the knowledge of the Self](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn). He is [skillful in his activity](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) as well. He is a champion in his activity, doing it as a form of contemplating the Self.

This Shloka says that such a person is not without fire, neither is he idle. He is dedicated in his work and doesn't avoid it. As described above, his activity is His worship. This dedication in activity is his focus to realize the Self.

Next, The Lord says that contemplation and realization are always embedded in such actions.

## 6-2

[

yam saMnyAsa iti prAhu: yOgam tam viddhi pAndava |

na hi asaMnyasta sankalpO yOgI bhavati kashchana || 2 ||

]

[pAndava] Arjuna, [viddhi] know that [yam saMnyAsa iti prAhu:] what’s called renunciation [tam yOgam] is activity that isn’t driven by desire. [asaMnyasta sankalpa: kashchana] Anyone who doesn’t give up expectations [yOgI na bhavati hi] cannot practice such activity.

We get driven by expectations when we think that we are our body.

When you [work without being driven](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga), you contemplate the true nature of the Self. He completes the picture by saying- Anyone who doesn’t give up expectations cannot practice such activity.

A person gives up expectations when he contemplates the Self in its true form, being free of the notion that he is the body. As long as he considers himself to be something other than the Self, he mixes the Self and the body, getting attached to expectations. Such a person will not work without being driven by desire.

Chap.4#19 talks about such a person: ‘A person whose every initiative is separated from desire and expectation’.

The next Shloka says that only [such activity](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) achieves [realization](#yoga_is_to_realize) without misleading us.

## 6-3

[

ArurukShO: munEryOgam karma kAraNam uchyatE |

yOgArUDhasya tasyaiva shama: kAraNam uchyatE || 3 ||

]

[ArurukShO: munE:] To the enthusiast who wants to ascend [yOgam] to realization, [karma] activity [kAraNam uchyatE] is said to be the means. [tasyaiva yOgArUDhasya] To a person who is well-established in the realization of his Self, [shama:] tranquility and meditation [kAraNam uchyatE] are said to be the principle of existence.

A person who wants to realize the Self and be [liberated](#Moksha) needs to [work without being driven](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) by desire. This is said to be the means to achieve his goal. Once this very person has achieved proficiency in working this way, tranquility is said to be his principle of existence.

Tranquility of the Self is gained by working without being driven

To summarize- till the goal of Self-realization and [moksha](#Moksha) are achieved, you must [work without being driven](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) by desire.

When is this proficiency achieved? In the practice of [working without being driven](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga), when do we say that we’ve ‘arrived’?

## 6-4

[

yadA hi nEndriyArthEShu na karmasu anuShajjatE |

sarva sankalpa saMnyAsI yOgArUDha: tadOchyatE || 4 ||

]

[yadA hi] When [na anuShajjatE] a person is not attached to [indriyArthEShu] sensual things, [na karmasu] nor to the activities associated with those stimuli, [tadA] then, [sarva sankalpa saMnyAsI] he is free from attachments towards desires. [yOgArUDha: tadOchyatE] He is said to be firmly situated in the realization of the Self.

When a person works independent of desire, he gives up attachment towards things that are unrelated to the experience of the Self. These are things in the material world that stimulate sense organs – taste, smell and so on. The natural inclination of this person is to realize the Self alone. He gives up attachment to material stimuli and the activities done to react on them.

In this state, he is considered to be situated firmly in the true nature of the Self, having freed himself of all desires.

However, a person who wants to ascend to that state is still susceptible to the stimuli of the material world. Hence, he needs to practice [working without being driven by desire](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga), purely as worship to the Lord. In this way, he practices the art of giving up attachment towards the material world and the art of meditation to realize the Self. This technique of [[karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)] is the only way available to him and he needs to practice just that.

The same is elaborated in the next Shloka.

## 6-5

[

uddharEt AtmanA\_tmAnam na AtmAnam avasAdayEt |

Atmaiva hi AtmanO bandhu: Atmaiva ripurAtmana: || 5 ||

]

[AtmanA] With his own intent, detached from material desires, [uddharEt] he needs to achieve progress [AtmAnam] in his own self. [AtmAnam na avasAdayEt] He must not get disheartened and give up in defeat. [Atmaiva] His own intention [AtmanO bandhu:] is his friend. [Atmaiva] His intentions [Atmana: ripu:] can be his enemies.

A person must make progress in realizing his Self by his own intention to be detached from material desires. He must not distress himself by letting his mind be attracted towards things that are detrimental to his progress.

His own intention is his friend when it helps in realizing the Self. His very intentions can be his enemies when they drive him away from this realization.

## 6-6

[

bandhurAtmA\_tmanastasya yEna Atmaiva AtmanA jita: |

anAtmanastu shatrutvE vartEt Atmaiva shatruvat || 6 ||

]

[tasya Atmana: AtmA bandhu:] The intentions of a being are favorable [yEna Atmaiva jita:] when his own mind and intentions have been won over [AtmanA] by the Self in him. [anAtmanastu] However, to a person who has not won over his mind, [Atmaiva shatruvat] his very intentions stand as his foe [shatrutvE vartEta] and remain to work against him.

Driving or being driven – it’s your choice

A person can win his mind from the material world using the native qualities of the Self. Then, his mind is his friend.

On the other hand, a person who hasn’t won over his mind, who has not focused his mind on realizing the Self will have the mind opposing him, like it was his enemy. Such a mind will work to counter the achievement of knowledge and the ultimate bliss it brings.

This is told by Sri Parashara too, in [vishNu purAna], 6-7-28: ‘The mind with its intentions is the cause for a person’s bondage and liberation. Intentions that are tied to the material world lead to bondage. For [liberation](#Moksha), our intentions must be detached from the stimuli of the material world.’

Next, He describes the state-of-being that is suitable to start on the journey to realize the Self.

## 6-7

[

jitAtmana: prashAntasya paramAtmA samAhita: |

shItOshNa sukha du:khEShu tathA mAna apamAnayO: || 7 ||

]

[jitAtmana:] Having conquered his mind, [prashAntasya] a person who is at peace [parama] is completely [atmA samAhita:] focused on the Self, which has the Lord as the basis for its existence [shItOshNa sukha du:khEShu] in situations of cold, heat, comfort, difficulties, [tathA mAna apamAnayO:] during fame and insult too.

Having won over the mind, a person is at peace with his environment. He keeps the Self and the Lord in firm focus, irrespective of the situation – be it cold, heat, comfort, difficulties, while being famous or being insulted. The intentions of such a person do not waver.

Since the Self is realized by such a person in its true form, it is referred to as [paramAtma] over here – the complete Self.

By nature, the Self has the Lord as the basis for its existence, and is totally pervaded by the Lord. Considering the previous state of such a person – he had not yet realized the Self in its true form then – we can consider him to know about the superiority of the Self now.

This person is continuously situated in the knowledge of the Self and the Lord.

## 6-8

[

jnAna vijnAna tr`ptAtmA kUTasthO vijitEndriya: |

yukta ityuchyatE yOgI sama lOShThAshma kAnchana: || 8 ||

]

[tr`ptAtmA] A person whose mind is content [jnAna] in the knowledge of the Self [vijnAna] and the awareness to distinguish it from the environment [vijitEndriya:] has conquered his organs, [kUTastha:] knowing that he is the unchanging Self. [yOgI] This person works without being driven by desire. [sama lOShThAshma kAnchana:] He views a lump of clay, a stone and gold with equanimity. [yukta: ityuchyatE] He is said to be focused and engaged.

A person who works only to worship the Lord is content in the knowledge of the Self. He is content with the realization that the Self is separate from the environment and our body.

He is situated as the Self, which is present in all beings, is unchanging and has a form that consists of pure knowledge. This person subdues his organs here itself. He has no indulgence in the stimuli provided by the material world, since he is focused on the Self, which is distinct from the material environment.

He sees the same utility in a lump of clay, a stone and gold. Such a person is focused and engaged. The Lord says that he is qualified to pursue the realization of the Self.

## 6-9

[

suhr`n mitrAri udAsIna madhyastha dvEShya bandhuShu |

sAdhuShvapi cha pApEShu sama buddhir vishiShyatE || 9 ||

]

[vishiShyatE] A person is distinguished and superior [samabuddhi:] when he is level-headed [bandhuShu] among friends, [dvEShya:] foes, [suhr`t] the affectionate, [mitra] companions of the same age, [ari:] enemies, [udAsIna:] disinterested people, [madhyastha:] neutrals, [sAdhuShvapi] even among the good people [pApEShu cha] and the offenders.

*The terms in the Shloka illustrate our relationships. Let’s explore them.*

Affectionate people relate to us irrespective of our age. People who are of the same age as us, who wish us good are our companions. Enemies are those who wish misfortune due to some reason.

People who don’t have a reason to wish us good or bad are those who are disinterested. Those who don’t have these feelings by nature are the neutrals.

Those who wish us misfortune by nature are our foes. Those who wish us well by nature are our friends. Those who uphold righteousness are the good people. Those who indulge in unacceptable activity are the offenders.

A person is distinguished and specially qualified for [realization](#yoga_is_to_realize) when he is level-headed towards all of them, by virtue of finding contentment in the Self alone, by not finding utility in friends and companions, while not facing opposition from the others.

## 6-10

[

yOgI yunjIta satatam AtmAnam rahasi sthita: |

EkAkI yatachittAtmA nirAshIraparigraha: || 10 ||

]

[yOgI] Such a person, who works without being driven by desire [AtmAnam yunjIta] must meditate on the true nature of the Self [satatam] daily [rahasi sthita:] in a place that is not public, [EkAkI] being by himself, [yatachittAtmA] keeping his mind and intellect under control, [nirAshI:] not being interested in anything else [aparigraha:] and not giving into possessiveness.

Such a person, who is focused on [working without being driven](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) is instructed to bring the Self into focus at a given time daily, when he contemplates its true nature. While doing this, he is situated in a place that’s quiet, without the company of a second person.

He controls his mind and intellect, not being interested in anything except the Self, not falling for any feelings of possessiveness.

## 6-11 to 6-12

[

shuchau dEshE pratiShThApya sthiram Asanam Atmana: |

nAtyuchChritam nAti nIcham chElAjina kushOttaram || 11 ||

tatraikAgryam mana: kr`tvA yata chittendria kriya: |

upavishyAsanE yunjyAt yOgam Atma vishuddhayE || 12 ||

]

[Asanam sthiram pratiShThApya] Setting up a stable seat [Atmana:] for himself [shuchau dEshE] in a place that is clean, [nAtyuchChritam] not too high, [nAtiNIcham] not too low, [chElAjina kushOttaram] keeping cloth, fur and straw on it, [tatra upavishya] sitting there, [mana: aikAgryam kr`tvA] keeping his mind focused [yata chittendria kriya:] controlling the works of the organs and the intellect, [yOgam yunjIta] he employs his body to work without being driven by desire [Atma vishuddhayE] to purify his Self.

A clean place, not settled-in by impurity, free from feelings of possessiveness, not attached to dirty things, on a seat of moderate height made of things like wood, covered by cloth, a smooth cover and straw – Such a place is pleasing to the mind and offers a good base for an upright posture.

Being seated in this place, he fixes his attention on realizing the Self with full focus. Controlling consciousness, organs and deeds, he stops all their reactions in their tracks. He strives to realize the Self and attain liberation from bondage.

## 6-13 to 6-14

[

samam kAya shirOgrIvam dhArayan achalam sthiram |

samprEkShya nAsikAgram svam dishashcha anavalOkayan || 13 ||

prashAntAtmA vigata bhI: brahmachAri vratE sthita: |

manassamyamya machchittO yukta AsIta matpara: || 14 ||

]

[dhArayan] Keeping [kAya] the body, [shira:] the head [grIvavm] and the neck [samam] in line, [sthiram] stable, [achalam] without changing position, [samprEkShya] looking at the [nAsikAgram] uppermost part of his nose, [dishashcha anavalOkayan] without looking in different directions, [prashAntAtmA] with a peaceful mind, [vigata bhI:] without being afraid of anything, [brahmachAri vratE sthita:] situated in the vow of celibacy, [manassamyamya] keeping his mind under control, [machchitta:] with the consciousness dedicated to Me, [yukta AsIta] a person must remain focused on the Self, [matpara:] knowing that I pervade everything ultimately.

Keeping the body, the head and the neck in a straight line, stable and without changing position – by virtue of having a good base for supporting an upright posture, without getting distracted in various directions, looking at the uppermost part of his nose, with the mind at peace, without being afraid of anything, standing firm in the vow of celibacy (*being without infatuation*), he controls the mind to focus on Me alone, being conscious to think about Me alone.

## 6-15

[

yunjannEvam sadA AtmAnam yOgI niyata mAnasa: |

shAntim nirvANa paramAm matsamsthAm adhigachChati || 15 ||

]

[yOgi] The person who offers his [work as worship to Me](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) [yunjan] will fix [AtmAnam] his mind [Evam] in this way [sadA] always. [niyata mAnasa:] Controlling his mind to focus on Me, [adhigachChati] he reaches [nirvana paramAm] the ultimate joy [shAntim] and peace [matsamsthAm] that resides in Me.

Offer your work to the Lord and be with Him constantly

In this way, the one who practices [[karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)] keeps his focus on Me, the ultimate creator, the best among all beings and a favorable abode for the mind. This person fixes his mind upon Me and does not let it waver.

Thinking about Me always, his mind has been purified by My touch – hence it stays unmoved. This person attains the ultimate joy and peace that resides in me. This joy is pure and concentrated.

In this way, the manner in which a person can begin realizing his Self was described. It was also explained how such a person can place his mind in the Lord, the ultimate purifier, who is an extremely favorable abode. Now, other instruments of this practice are described.

## 6-16 to 6-17

[

nAtyashnatastu yOgO\_sti na chaikAntam anashnata: |

na chAti svapna shIlasya jAgratO naiva cha arjuna || 16 ||

yukta AhAra vihArasya yukta chEShTasya karmasu |

yukta svapnAvabOdhasya yOgO bhavati du:kha hA || 17 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [yOga: nAsti] the quest for the realization of the Self is not [atyashnatastu] for one who eats excessively. [anashnata:] A person who does not eat [na chaikAntyam] will not have a singularity of purpose either. [na] It is not [ati svapna shIlasya cha] for a person who sleeps excessively either. [jAgratO naiva cha] Neither is it for a person who is awake all the time.

[yOga:] This quest [du:kha hA bhavati] will be the destroyer of sorrow [yukta AhAra vihArasya] for one who eats and enjoys appropriately, [karmasu yukta chEShTasya] and exerts himself appropriately in his work.

Eating too much, or not eating at all – both of these are obstacles to realizing the Self. Getting diverted excessively goes against realizing the Self. So does the avoidance of all leisure. Similarly, sleeping too much, sleeping too less, exerting ourselves beyond limit and avoiding exertion are obstacles to realizing the Self.

The realization of the Self happens to a person who exercises control. This person is prudent in eating, leisure, exertion, in sleep and in staying awake. Such a realization of the Self destroys all bondage and limitation.

## 6-18

[

yadA viniyatam chittam AtmanyEva avatiShThatE |

ni:spr`ha: sarva kAmEbhyO yukta ityuchyatE tadA || 18 ||

]

[yadA] When [chittam] a person’s consciousness [avatiShThatE] stays [viniyatam] firm [Atmani Eva] in the Self alone, [ni:spr`ha:] without attachments [sarva kAmEbhya:] towards any desires, [tadA] then [yukta: ityuchyatE] the person is said to be focused and deserves to realize the Self.

The consciousness is by nature looking for benefits and outcomes. When it is stationed firmly in the Self, it is turned towards the ultimate benefit ([*moksha*](#Moksha)) and thus stays focused, unmoved. When this happens, the person stands free of attachment towards all desires.

He is said to have the focus and deserves to realize the Self.

## 6-19

[

yathA dIpO nivAtasthO nEngatE sOpamA smr`tA |

yOginO yatachittasya yunjatO yOgamAtmana: || 19 ||

]

[Atmana:] The Self [yOgina:] in a person who [works purely as worship to the Lord](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), [yatachittasya] who controls his consciousness, [yOgam yunjata:] who is dedicated and focused in his quest to realize the Self [sOpamA smr`tA] is considered similar to [dIpa:] a flame [yathA nEngatE] that stays without shaking [nivAtastha:] in a place without winds.

A flame in a place devoid of wind does not waver. It shines bright and steady. In the same way, the Self shines in a person who practices [works without being driven](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), who is not interested in anything other than the Self and the Lord, who is focused in his quest to realize the Self.

A flame unaffected by the wind is analogous to the Self that shines in the form of pure knowledge, unmoved by all other interests and desires.

## 6-20 to 6-23

[

yatra uparamatE chittam niruddham yOga sEvayA |

yatra chaivAtmanA AtmAnam pashyan Atmani tuShyati || 20 ||

sukham atyantikam yattad buddhigrAhyam atIndriyam |

vEtti yatra na chaivAyam sthita: chalati tattvata: || 21 ||

yam labdhvA chAparam lAbham manyatE nAdhikam tata: |

yasmin sthitE na du:khEna guruNA\_pi vichAlyatE || 22 ||

tam vidyAt du:khasamyOga viyOgam yOga sanjnitam |

sa nishchayEna yOktavyO yOgO\_nirviNNa chEtasA || 23 ||

]

[yatra] The state of being, in which [niruddham chittam] the consciousness, controlled and focused [yOga sEvayA] for the purpose of realizing the Self and the Lord [uparamatE] experiences ultimate joy,

[yatra cha] in which [AtmAnam pashyan] the consciousness sees the Self [AtmanA] by using the mind [Atmani Eva tuShyati] and is content in the knowledge of the Self alone,

[yatra] in which [vEtti] it knows [yattat sukham atyantikam] the unparalleled joy, which [buddhigrAhyam] can only be grasped by knowledge [atIndriyam], being beyond the reach of the senses [chaiva] and indeed, [ayam] when it is [sthita:] situated in that state, [na chalati] it does not move [tatvata:] from this ultimate reality.

[yam labdhvA cha] Further, having attained that state, [manyatE na] it does not consider [aparam] other [lAbham] benefits [adhikam tata:] to be more valuable.

[yasmin sthitE] While being in this state [na vichAlyatE] it does not get toppled [guruNA\_pi] even by huge [du:khEna] difficulties and sorrows.

[vidyAt] Know that [tam du:khasamyOga viyOgam] this state of being, which detaches you from bondage and sorrow [yOga sanjnitam] is called ‘yoga’. [sa yOga:] This yoga [yOktavya:] is to be practiced [anirviNNa chEtasA] with enthusiasm, [nishchayEna] without doubt.

Yoga is the realization of your Self and its intimacy with the Lord. It is a state of being.

By practicing [realization](#yoga_is_to_realize), the Self stays focused and enjoys unlimited joy. In this state of being, the mind sees the Self and is satisfied in the Self alone, not being interested in other things. It knows and experiences the ultimate contentment that can only be grasped by realizing the Self. Such contentment is not grasped by the senses.

Situated in this state of being, we do not move from the ultimate reality and the unlimited joys that come with the realization of the Self.

After reaching this state of being, our only aim is to be focused on the Self and the Lord – we do not consider any other benefit to be greater than this. In this state of being, even major events that cause sorrow, such as the separation from a good son, do not shake us from our path.

Know this state of being by the name ‘yoga’. It frees us from our bondage to sorrow. Know this for sure while starting on your quest. Practice it with enthusiasm.

## 6-24 to 6-25

[

sankalpa prabhavAn kAmAn tyaktvA sarvAn ashEShata: |

manasyaiva indriya grAmam viniyamya samantata: || 24 ||

shanai: shanairuparamEt buddhyA dhr`ti gr`hItayA |

Atmasamstham mana: kr`tvA na kinchidapi chintayEt || 25 ||

]

[tyaktvA] Giving up [sarvAn kAmAn] all desires [sankalpa prabhavAn] that arise out of our intentions [ashEShata:] without exceptions, [viniyamya] controlling [indriya grAmam] the group of organs [samantata:] in all ways [manasyaiva] using the mind itself,

[Atmasamstham mana: kr`tvA] stationing the mind in the Self [shanai: shanai: uparamEt] giving up, little by little, things other than the Self, [buddhyA] using the knowledge [dr`ti gr`hItayA] grasped by perseverance, [na kinchidapi chintayEt] do not be anxious about anything.

Desires are of two types. The first type comes out of contact with the material world – warmth, cold and so on. The second type is born out of your wishes – such as the desire for a child or territory.

Only by relying on your true nature, you get the ability to look beyond your wishes. Focus your mind on the fact that there’s no logical connection between those desires and your Self.

Then, give up the limited happiness and sorrow that arise out of unavoidable contact with the material world. Govern the group of organs that form your body, even in the presence of all their stimuli.

Little by little, you will let-go of things other than the Self. You do this using knowledge obtained by perseverance. Station the mind within the Self and don’t be anxious about anything.

## 6-26

[

yatO yatO nishcharati mana: chanchalam asthiram |

tatastatO niyamyaitat AtmanyEva vasham nayEt || 26 ||

]

[chanchalam] The ever-wandering [asthiram] unstable [mana:] mind [nayEt] needs to be brought [tatastatO niyamyaitat] under control among [yatO yatO] things that [nishcharati] make it wander. [vasham] Constrain it [Atmani Eva] in the Self alone.

Wandering is in the nature of the mind. That’s why it doesn’t stay within the Self.

When the mind wanders away from the quest for the Self for various reasons, bring it back from those reasons; Endeavour to restrain it with dedication and keep it in the quest for the Self alone, with focus on the unlimited joy that it yields.

## 6-27

[

prashAnta manasam hyEnam yOginam sukham uttamam |

upaiti shAntarajasam brahmabhUtam akalmaSham || 27 ||

]

[sukham uttamam] Ultimate joy [upaiti hi] will definitely come to [Enam yOginam] this person, who is in the quest for the Self [prashAnta manasam], whose mind is at peace, [shAntarajasam] whose passions have subsided [brahmabhUtam], who is situated in the true nature of the Self, [akalmaSham] who is rid of all his faults.

The person whose mind is at peace is the one who has his mind focused upon the Self.

With such focus, all your faults are destroyed and your passions subside. This in turn lets you be in your true nature – the nature of the Self. Ultimate joy, in the form of the experience of the Self will come to you.

The word ‘definitely’ in this Shloka is used to illustrate the cause and its effect. In summary, a person in the quest for the Self is able to keep away from materialistic passions, due to the fact that the Self is pure and unlimited joy.

## 6-28

[

Evam yunjan sadAtmAnam yOgI vigata kalmaSha: |

sukhEna brahma samsparsham atyantam sukham ashnutE || 28 ||

]

[Evam] In this way, [yOgI] a person who [works without being driven](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html) [AtmAnam yunjan] stays in the quest for the Self. [sukhEna ashnutE] He easily experiences [atyantam sukham] the ultimate joy [brahma samsparsham] of being in touch with the Self [sadA] always, [vigata kalmaSha:] flawlessly.

In this way, a person who [works independent of desire](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) stays in the quest for the Self, as described before. In this quest, he gets rid of all the faults he has committed since time immemorial.

Once he is rid of all that baggage, he easily enjoys the unlimited joy of experiencing the Self and the Lord always.

Next, He explains that the state of a person manifests in four forms, when the quest for the Self is mature.

## 6-29

[

sarva bhUtastham AtmAnam sarva bhUtAni chAtmani |

IkShatE yOgayuktAtmA sarvatra samadarshana: || 29 ||

]

[yOga yuktAtmA] A person who is firm in his quest for the Self [IkShatE] sees [AtmAnam] himself [sarva bhUtastham] as being present within every being, [cha] and [sarva bhUtAni] all the beings [Atmani] in his Self. [sarvatra samadarshana:] He has an equal outlook everywhere.

The Self in you is identical to the Self in every other being

A person who is immersed in [work that is independent of desire](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), who is committed to the realization of the Self, sees that all beings including him have an identical form when they are detached from the environment – A form, which is pure knowledge. All differences observed are a manifestation of the environment.

Thus, he sees the Self in everyone as being equal, since the Self is pure knowledge when it is separated from the environment. He sees his own Self situated in other beings and other beings situated in his own Self. Meaning, he sees his own Self as having the same form as all beings and the Self in all beings having an identical form as his own. Seeing one Self is the same as seeing the Self in all beings, due to their equivalence.

This is also expressed in other Shlokas, such as (Chap.6#33): ‘The state called [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being), which was told by You as equanimity’ and (Chap.5#19): ‘When devoid of faults, the Self in everyone is whole and complete’.

## 6-30

[

yO mAm pashyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pashyati |

tasyAham na praNashyAmi sa cha mE na praNashyati || 30 ||

]

[tasya ya:] For the one who [pashyati mAm] sees me [sarvatra] everywhere [cha] and [pashyati] sees [sarvam] everything [mayi] in me, [aham] I [na praNashyAmi] will not go unseen. [sa] He [na praNashyati] does not go unseen [mE] to me [cha] either.

The characteristic of every Self is identical to the Lord

Now, let’s look at a person who has achieved a more mature state of being. The Lord continues- Such a person gains those characteristics that are similar to Me, as said in [munDaka upanishad], 3-1-3: ‘a person who is rid of faults will attain ultimate equality’.

In this way, the person sees the true nature of the Self in everyone – separate from their good and bad deeds – as being equivalent in nature to Me. In this way, he sees Me in every Self and sees all of them being present in Me.

Due to the fact that all of them are equivalent, he sees one Self and looks at all of the others as being similar to it. He has realized the true nature of his Self. By virtue of being equivalent in nature to Me, I will never go out of his sight.

As for Me, of course, I keep seeing Myself – and due to the equality mentioned before, I keep seeing this person as being equivalent to Me. I do not let him out of My sight.

Next, he describes a state of being that is even more mature than this one:

## 6-31

[

sarvabhUtastham yO mAm bhajati EkatvamAsthita: |

sarvathA vartamAnO\_pi sa yOgI mayi vartatE || 31 ||

]

[yO] The person who [bhajati] worships [mAm] Me, [sarvabhUtastham] the one who is situated in all beings, [Ekatvam Asthita:] believe in My uniqueness and exist in one-ness with Me. [sa: yOgI] This person, who is in the quest for the Self [mayi vartatE] resides in Me, [api] even though [sarvathA vartamAna:] he exists in all kinds of situations.

In the state of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being), where the person is focused on realizing the Self, he is situated in unity with Me and believes in My unique nature – that is due to the fact that I am situated in every being and My form is unlimited knowledge.

This person worships Me with a firm mind, giving up all differences that are created by the environment. Even when such a person arises out of the state of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being), even when he is involved in various deeds, even as he perceives himself and all the other beings, he always sees Me – he resides in Me. Meaning, he always sees an equivalence to Me in his own Self and in all beings as well.

Next, he describes the state of being that is at an even higher state of maturity:

## 6-32

[

AtmaupamyEna sarvavtra samam pashyati yO\_arjuna |

sukham vA yadi vA du:kham sa yOgI paramO mata: || 32 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [yO] the person who [padhyati] sees [samam] equality [sarvatra] everywhere, [sukham vA] whether in happiness [yadi vA du:kham] or in difficulties [AtmaupamyEna] due to the equivalence of the Self in everyone, [sa yOgi] this person, who is in the quest for realizing the Self [paramO] is the ultimate [mata:] – that is my opinion.

The Self in every being, including ourselves, has a single form – that of pure and unrestricted knowledge. Due to this, all of them are similar. The person described in this Shloka is the one who stands by this fact and considers the feelings present everywhere with equanimity.

These ‘feelings’ could be happiness such as the birth of a son, and sadness such as his death. This person considers them equally, as they are not related to him.

To elaborate, he considers the birth and death of his own son to be equal to the birth and death of another’s son. This person, who is in the quest for the Self is considered to be the ultimate – meaning, he has attained the highest maturity in this quest.

## 6-33 to 6-34

[

arjuna uvAcha -

yO\_yam yOgastvayA prOkta: sAmyEna madhusUdhana |

EtasyAham na pashyAmi chanchalatvAt sthitim sthirAm || 33 ||

chanchalam hi mana: kr`shNa pramAthi balavat dhr`Dham |

tasyAham nigraham manyE vAyOriva suduShkaram || 34 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said [madhusUdhana] Krishna, [chanchalatvAt] due to the mind being volatile, [aham na pashyAmi] I do not see [ya: ayam yOga:] this yoga, which was [tvayA sAmyEna prOkta:] told by you as equanimity, [Etasya sthirAm sthitim] as a state with any stability.

[kr`shNa] Krishna, [mana:] the mind [chanchalam hi] is indeed unstable. [balavat] As if by force, [pramAthi] it causes diversions [dhr`Dham] that are very strong. [aham manyE] I am of the opinion that [suduShkaram] it is extremely difficult [tasya nigraham] to gain control over it, [vAyOriva] just as it is difficult to gain control over the wind.

Is such a state of being really possible?

Arjuna said- For a long time, the mind has experienced a wide variety of beings, based on the differences between humans, differences between our Self, the Lord and so on. Given the variety it has encountered, I do not see a way in which the mind can be stationed firmly in the idea of equality.

The idea of equality was illustrated by You as the universal equivalence of all beings- All of them have a form that is pure knowledge and are equivalent to the Lord’s form, when they are not under the influence of their past deeds.

However, the mind has seen a wide variety of humans and other beings. The mind is accustomed to reacting to the various stimuli of the environment incessantly and is inherently volatile. Its entire experience goes against this equivalence. Hence, it is not possible for a person to make it stand in one place.

This mind will divert the person by force and firmly drive him elsewhere. Even among the stimuli he is used to, the mind cannot stay at one thought – it keeps wandering. Moreover, the Self has qualities that are opposite to the usual stimuli experienced by the mind.

Given all this, an attempt to make it stand still in the Self is like controlling an unfavorable strong wind with a small fan. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

In this way, a desire to know the means to control the mind is expressed.

## 6-35 to 6-36

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

asamshayam mahAbAhO manO durnigraham chalam |

abhyAsEna tu kauntEya vairAgyENa cha gr`hyatE || 35 ||

asamyatAtmanA yOgO duShTrApa iti mE mati: |

vashyAtmanA tu yatatA shakyO\_vAptum upAyata: || 36 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said: [mahAbAhO] O one with powerful arms, [asamshayam] there is no doubt that [manO] the mind [chalam] keeps wandering [durnigraham] and is difficult to control. [tu] However, [kauntEya] Arjuna, [abhyAsEna] by practice [vairAgyENa cha] and by preventing oneself from being driven by desire, [gr`hyatE] it can be brought under our grip.

[asamyatAtmanA] Someone who doesn’t​ have his mind under control [duShTrApa] would find it impossible [yOgO] to pursue the Self - [iti mE mati:] this is my opinion. [tu] While [avAptum shakya:] this is achievable [vashyAtmanA] by a person who has control, [yatatA] who perseveres [upAyata:] according to the described methods.

Your intention to drive lets you stay in the [state of yoga](#yoga_state_of_being).

Lord Krishna replies- No doubt, the mind is difficult to control. It wanders constantly by its very nature. Even then, it can be brought under control by the excellence of the Self – which results from the practice of its pure form and qualities.

Moreover, attachment to things other than the Self leads to bondage. With this awareness, we get rid of the thirst for various desires. With this and a little effort from the intellect, the mind can be brought under our grip.

The pursuit of the Self is indeed impossible – even with very heavy effort – if the mind is not under control. A person needs to bring his mind under control, persevering by the methods described before- being aware of the Self, [working independent of desire](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html) to worship Me.

With this, he gains the ability to practice [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being). He gains the ability to see everything with equanimity.

Next, Arjuna requests to understand the greatness of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) in its true nature, in the manner described in Chap.2#40: ‘While working without attachment towards outcomes, something that has been started is not destroyed’. Over there, The Lord stated that the preferred means to realization is the [technique of working](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html) without being driven. The knowledge of the Self is embedded in it. This greatness is the same as [the special state of being](#yoga_state_of_being) described in this chapter.

## 6-37 to 6-39

[

arjuna uvAcha -

ayati: shraddhayOpEtO yOgAt chalita mAnasa: |

aprApya yOga samsiddhim kAm gatim kr`ShNa gachChati || 37 ||

kachchit ubhaya vibhraShTa: ChinnAbhramiva nashyati |

apratiShThO mahAbAhO vimUDhO brahmaNa: pathi || 38 ||

Etam mE samshayam kr`ShNa! ChEttum arhasi ashEShata: |

tvavdanya: samShayasyAsya ChEttA nahyupapadyatE || 39 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said: [kr`ShNa] Krishna, [shraddhayOpEtO] a person with the best intentions and sufficient dedication [ayati:] without perseverance and proper efforts [yOgAt chalita mAnasa:] will have his mind wander from the path of realizing the Self. [aprApya yOga samsiddhim] Without attaining the goal of realizing the Self, [kAm gatim gachChati] what will be his state?

[kachchit na nashyati] Will he not go wasted, [ubhaya vibhraShTa:] being ineffective on both sides, [ChinnAbhramiva] like a small piece of cloud that gets separated from a big thunder-cloud? [apratiShThO] He would have nothing to rest on, [brahmaNa: pathi vimUDha:] having deviated from the path of realizing the Self and the Lord.

[kr`ShNa] O Krishna, [Etam mE samshayam] this is my doubt! [arhasi] You have the ability [ChEttum] to get rid of it [ashEShata:] completely. [tvadanya:] Other than You, [na upapadyatE hi] there is indeed nobody [asya samShayasya ChEttA] who can get rid of this doubt.

What if my intention breaks?

Even though a person pursues the knowledge of the Self in full faith, his mind may wander from the path of Self-realization due to imperfections in the intensity of his efforts. Without gaining the goal of realizing the Self, what state will he fall into? Just as a fragment of cloud that has separated from a huge thunder-cloud perishes in the midst of the sky, without being able to reach any other cloud, will he not perish too?

How would it be, to lose out on both counts? On one side, he has deviated from the path shown by the Lord, to realize the Self. On the other, he is not interested in being driven by the usual pleasures and goals of this world. He is also not interested in the outcome of his actions. He doesn’t seem to thrive in achieving material goals.

In this way, it appears that he has no base to rest upon. Having proceeded on the path of realizing the Self, he has slipped and fallen. Deprived of both, will he perish? Or will he not?

You are capable of cutting this doubt away totally. By Your very nature, You see everything simultaneously at all times. Other than You, there is nobody who can get rid of this doubt.

## 6-40

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

pArtha naivEha nAmutra vinAshastasya vidyatE |

na hi kalyANa kr`t kashchit durgatim tAta gachChati || 40 ||

]  
[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said – [pArtha] Arjuna, [na vidyatE] there is no [vinAsha:] destruction [tasya] for this person - [naiva iha] not here, [na amutra] not anywhere else. [kalyANa kr`t kashchit] Any person who does virtuous deeds [durgatim na gachChati hi] shall not fall into misfortune, [tAta] my friend.

Don’t worry; your intention is never destroyed

A person who has begun the journey to realize the Self may slip from the path, though he has complete faith. There is no destruction for him here or anywhere else. The word ‘destruction’ includes the loss of enjoyment of material goals, missing the experience of the Self that we seek, as well as the onset of any unfavorable events.

This kind of destruction will not befall a person who has faith in the goal but has slipped from the path. The performance of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) is the most virtuous deed. Any person who practices [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) will definitely not end up in misfortune, in any of the three time-spans (*the past, in his present or in the future*).

What happens to such a person? This question is answered next-

## 6-41

[

prApya puNyakr`tAn lOkAn uShitvA shAshvatI: samA: |

shuchInAm shrImatAm gEhE yOga bhraShTO\_bhijAyatE || 41 ||

]

[yOga bhraShTa:] A person who has started on the path to realize the Self but has slipped [prApya] obtains [puNyakr`tAn lOkAn] fortunate environments, [uShitvA] lives there [shAshvatI: samA:] for a long time [abhijAyatE] and will be born [shuchInAm gEhE] to a family of open and affectionate people, [shrImatAm] who are endowed with good material comforts.

A person diverts from the path of realizing the Self due to some desires. This person will then obtain worlds that are available to virtuous people. He enjoys those very types of desires at their best for a long time. He enjoys all this due to the greatness of the [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) he has practiced.

He lives there for a long time, till his desires conclude.

Finally, his desire for that kind of enjoyment fades away. Then, this person, who slipped after having started practicing [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) is born to a family of open and affectionate people who are endowed with good comforts – meaning, people who have initiated the practice of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) and who are capable of accomplishing it.

This birth is again due to the greatness of the practice of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being), which he has started.

## 6-42

[

athavA yOginAm Eva kulE bhavati dhImatAm |

Etaddhi durlabhataram lOkE janma yadIdr`sham || 42 ||

]

[athavA] A person who slipped after going further on the path to realize the Self [bhavavti] is born [kulE] to a family [dhImatAm] of wise people who are capable of teaching, [yOginAmEva] and who themselves practice the realization of the Self. [yat Idr`sham janma] This type of birth [Etat durlabhataram hi] is extremely rare and difficult to get [lOkE] in this world.

When a person's realization of the Self has progressed to become mature and he slips from the path of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being), he is born in a great and wise family whose members themselves practice [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) and are capable of teaching this to others.

These two types of births – in a family of people who are capable of yoga and among people who practice it – are extremely rare for ordinary beings of this world. They are achieved by the greatness of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being).

## 6-43 to 6-44

[

tatra tam buddhisaMyOgam labhatE paurva daihikam |

yatatE cha tatO bhUya: samsiddhau kurunandana || 43 ||

pUrvAbhyAsEna tEnaiva hriyatE hyavashO\_pi sa: |

]

[kurunandana] Arjuna, [tatra] in this birth *(mentioned in the previous two Shlokas)*, [labhatE] he will regain [tam buddhisamOgam] the same knowledge of the Self, [paurva daihikam] as he had in his previous body. [tata:] Then, [yatatE samsiddhau] he strives for realizing the Self [bhUya:] with greater strength.

[sa:] He [hriyatE hi] will definitely get pulled towards the realization of the Self [tEnaiva pUrvAbhyAsEna] due to the same practice he was involved in previously, [avasha: api] even though he has not controlled his mind to focus upon it entirely.

Born in this way, he gains back the knowledge of the Self, which was associated with his previous body. Then, similar to a person waking up from sleep, he pursues this knowledge with even greater perseverance. He pursues the path of realizing the Self in such a way, that obstacles do not put him off anymore.

Worship of the Lord has been his virtue. He worships by working independent of desire. Having begun his quest to realize the Self, this person may slip from the path of realizing the Self. He still gets pulled towards the same path, though he does not consciously focus his mind upon it. The efficacy of this yoga is well-established.

## 6-44

[

jijnAsurapi yOgasya shabdabrahmAtivartatE || 44 ||

]

[api] Even [jijnAsu:] a person who wants to know [yOgasya] the nature of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) [ativartatE] will overcome [shabdabrahma] the influence of material stimuli.

Even when a person is not yet in the state called [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being), as long as he wants to know the path to realize the Self, he will be led by the aspiration to gain that realization. In this way, he accomplishes the realization of the Self by means of his [activity](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn).

With this accomplishment, he overcomes the influence of the material world.

The ‘material world’ consists of various forms that we call by names such as humans, animals, earth, sky, gods and heavens. A person who is beyond the limitations imposed by the material world realizes the Self. The Self has a form that is nothing but knowledge and infinite joy. It does not deserve to be called by names such as human or god.

## 6-45

[

prayatnAt yatamAnastu yOgI samshuddha kilbiSha: |

anEka janma samsiddha: tatO yAti parAm gatim || 45 ||

]

[tata:] Hence, [yOgI] a person who has set out on the path to realize the Self [yAti] obtains [parAm gatim] the ultimate goal [anEka janma samsiddha:] accomplished over several births [prayatnAt yatamAnastu] by persevering with efforts, [samshuddha kilbiSha:] having been cleaned of all flaws.

With the [greatness of yoga](#greatness_of_yoga), the flaws of a person are cleaned by a fortunate collection of births. With this, he obtains a life where he perseveres with renewed efforts.

In this way, even though a person who is on the path to realize the Self may deviate, he will definitely reach the same ultimate goal ([*Moksha*](#Moksha)).

By virtue of being focused on the ultimate goal, a person who practices [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) is said to be better-placed than others. This is stated in the next Shloka.

## 6-46

[

tapasvibhyO\_dhikO yOgI jnAnibhyO\_pi matO\_dhika: |

karmibya: chAdhikO yOgI tasmAt yOgI bhavArjuna || 46 ||

]

[yOgI] A person who practices [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) [adhika:] is higher [tapasvibhya:] than people who perform penance. [mata:] He is considered to be [adhika:] higher [jnAnibhya: api] than learned people as well. [yOgI] The person who practices [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) [cha adhika:] is also higher [karmibhya:] than people who work hard to get results. [tasmAt] Hence, [arjuna] Arjuna, [yOgI bhava] practice [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being).

There are goals that are achieved merely through contemplation, goals that merely require you to know a little about the Self and those that only require work. The goal to realize the Self and the Lord is higher than all of them. Hence, a person who practices [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) – who is on the path to realize the Self – is the best among people who achieve goals through penance, learning and doing things. Hence, practice [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being).

What is our intimacy with the Lord?

In this way, the realization of the Self was described in the words of the Creator Himself. This realization is an accessory to attaining the Lord. Now, the science of attaining the Lord is introduced.

## 6-47

[

yOginAm api sarvEShAm madgatEna antarAtmanA |

shraddhAvAn bhajatE yO mAm sa mE yuktatamO mata: || 47 ||

]

[yO mAm bhatatE] The person who worships Me, [madgatEna antarAtmanA] having placed himself within Me [shraddhAvAn] with complete trust, [sa mE yuktatamO mata:] I consider him to be the most focused, [yOginAm api sarvEShAm] even in comparison to all those who persevere to realize the Self.

We spoke about realizing the Self within us. What about its intimacy with the Lord?

*In this Shloka, the Lord says that the people described till now pale in comparison with a person who surrenders to Him. This person is not one among them; he’s in a different league.*

*To understand this commentary, it is necessary to know the usage of the various grammatical cases. The [panchamI] case means ‘in comparison to’, which denotes that the subject is distinct from the objects being compared. The [ShaShThI] case means ‘among’, which means the subject is one among the objects mentioned. In this Shloka, the person being described is different from others. We must pick up the ‘in comparison to’ case, not the ‘one among the others’ case.*

The Shloka describes a person, different from all others who persevere to realize the Self. This description uses the ablative case (which means a comparison and separation – the [panchami vibhakti]) to denote all the others.

People who persevere to realize the Self were described at progressive stages of maturity, starting with Chap.6#26 till Chap.6#30. The person who is going to be described now is distinct from all these four types.

The genitive case (denoting ‘belongingness’ – the [ShaShThI vibhakti]) is not used, since this person is not merely a special one among others. The phrase ‘even in comparison to all those who persevere to realize the Self’ has been used in this Shloka. The word ‘all’ over here includes the people who perform penance and the others mentioned previously (Chap.4#28). Even here, the [panchamI] case is to be grasped, by the same logic mentioned before- the practitioner who is going to be described now has focused his mind the most. He is distinct in comparison to all those people.

In comparison to this person, the distinction between people mentioned previously (Chap.4#28) is insignificant. It is like comparing a fabulous mountain in the Himalaya and a minute mustard seed. Even though the mustard seeds have a perceptible difference and inequality among themselves, their insignificance is obvious when placed in perspective with the mountain.

This person has placed himself in Me by extreme affection and with the conviction that there is no protector other than Me. This person worships Me with strong intent and a sense of urgency to attain me, since he cannot tolerate even a moment of separation from Me – again, by an overload of affection towards Me.

‘Me’ refers to Lord Krishna, whose playing field is the creation, evolution and destruction of the entire universe, which is endowed with a variety of things that are to be experienced, various species of beings that experience it, things that help in experiencing it and places where it can be experienced.

This is The Lord, whom no flaw can influence, who is an abode of unlimited amount of great knowledge, power, wealth, courage, strength, brilliance and uncountable other auspicious qualities, whose form is exactly the way He wishes, a form that is unthinkable in its entirety – divine, extraordinary, eternal, flawless, with limitless brilliance, beauty, aroma, tenderness, charm, youthfulness and is an abode to infinite such qualities.

His form and nature cannot be broken-down and understood either through speech or thought. He is a vast ocean of compassion, character, affection, generosity and protects all beings of the universe without exception, without regard to any of their peculiarities.

He takes away the pain from anyone who bows and submits to Him. He is a sea of affection to them. He is not visible to any human and never moves away from his true nature.

This is Krishna, who has taken birth in the house of Vasudeva, who brightens the world with his continuous and unsurpassed brilliance, who fills the universe with his splendor – is the kind of Lord worshipped by this person.

Lord Krishna concludes this chapter- I, the Lord who always brings everything everywhere into realization in its true form, consider this person to be the most focused, the best of the best among all beings.

# Chapter 7

In the first volume (Chapter 1 to Chapter 6), Lord Krishna described the way to realize the Self. This realization is an accessory in the service of the Lord. It is achieved by [working](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html) purely as worship to the Lord, without being driven by desire. Such work has the knowledge of the Self embedded in it.

Worship is the means to reach Lord Narayana, who is always present with Lakshmi, who alone is the creator of the universe, who is flawless, who knows everything, who is present in all beings, whose will is always realized, who pervades everything and is beyond the perception of our sense organs.

Till now, the true nature of the Self, along with the means to realize it was described to be able to explain the worship of the Lord.

In this middle volume (chapter 7 to chapter 12) the nature of the Supreme Lord and His worship, also called *bhakti*,are described. Several testimonies from the scriptures describe this worship, starting with:

Chap.18#46: Any human being attains the goal by worshipping The Lord with his own work.

Chap.18#54: Having realized the Self, with a serene mind, he doesn't get upset and doesn't yearn. Such a person has equanimity among all beings. He attains the ultimate devotion to Me.

These two Shlokas summarized the achievement of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn).

Service to the Lord can be a means to achieve Him, only when it takes the form of devotion - as stated in the following sentences of the Vedanta:

[shvetAshvatara upanishat], 3-8: ‘A person overcomes the cycle of deaths only by knowing Him’

[purusha sUkta]: ‘Knowing Him alone, a person attains [moksha](#Moksha)’

And further:

[br`hadAraNyaka upanishat], 4-5-6: ‘The Self must be seen - it must be realized through focused attention’

[br`hadAraNyaka upanishat], 1-4-15: ‘We must perform worship by keeping the Lord as the goal’

[ChandOgya upanishat], 7-26-2: Once purified (*from desire, anger and laziness*), we think of the Lord constantly. By meeting the memory of the Lord, we are freed from all things that mislead us. Then we will achieve [moksha](#Moksha).

[muMDaka], 2-2-8: Be it a great being or a lowly creature, when it sees The Lord, it loses all its past deeds. The enemies of the Self (*desire and hatred*) will be destroyed. All doubts and suspicions are driven out.

In this way, all of these statements convey a single meaning - what we call variously as meditation and worship is an unbroken chain of thought, which is equivalent to seeing the Lord.

Further, it is stated in the [kaTha upanishat, 2-23]: This Self and the Lord are not achievable by instruction, not by thought, not even by hearing a lot about them. The person who is blessed by the Lord alone will attain the Lord. The Lord will show himself to this person.

Worship is an uninterrupted chain of thought

By the emphasis laid here, we see that worship is the uninterrupted chain of thought, which makes a person obtain the blessings of the Lord. Since the object of worship is so adorable, the chain of thought called worship itself is lovely.

Devotion is to worship with friendship

This is called *bhakti*: 'When the uninterrupted chain of thought is filled with friendship, it is called *bhakti*' -as stated in [laingapurANa,uttarabhAga:].

Further, there are more statements in the scriptures that convey the same meaning:

The [puruSha sUkta] says: 'By knowing Him alone, a person attains moksha. There is no other way to the goal'

Chap.11#53, Chap.11#54: The Lord says through these Shlokas: 'Not through the Vedas, not even by penance, not by donating things, not by performing sacrifice - it is not possible to see Me in the way that you do. Arjuna, through devotion alone, it is possible to know Me like this, to see Me in My true form and finally go into Me.

Here, the seventh chapter describes the true form of Lord, who is to be worshipped in this way. It describes that the Lord's form is concealed by the environment ('*environment*' *includes our body*). It speaks about seeking refuge in the Lord to shake off this ignorance. Then, the four types of people who render service to the Lord are described along with the special characteristics of [those who know](#jnAnI).

## 7-1

[

shrI bhagavAnuvAcha -

mayyAsakta manA: pArtha yOgam yunjan madAshraya: |

asamshayam samagram mAm yathA jnAsyasi tat shr'Nu || 1 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAnuvAcha] The Lord said:

[pArtha] Arjuna, [shr'Nu] listen [tat yatha] to the way in which [mAm jnAsyasi] you will know me [samagram] entirely [asamshayam] without any doubt, [mayi Asakta manA:] with a mind filled with eagerness towards Me, [yOgam yunjan] embarking on the journey to join Me, [madAshraya:] having taken refuge in Me

Awareness of the Lord’s uniqueness generates affection towards Him

The Lord continues- The mind focuses on Me with an eagerness that comes from a strong wish to attain Me. As soon as you realize the uniqueness of My great powers, My true nature, My qualities and My activities, you will be swept off your senses by a rush of love towards Me. By this love, you will deeply bind your thoughts in Me.

Then you take refuge in Me - you cannot exist without Me; In this way, I alone am your refuge and the basis for your existence. You will embark on the journey to join me and be of my service. Listen to the knowledge that I am going to tell you with an attentive mind. After I tell this, you will know Me entirely without any doubt.

## 7-2

[

jnAnam tE\_ham savijnAnam idam vakShyAmi ashEShata: |

yat jnAtvA nEha bhUyO anyat jnAtavyam avshiShyatE || 2 ||

]

[tE aham vakShyAmi] I will now tell you [idam jnAnam] this knowledge [sa vijnAnam] along with the ability to distinguish, [ashEShata] in completeness. [yat jnAtvA] After knowing this [na anyat] there is nothing else, [avashiShyatE iha] which remains over here [jnAtavyam] to be learnt [bhUya:] any more.

I will now teach you about Me, along with the knowledge required to distinguish Me. I will not leave out anything about the subject. The 'knowledge required to distinguish' is about knowing those qualities that make Me distinct - the way in which I differ from the variety of conscious beings and non-conscious things – everything other than Me.

My distinction is by virtue of being the destroyer of all impurity, by having countless varieties of favorable qualities in limitless amounts with no boundaries and by having an unending set of great powers.

Along with the knowledge about this distinction, I will tell you the knowledge about My true nature. There wouldn’t be any need to elaborate further. After knowing this, there is nothing to be learnt about Me anymore.

Next, the Lord illustrates the great difficulty involved in knowing.

## 7-3

[

manuShyANAm sahasrEShu kashchit yatati siddhayE |

yatatAmapi siddhAnAm kashcinmAm vEtti tatvata: || 3 ||

]

[manuShyANAm sahasrEShu] Among thousands of people, [kashchit] someone [yatati] persists in his endeavor [siddhayE] to achieve supreme knowledge. [yatatAmapi siddhAnAm] Even among those who persevere to achieve this knowledge, [kashchinmAm] someone among them [vEtti] will know Me [tatvata:] in My true form.

Among thousands of people who are eligible to gain knowledge from the scriptures, perhaps one would persevere till the final goal is reached. Among thousands of people who persevere till the goal is reached, perhaps one would know me and aspire to gain the ultimate goal from Me. Among the people who know Me, perhaps one would know Me in my true form, as I really am. The opinion expressed here is: Everyone doesn’t understand the Lord.

Our understanding comes from breakdown and analysis. The Lord cannot be analyzed in this way, so how do we bring Him into our thoughts?

As said in Chap.7#19: 'Such a great person is extremely difficult to find'; In Chap.7#26: 'There isn't anyone who knows Me'.

## 7-4

[

bhUmirApO\_nalO vAyu: kham manO buddhirEva cha |

ahankAra itIyam mE bhinnA prakr'tiraShTadhA || 4 ||

]

[iyam mE prakr'ti:] This universe of mine [aShTadhA bhinnA] is divided into eight categories: [bhUmi:] Solids, [Apa:] liquids, [vAyu:] gasses, [anala:] energy, [kham] space, [mana:] mind, [buddhi] the gross collections [ahankAra:] and the notion of individuality.

The universe is one of The Lord’s natures, which all conscious beings experience

The universe contains many types of countless things to be experienced, instruments that are used to experience them and places where they can be experienced. They can be classified into eight parts: Solids, liquids, energy, gasses, space, with their various qualities such as smells and textures; The mind and the associated organs; The gross collections; The notion of individuality. Know that the universe belongs to Me.

## 7-5

[

aparEyam itastvanyam prakr'tim viddhi mE parAm |

jIvabUtAm mahAbAhO yayA idam dhAryatE jagat || 5 ||

]

[mahAbAhO] Arjuna, [iyam] the universe that I just described [aparA] is not the ultimate one. [viddhi] Know [mE parAm prakr'tim] My ultimate nature, [ita: tu anyam] which is something distinct from this one, [jIvabhUtam] in the form of a conscious being [yayA] by whom [idam jagat] this world [dhAryatE] is sustained.

Consciousness - the ability to know - is The Lord’s primary nature

This universe is My nature, which is experienced by conscious beings. However, it isn’t My primary nature. Indeed, there exists another form, which is alive and enjoys the entire universe. Know that it has a conscious form and that it belongs to Me. It is My prime nature. It sustains the entire non-conscious universe.

## 7-6

[

Etat yOnIni bhUtAni sarvANi ityupadhAraya |

aham kr'tsnasya jagata: prabhava: pralayastathA || 6 ||

]

[upadhAraya] Bear in mind that [sarvANi bhUtAni] all beings [Etat yOnIni] owe their existence to the two natures. [tathA] In this way, [aham] I am [prabhava: pralaya:] the creator and the destroyer [kr'tsnasya jagata:] of the entire universe.

I am an aggregate of these conscious and non-conscious beings. Know that all beings, right from the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) down to minute organisms and inanimate objects belong to Me. They appear to be higher and lower life forms. They are a combination of things that have the ability to perceive and things that don't. My two natures are the basis of their existence (*two natures of the Lord are: The material nature described in Chap.7#4 and the conscious nature described in Chap.7#5*). Since they have My [two natures](#TwoNatures_univrs_and_ultimate) as the basis of their existence, they definitely belong to Me.

In fact, the entire universe has My [two natures](#TwoNatures_univrs_and_ultimate) as the basis for its existence. My [two natures](#TwoNatures_univrs_and_ultimate) in turn have Me as the basis for their existence. By this fact, and by the fact that everything belongs to Me, know that I alone am the birth of the entire universe, I alone am its destruction and I alone am its controller.

This fact - that the Lord is the basis for all of nature's beings, all of them being an aggregation of things that perceive and things that don't - is established by statements in the scriptures:

[subAla], 2: The gross elements perish and settle in the subtle. The subtle rests in enlightenment. Enlightenment rests in darkness. Darkness becomes one with the Supreme Lord.

[viShNu purANa], 1-2-24: From Lord Vishnu's form, there arise two forms - the supreme and the subject beings.

[viShNu purANa], 6-4-30,31: The nature that was described by Me, in both its gross and subtle forms, along with the subject beings perish into the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is the basis for the existence of every being and is the ultimate controller. The Supreme Lord, known by the name of Vishnu, is praised by verses in the Vedas and Vedanta.

These were some of the scriptures describing the relation of the universe to the Lord.

## 7-7

[

matta: parataram nAnyat kinchit asti dhananjaya |

]

[dhananjaya] Arjuna, [na asti kinchit] there is absolutely nothing [anyat] else [matta: parataram] that is beyond Me.

*The word [para] means ‘beyond’, in the sense of being the basis of existence or the controller. For instance, gravitation is a basis of planetary motion and controls the path of movement. So, an understanding of gravity lies ‘beyond’ the understanding of planetary motion. In this Shloka, the Lord states that He has no other basis or controller.*

My [two natures](#TwoNatures_univrs_and_ultimate) are the basis of existence. I am the basis of their existence. By virtue of being the controller of the very consciousness that controls all conscious beings, I am the ultimate basis of everything. Further, I am the ultimate in having the qualities of knowledge, strength and power. Nothing else is beyond Me in knowledge, strength or power.

[

mayi sarvam idam prOtam sUtrE maNigaNA iva || 7 ||

]

[idam sarvam] All of this [prOtam] is mounted [mayi] in Me [iva] just as [maNigaNA] beads are strung [sUtrE] in a string,

All entities of this universe are made from combinations of the conscious and non-conscious. They are in activity and cause other activities. They exist as though they were My body. Like a set of beads on a string, they have Me as the core of their Self. They have Me as their abode.

The fact that the universe exists as the body of the Lord, who is its owner and controller, who is situated inside everything, is given by the following references:

[br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-3: The one, for whom the earth is His body

[br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-22: The one, for whom our Self is His body

[subAla], 7: He is inside every being, destroys all faults, is divine and unique - He is Narayana.

In this way, the universe with all its beings exists as the body of the Lord. The Lord is situated inside everything as the Self inside the body.

Everything is a form of the Lord and the Lord exists in every form – since everything is His body and He is the ultimate Self. He continues in the following Shlokas, stating that everything relates to Him - that He is the one addressed by all words.

## 7-8 to 7-11

[

rasO\_ham apsu kauntEya prabhA\_smi shashi sUryayO: |

praNava: sarva vEdEShu shabda: khE pauruSham nr'Shu || 8 ||

puNyO gandha: pr'thivyAm cha tEjashcha asmi vibhAvasau |

jIvanam sarva bhUtEShu tapashchAsmi tapasviShu || 9 ||

bIjam mAm sarva bhUtAnAm viddhi pArtha sanAtanam |

buddhi buddhimatAm asmi tEja: tEjasvinAm aham || 10 ||

balam balavatAm chAham kAma rAga vivarjitam |

dharma aviruddhO bhUtEShu kAmOsmi bharatarShabha || 11 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [aham asmi] I am [rasa:] the taste [apsu] in all liquids, [prabhA] the radiance [shashi sUryayO:] in the moon and the sun, [praNava:] I am the sacred syllable (Om) [sarva vEdEShu] in all the Vedas, [shabda:] the waves [khE] in space, [pauruSham] capability [nr'Shu] in humans.

[aham asmi] I am [punyO gandham] the pleasant fragrance [pr'thivyAm] of this Earth [cha] and [tEja:] the energy [vibhAvasau] in a fire. [asmi] I am [jIvanam] the life [sarva bhUtEShu] in all living beings [cha] and [tapa:] thoughts [tapasviShu] in the people who focus their intellect.

[pArtha] Arjuna, [mAm viddhi] know Me [bIjam] as the primary cause [sarvabhUtAnAm] of all beings, [sanAtanam] existing since beginning-less time. [aham asmi] I am [buddhi] the intellect [buddhimatAm] of intelligent beings, [tEja:] the brilliance [tEjasvinAm] in brilliant people.

[bharatarShbha] Arjuna, [aham asmi] I am [balam] the power [balavatAm] in powerful people, [kAma rAga vivarjitam] separate from desire and indulgence [cha] and I am [kAma:] love [dharma aviruddhO] that does not oppose My principles [bhUtEShu] in the beings of this world.

All these thoughts and feelings, having different characteristics, originate from Me. They are a part of My body and exist in Me in My service. In this way, I am the one who is present in all types of things.

## 7-12

[

yE chaiva sAtvikA bhAvA rAjasA: tAmasAshcha yE |

matta EvEti tAn viddhi na tvaham tEShu tE mayi || 12 ||

]

[yE chaiva] All these [sAtvikA bhAvA] feelings of wisdom and virtue, [rAjasA:] passion and activity, [tAmasA: cha] ignorance and laziness [viddhi tAn] - know that they [matta Eva iti] originate from Me. [na tu aham tEShu] However, I am not bound in them. [tE mayi] They are situated in Me.

You get the point, so there’s no need of further enumeration.

All thoughts and feelings having the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) of wisdom, passion and ignorance make up experiences, the sense organs and the body. Know that all of them come into being from Me.

By virtue of being My body, know that they have Me as the basis of their existence. However, I am not bound in them – I do not depend on them.

Though the analogy to the Self-and-body is made here, there is a difference. The body exists for the Self to experience. Similarly, the Universe exists for the Lord’s enjoyment. The analogy ends there. In us, the Self is in a state wherein it can receive favors from the body. Unlike this, the Lord does not have any relationship of need with the entities of the universe. They only interest the Lord as a source of amusement.

## 7-13

[

tribhi: guNamayai: bhAvai: Ebhi: sarvam idam jagat |

mOhitam nAbhijAnAti mAmEbhya: param avyayam || 13 ||

]

[mOhitam] Being deluded [Ebhi: bhAvai:] by these ways of thinking and feeling [tribhi: guNamayai:] that are pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), [sarvam idam jagat] this whole world [nAbhijAnAti] does not know [mAm] Me, [Ebhya: param] who is above them, [avyayam] who stays unchanged.

As described before, the entire universe belongs to Me, consisting of conscious and non-conscious elements. The universe periodically comes into being from Me. At the time of its destruction, it comes back to rest in Me. It is sustained in Me alone. It is situated as though it were My body, having Me as its owner.

In this way, I am present as all different things in this universe - as the cause and origin, as well as the resulting manifestation.

In this way, I am the basis of existence and the controller. I have unbounded knowledge and count-less other favorable qualities. I am above and beyond in all ways. There is nobody else who is beyond My auspicious qualities. Situated in this way, having unique favorable qualities and ways to enjoy them, I am above all thoughts and feelings that are pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

Here, the phrase 'I am above all thoughts and feelings' means that the Lord is beyond those qualities, without being worn out by them, always having an undisturbed, constant form.

This entire universe is deluded by material things that are pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). These material things are very unpleasant and short-lived. They exist to be experienced by our body and sense organs in accordance with past deeds. Being deluded in this way, the world, with its [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), animals, humans and inanimate things, does not know Me.

Why do we pursue constrained happiness?

Now comes the question: With You (the Lord) being ever-present, being superior to all material enjoyments by Your very nature, being with uninterrupted joy in large amounts, with an eternal and undisturbed form, how come every conscious being intends to enjoy the limited pleasures of the material world? Especially considering that material experiences are pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), are short-lived and are very unpleasant?

## 7-14

[

daivI hyEShA guNamayI mama mAyA duratyayA |

]

[EShA] These [mama daivI mAyA] divine creations of Mine [guNamayI] are pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). [duratyayA hi] They are indeed impossible to cross over.

These material creations are 'divine' because they are created by the Lord for the Lord's entertainment. Due to this, they are impossible to cross over. The word [mAyA] has been used over here to refer to the material creations we perceive - including all unpleasant things - which drive us towards strange activities.

For instance, the word [mAyA] has been used thus in [vishNu purANa], 1-19-20:

[tatO bhagavatA tasya rakShArtham chakramuttamam | AjagAma samAjnaptam jvAlAmAli sudarshanam | tEna mAyAsahasram tat shambarasya ashugAminA | bAlasya rakShatA dEham EkaikashyEna sUditam || ]

Translated, it means: 'Then, being instructed by the Lord, the unparalleled disk arrived to protect him (to protect Pralhad). Each one of the thousands of creations and actions of the wicked were destroyed by this quick-spinning weapon that is a blazing ring known as Sudarshana, while protecting the boy’

Used in this way, the word [mAyA]does not give the common meaning of 'illusion'.

There are other contexts where this word is used to denote 'magic', a certain spell or the effect of medicines. Since these things make our mind to perceive various meanings, they are denoted by the word [mAyA]*.* If we were to take the common thread through all the usages of the word [mAyA], even including the meaning of 'illusion', they all influence the mind and the intellect. In this way, it is complementary to the mind, creating impressions in it.

In the [shvEtAshvatara upanishat], 4-10, it is said - 'Know the environment around you as [mAyA], your experiences. Know the person who owns this [mAyA] as the Lord'. In this way, it is pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), creates our experiences and belongs to the Lord. Its job is to conceal the form of the Lord and trigger the intent to indulge in itself.

It isn’t possible to see beyond our cognition of this material world, unless we surrender to the Lord.

Hence, being deluded by the Lord's material creations, the beings of this world do not know the nature of the Lord, who has a form that is limitless and unbroken joy.

Now The Lord describes the method to free ourselves from the delusion brought about by material experiences -

[

mAmEva yE prapadyantE mAyAmEtAm taranti tE || 14 ||

]

[yE] The people who [prapadyantE] surrender [mAmEva] exclusively to Me [tE taranti] - they will cross over [EtAm mAyAm] this material world.

I am The Lord whose intent is always fulfilled. I am extremely kind, the refuge of the entire universe. I provide refuge without considering any special qualities of anyone. Those who surrender and take refuge in Me alone will cross over My material world that’s pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Being freed from material experiences, they render service to Me alone.

Now He explains why everyone does not surrender to the Lord, even though such surrender would bring them the reward of adoring the Lord and being close to Him.

## 7-15

[

na mAm duShkr'tinO mUDhA: prapadyantE narAdhamA: |

mAyayA apahr'ta jnAnA: asuram bhAvam AshritA: || 15 ||

]

[duShkr'tina:] People who do not value virtue [mUDhA:] are ignorant. [na mAm prapadyantE] They do not take refuge in Me. [narAdhamA:] Even though they consider Me to be ordinary, they do not approach Me. [mAyayA apahr'ta jnAnA:] The material world and its perceptions have stolen awareness in them. [asuram bhAvam AshritA:] Yet others know about My vast powers, possessions and My knowledge, but that only builds jealousy and hatred towards Me.

People who do not value virtue are those who commit vile deeds - they do not take refuge in Me. They come in four types, going by the deeds they committed in the past:

1. People who do not know
2. Those who know and still waste their human birth
3. Whose knowledge is stolen by material perceptions
4. Those who are consumed by jealousy and hatred

Let's examine each category:

People in the first category - Those who do not know - have knowledge that is misleading. Their misunderstanding tells them that the Self and their experiences exist in their service, for their purpose. However, as described before, the Self and the environment exist primarily in the Lord's service - that is their true nature.

People in the second category - Those who know and still waste their awareness – They know My character in the usual way (*by reading and listening, for instance*). Even then, they do not approach Me.

People in the third category have their knowledge stolen by material perceptions. Though they’ve been told about Me and My possessions, their awareness has been stolen by false logic, which tries to prove that anything that's not perceptible in this material world is not real.

People in the final category know me well and also know of My vast possessions. However, this knowledge only serves to trigger jealousy and hatred in them.

This was the list of people in the increasing order of vile deeds committed.

## 7-16

[

chaturvidhA bhajantE mAm janA: sukr'tina: arjuna |

ArtO jijnAsu: arthArthI jnAnI cha bharatarShabha || 16 ||

]

[bharatarShabha arjuna] Arjuna, [chaturvidhA] four types of [sukr'tina: janA:] virtuous people [mAm bhajantE] worship Me: [Arta:] The distressed, who want to regain what they lost, [jijnAsu:] those who are curious, [arthArthI] those who want to acquire wealth [jnAnI cha] and those who know.

We have different objectives and we surrender to the Lord accordingly

'Virtuous people' are those who, by their virtuous deeds, have taken refuge in Me and worship Me alone. Due to differences in their deeds, they are grouped into four categories.

These categories of virtuous people will be described now. Due to great deeds performed, those described later in the list have distinguished knowledge and are hence special:

1. Worshippers in the first category are those who have lost their possessions and their fame. They desire to have it back.
2. The second category has people who desire wealth that they don't have yet.

The difference between the first and second category is only superficial. Since the objective of both is to gain wealth, they get the same status.

1. Worshippers in the third category are driven by curiosity. They want to experience the Self, considering that the Self has a form that's pure knowledge.
2. Worshippers in the fourth category know the nature of the Self – that it is under the service of the Lord, for His purpose alone - as stated in the Shlokas beginning with Chap7#5: 'know this other nature of Mine, which is the ultimate one'. They do not stop at merely realizing the nature of the Self as being distinct from the environment. They believe in the Lord Himself being the ultimate goal and strive to reach the Lord. They are the wise ones ‘who know’.

*Know that the Lord is the ultimate purpose. When we know this, we yearn for the Lord Himself. To those of us who know the Lord, it doesn’t make sense to yearn for wealth - since the Lord is the purpose of any enjoyment that comes from it. It also doesn’t make sense to yearn for the bliss of the Self, since He is the purpose of that enjoyment too. We yearn for the Lord for the Lord’s sake.*

*Those who know this are the ‘ones who know’.*

## 7-17

[

tEShAm jnAnI nityayukta: Ekabhakti: vishiShyatE |

priyO hi jnAnina: atyartham aham sa cha mama priya: || 17 ||

]

[tEShAm] Among them, [jnAnI] the [one who knows](#jnAnI), [nityayukta:] whose thoughts are always with Me, [Ekabhakti:] who is devoted to Me alone [vishiShyatE] is special. [aham] I am [priya:] dear [jnAnina:] to this wise person, [atyartham hi] in a way that is entirely beyond description. [sa:] He is [mama priya: cha] dear to Me as well.

Once we know the Lord, other objectives seem insignificant

Among them, the [one who knows](#jnAnI) is special. He is always with the Lord and is devoted to the Lord alone. As the Lord says - To the [one who knows](#jnAnI), I am the only one he wants to achieve. This person has an eternal bond with Me. In case of the other two types of people, the bond with Me lasts only till their aspirations are met. Further, the [one who knows](#jnAnI) is devoted to Me alone, while the other two are devoted to Me by the achievement of their desires.

Moreover, I am extremely dear to the [one who knows](#jnAnI). Here, the word 'extremely' has been used in the sense of being 'beyond description'. This love is so great, it is beyond description even to Me, the Lord who knows everything and has all capabilities. This is because such Love does not have any limit.

It is said of Pralhad in [vishNu purANa 1-17-39]:

[sattvasakta mati: kr'ShNE dashyamAnO mahOragai: | na vivEdAtmanO gAtram tat smr'tya AhlAda samsthita: ||]

It means - 'Pralhad, having his focus on Lord Krishna alone, went without even noticing his body when he was being bitten by huge snakes, since he was situated in the joy that is generated by keeping the Lord in mind'

In the same way, he is dear to Me as well.

## 7-18

[

udArA: sarva EvaitE jnAnI tu Atmaiva mE matam |

Asthita: sa hi yuktAtmA mAmEva anuttamAm gatim || 18 ||

]

[EtE sarvE] All of these people [udArA: Eva] are definitely generous. [mE matam tu] However, I assert that [jnAnI] the [one who knows](#jnAnI) [Atmaiva] is like Myself. [sa: yuktAtmA] His thoughts are always with Me. [mAm Eva Asthita:] He believes and takes refuge in Me alone, [anuttamAm gatim] the supreme goal.

All four categories of people are generous in the sense that they worship Me alone. They are very charitable. Whoever takes even a small thing from Me, they are the ones who have given Me everything. Even among them, I consider the [one who knows](#jnAnI) as Myself - I assume a form in which I (the Lord of the universe) owe affectionate service to him.

Why is this so? That is because he has sought refuge in Me, considering Me alone as the ultimate achievement, knowing that without Me, his Self does not have any basis of existence.

Hence, there is no possibility for Me to exist without him either. In this way, he is indeed My own self.

## 7-19

[

bahUnAm janmanAm antE jnAnavAn mAm prapadyatE |

vAsudEva: sarvam iti sa mahAtmA sudurlabha: || 19 ||

]

[antE] At the end of [bahUnAm janmanAm] many births, [jnAnavAn] a [person who knows](#jnAnI) [prapadyatE] will surrender [mAm] to Me [vAsudEva: sarvam iti] with the conviction that Lord Krishna is everything. [sa: mahAtmA] Such a great person [sudurlabha:] is extremely difficult to find.

This surrender, which precedes the joy of being in the service the Lord and the joy of knowing the true Self, is not the result of a small number of virtuous births. Indeed, at the conclusion of many virtuous births, a person comes to know that his primary source of joy is in being of service to Lord Krishna alone.

From that point onwards, he comes to know about his own nature, state of being and his activities. He gains knowledge that the Lord is greater than all the countless great qualities put together.

Having gained such knowledge, he believes - 'Lord Krishna is the ultimate goal. He is also the means to arrive at that goal. Though there are many other desires, the Lord Himself is all of that' - With this conviction, he surrenders to Me and dedicates himself to My service. This is a great person. Such people are hard to find in this world.

This is indeed the meaning of the phrase 'Lord Vasudeva is everything' – Starting with Chap7#17 'I am dear to this knowledgeable person, in a way that is definitely beyond description' and Chap7#18 'Keeping Me in his thoughts always, he considers Me as the ultimate achievement and takes refuge in Me'. These Shlokas gave the description of the [one who knows](#jnAnI).

The fact that all conscious and non-conscious beings are [two natures](#TwoNatures_univrs_and_ultimate) of the Lord and exist in His service was illustrated starting with Chap7#4: 'This universe of mine is divided into eight categories: The solids, liquids, gasses, energy, space, mind, the gross collections and the concept of individuality' and in Chap7#5 'Know My ultimate nature as being distinct from this universe - know My ultimate form as a conscious being by whom all this is sustained'

Further, the dependence of these [two natures](#TwoNatures_univrs_and_ultimate) on the Lord was described, along with the dependence of all causes and effects, their form, state of existence and their activities. This was stated starting with the Shloka in Chap7#6 'I am the creator and the destroyer of the entire universe', going on to Chap7#7 'There is absolutely nothing else that is superior to Me' till Chap7#12 'Know that all these feelings, with the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) being prominent in them, originate from Me. However, I am not bound in them. They are situated in Me' - These Shlokas established the supremacy of the Lord in all ways and the dependence of everything on Him.

The person who knows all this is termed as '[the one who knows](#jnAnI)'.

Again, the Lord emphasizes that the [one who knows](#jnAnI) - the type of person described above - is very rare.

## 7-20

[

kAmai: taistai: hr'tajnAnA: prapadyantE anya dEvatA: |

tam tam niyamam AsthAya prakr'tyA niyatA: svayA || 20 ||

]

[niyatA:] Being controlled by [svayA prakr'tyA] their own nature, [hr'tajnAnA:] their knowledge having been taken [tai: tai: kAmai:] by various desires arising out of that nature, [prapadyantE] people take refuge [anya dEvatA:] in other powers [tam tam niyamam AsthAya] by following various methods, in order to attain those desires.

All people of this world are led by the influence of their own nature, which take the form of 'feelings' that are pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). The knowledge about My form has been abducted by desires that have the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) prominent in them. In order to satisfy those desires, they seek refuge in powers other than Me. They follow various methods to please others - methods that go against their 'true nature'.

Our true nature is to be of service to the Lord alone.

## 7-21

[

yO yO yAm yAm tanum bhakta: shraddhayA architum ichChati |

tasya tasya achalAm shraddhAm tAmEva vidadhAmyaham || 21 ||

]

[yO yO bhakta:] Which ever devotee [architum ichChati] likes to please [yAm yAm tanum] what ever form [shraddhayA] with dedication, [vidadhAmi aham] I give [achalAm] stability [tAmEva] to the same [shraddhAm] faith [tasya tasya] in each of them.

Even these sources of power are indeed My body, existing for My purpose. This is stated in the scriptures such as [br'hadAranyka upanishad], 3-7-9: 'The One who sits in the Sun; The One whom the Sun does not know; The One, for whose utility the Sun exists'

People who worship those powers will want to do so with faith and dedication, without knowing that they exist for My purpose alone. Even though these worshippers are unaware that all powers are Mine, I take consideration of the fact that their dedication is towards My body. Hence, I bring stability to their dedication - meaning, I remove the obstacles in their way.

## 7-22

[

sa tayA shraddhayA yukta: tasya ArAdhanam IhatE |

labhatE cha tata: kAmAn mayA Eva vihitAn hi tAn || 22 ||

]

[yukta:] With [tayA shraddhayA] that dedication, [sa] the person [IhatE] wishes [tasya ArAdhanam] to worship accordingly. [tata:] By this [labhatE cha] he obtains [tAn kAmAn] the desires he wants. [mayA Eva vihitAn] These desires are given by Me alone.

In this Shloka, the phrase 'With that dedication' refers to the dedication that is stabilized by the Lord by removing all obstacles. With such dedication, the person desires to adore and worship a source of power. Since all sources of power are analogous to My body, since they exist in My service, the person obtains the desires he wished for - they are given by Me alone.

Dedication to a cause is dedication to the Lord

This person may not know that those other powers are like My body, when he worships them. Hence, he doesn't even know that such worship is actually a service to Me. Even then, I give him what he desires - since it is worship that's rendered to Me in reality.

## 7-23

[

antavattu phalam tEShAm tadbhavati alpa mEdhasAm |

dEvAn dEvayajO yAnti madbhaktA yAnti mAm api || 23 ||

]

[tu] However, [tat phalam] those results, [tEShAm alpa mEdhasAm] which are obtained by people with little knowledge [antavat bhavati] are short-lived. [dEvayaja:] People who reach out to various powers [dEvAn yAnti] will obtain those powers. [madbhaktA:] My devotees [yAnti mAm api] will also attain Me.

People with little knowledge will worship various sources of power that can satisfy their desires. However, any outcome from such worship is minor and short-lived. How come?

Your outcomes are as temporary as you intend

All powers other than the Lord have a finite life span. Hence, a person who aspires to a position of power will obtain the same - but that position is short-lived and will be destroyed. The person will start again in a different form.

My devotees too involve in the same activities, considering them as a way to adore and worship Me. Having given up the addiction to temporary results, My adoration alone is their primary goal. In this way, they will attain Me. They do not need to start again. It is said clearly in Chap8#16: 'Arjuna, after attaining Me, there is no rebirth'.

Next, He says that all the others waste the opportunity to seek refuge in the Lord when He takes birth, for instance as a human.

## 7-24

[

avyaktam vyaktim Apannam manyantE mAm abuddhaya: |

param bhAvam ajAnantO mama avyayam anuttamam || 24 ||

]

[abuddhaya:] People who are incapable of discerning [ajAnata:] don’t know [mama param bhAvam] My ultimate characteristics [avyayam] of never wearing out [anuttamam] and of not having anyone superior. [manyantE] They believe [mAm] that I am [avyaktam] someone who is invisible, [vyaktim Apannam] who has obtained a visible form.

I am the Lord of everything, who is worshipped by all actions, whose form and nature cannot be described either by speech or thought. I am born out of great compassion, as the son of Vasudeva, to enable everyone to seek My refuge. I am born with affection towards those who have surrendered to Me. I am born without abandoning my true nature.

Most people don’t recognize Krishna as the permanent enjoyer of everything

People who are incapable of discerning don’t know My true nature of being supreme, of having nobody superior to Me and of being unchanged. They equate Me to a prince in this world. They think that I did not have a personality before, but obtained a special one now due to the effect of My past deeds. Due to this misconception, they do not seek My refuge; They do not worship Me with their actions.

Next, the Lord clears a doubt: How come the Lord's true nature is not apparent to them?

## 7-25

[

nAham prakAsha: sarvasya yOga mAyA samAvr'ta: |

mUDha: ayam nAbhijAnAti lOkO mAm ajam avyayam || 25 ||

]

[yOga mAyA samAvr'ta:] Being covered by My miraculous association with a human form, [nAham prakAsha:] I am not apparent in My brilliance [sarvasya] to everyone. [ayam lOka:] People of this world, [mUDha:] being unaware, [nAbhijAnAti mAm] do not know Me [ajam] as the one who is without birth, [avyayam] who does not diminish in any way.

My association with a human form is miraculous. Such confinement in a human form is not natural for someone who knows everything there is to know. Underneath this miracle, My brilliance is not visible to everyone. Being unaware of Me, people of this world see My human form alone.

Even though I am available with more power than any power of nature, with more brilliance than the Sun or any other source of energy, these people do not know Me as the one without birth and destruction, as the single cause of the entire universe, as the Lord of everything. They don't know that I have assumed a human form to enable everyone to take refuge in Me.

## 7-26

[

vEdAham samatItAni vartamAnAni cha arjuna |

bhaviShyANi cha bhUtAni mAm tu vEda na kashchana || 26 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [vEdAham] I know [bhUtAni] the beings [samatItAni] whose time has passed, [vartamAnAni] who are present now [bhaviShyANi cha] and those who will be in the future. [tu] However, [na kashchana] there isn't anyone [vEda] who knows [mAm] Me.

I know all beings that existed in the past, those that exist now and those that are yet to come. Further, the Lord states in this Shloka: 'there isn’t anyone who knows Me' – Conscious beings exist in the three times (past, present and future) as I’ve arranged them to be. Among all of them, it isn’t possible to find anyone who knows me in this way - as Vasudeva who has come to enable everyone to take refuge in Me. A person with such knowledge is very difficult to find.

Next, the Lord elaborates on the reason for such ignorance:

## 7-27

[

ichChA dvESha samutThEna dvandva mOhEna bhArata |

sarva bhUtAni sammOham sargE yAnti parantapa || 27 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [parantapa] the destroyer of enemies, [sarva bhUtAni] all beings [sammOham yAnti] get the state of ignorance [sargE] at the time of their birth [dvandva mOhEna] due to the delusion brought on by the dualities in Nature, [ichChA dvESha samutthEna] which arises out of desire and aversion.

Ignorance and pre-occupation with life’s dualities are part of our characteristics

All beings get into a state of ignorance at birth itself, being within dualities like heat and cold. This ignorance is generated by desires and aversions.

To elaborate: Dualities such as happiness and sorrow have [the three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) in them. All conscious beings have practiced feelings of desire and aversion towards various subjects in previous births. Due to their influence, beings are born with ignorance, with the same dualities (*like heat and cold*) becoming the subject of their desires and aversions.

With ignorance, these beings get deluded - desire and aversion towards various subjects becomes their character, instead of experiencing the joy of being together with Me or the sorrow of being without Me.

The [person who knows](#jnAnI), on the other hand, experiences only the joy of being with Me and the sorrow of being without Me. Nobody is born with that character.

## 7-28

[

yEShAm tu antagatam pApam janAnAm puNyakarmaNAm |

tE dvandva mOha nirmuktA bhajantE mAm dr'DhavratA: || 28 ||

]

[tu] However, [puNyakarmaNam janAnAm] people who have done virtuous things, [yEShAm pApam] whose vile deeds [antagatam] have come to an end [tE dvandva mOha nirmuktA:] get freed from the ignorance that's in the form of the [dualities](#dvandva_dualities) we experience [mAm bhajantE] and worship Me [dr'DhavratA:] with firm resolve.

While everyone is born with delusion, how do some of us end up knowing the Lord?

Misfortune trails everyone over many cycles of births and deaths, causing desire and aversion towards the [dualities](#dvandva_dualities) of Nature. It prevents them from looking up to Me by suppressing their natural inclination to be with Me.

In a few people, this misfortune has come to an end due to virtue that’s accumulated over many lives. These people take refuge in Me in different ways, in-line with their virtues as described before in Chap.7#16. They get free from the delusions of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). They resolve to worship Me alone – for freedom from infirmity and death, for great wealth or to attain Me.

*The Lord described four types of people in Chap.7#16: ‘Four types of virtuous people worship Me: The distressed who want to regain what they lost, those who are curious, those who want to acquire wealth and those who know’. The first and third are similar, since they crave wealth. So, the next Shlokas refer to them as ‘three’ types of people: Those who are curious to realize the imperishable Self, those who seek material wealth and those* [*who know*](#jnAnI)*.*

Now, The Lord describes the specialties that are to be known and practiced by the three types of people who worship the Lord.

## 7-29

[

jarA maraNa mOkShAya mAm Ashritya yatanti yE |

tE brahma tadvidu: kr'tsnam adhyAtmam karma chAkhilam || 29 ||

]

[mAm Ashritya] Having taken My refuge, [yE] those who [yatanti] endeavor [mOkShAya] to gain freedom [jarA maraNa] from infirmity and death [tE vidu:] know [tat brahma] the self-existent, [kr'tsnam adhyAtmam] the entire environment [akhilam karma cha] and all activity.

*The word ‘brahma’ is translated to ‘self-existent’ here, highlighting the fact that it doesn’t need the support of its environment to exist. This is explained further in the next chapter.*

By leaving the misfortune of delusion, we get to know the Lord and worship him for a purpose

The phrase 'freedom from infirmity and death' refers to the curiosity to realize the Self. This is about knowing the true nature of the Self, in a form that’s not entangled in the environment. A few people endeavor to achieve this realization in My sanctuary. They shall discern the Self, the environment and all actions in their entirety.

## 7-30

[

sAdhibhUta adhidaivam mAm sAdhiyajnam cha yE vidu: |

prayANa kAlE api mAm tE vidu: yukta chEtasA: || 30 ||

]

[yE] Those [mAm vidu:] who know Me, [sAdhibhUta] existing with the entire material creation, [adhidaivam] the divine agent operating in material objects [sAdhiyajnam cha] and with the attribute of being above all worship, [yukta chEtasA:] who have concentrated their thoughts in devotion, [tE mAm vidu:] they would know Me [prayANa kAlE] at the time of leaving their body [api] too.

Since the phrase 'Those who...' is repeated in this Shloka, it indicates the other set of people, distinct from those described in the previous Shloka. They’re the ones that desire wealth and those who know Me along with My effects - effects that are observed to come from materials, as well as the effect of various forces of nature.

Though this statement looks like a fact, it’s actually a mandate - the [three types of people who worship the Lord](#three_types_of_worshippers) must know that The Lord is above all worship. It means the methods of worship apply to all the three types. All of them need to do their routine and prescribed activities. They do it for the Lord’s purpose in His refuge. This is inevitable.

The Lord states- At the time of leaving their body, all of them will know Me in-line with their aspiration.

The word 'too' says that the people described in the previous Shloka - who are curious to realize the Self, free from infirmity and death - will also know me at the time leaving this world.

This statement applies to [those who know](#jnAnI) as well. These people know The Lord as the purpose of all worship. They will also know me at the time of leaving this world, according to their aspiration. Their aspiration is to have their Self attain Me. They attain Me.

# Chapter 8

From Chapter 7, we know Lord Krishna as the Supreme Lord, who is to be worshipped. He is the owner of all things, conscious and non-conscious. He is the cause and the basis of existence of everything. Everything exists like His body, so He is addressed by all words. He directs everything and is ‘above and beyond’ with unlimited auspicious qualities

The flood of actions we’ve committed since beginning-less time confine us to material experiences. We are constantly under the influence of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) of sattva, rajas and tamas. They conceal the Lord from us.

Then, due to great virtuous deeds, a few people surrender to the Lord. They push these influences away. These worshippers have varied aspirations - to gain wealth, to realize the true nature of the Self or to attain the Lord Himself. Such variety is due to differences in the knowledge they have attained, which is due to differences in their deeds.

Among them, the person who aspires to attain the Lord is always with Him and worships Him alone. Such a person is extremely dear to the Lord. This person is among the best of beings and is very rare, as stated by the Lord previously.

In that context, the Lord went on to explain the differences among the [three types of worshippers](#three_types_of_worshippers), in what they must know and practice. In this Chapter, the Lord elaborates the variety that needs to be distinguished, along with the variety in practice.

## 8-1 to 8-2

[

arjuna uvAcha -

kim tat brahma kim adhyAtmam kim karma puruShOttama |

adhibhUtam cha kim prOktam adhidaivam kim uchyatE || 1 ||

adhiyajna: katham kO\_tra dEhE asmin madhusUdana |

prayANa kAlE cha katham jnEyO\_si niyatAtmabhi: || 2 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said: [puruShOttama] O best among men, [kim tat brahma] What is that ‘self-existent’? [kim adhyAtmam] Which is the environment? [kim karma] Which 'activity' did you mean? [adhibhUtam kim prOktam] What is the entire material creation? [adhidaivam kim uchyatE cha] and what is meant by 'the divine agent'?

[madhusUdana] O Krishna, [adhiyajna: ka:] what is the purpose of worship [dEhE asmin] in this body? [katham] In what manner [atra] is it mentioned here? [cha] Finally, [katham] in what way [jnyEya: asi] are You known [niyatAtmabhi:] to the people who focus themselves, [prayANa kAlE] when they leave the body?

How do we get to know the Lord?

In the previous chapter (Chap.7#29), it was mentioned that there are people who take the Lord’s refuge to discover the Self and get free from infirmity and death. It was mentioned that they must know the self-existent, the environment and all activity. Here, Arjuna asks- What are they?

It was also said that those who desire wealth must know this material creation, the divine agent operating inside and the purpose of worship. What are these?

Who is the object of worship, for whose purpose we are in this body, to be known by all [three types of worshippers](#three_types_of_worshippers)? How does He stand as the object of all worship?

In what way do the three types of worshippers know You (*The Lord*) when they leave their bodies?

## 8-3

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

akSharam brahma paramam svabhAvO\_dhyAtmam uchyatE |

bhUta bhAvOdbhavakarO visarga: karma sanjnita: || 3 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord said- [brahma] The 'self-existent' denotes [paramam] the one who is beyond everything, [akSharam] who is unchanging. [adhyAtmam] The phrase 'environment' [uchyatE] refers to [svabhAva:] the nature of this material world. [visarga:] The act of creating, [bhUta bhAvOdbhavakara:] which makes all beings and their experiences [karma sanjnita:] is meant by the word 'activity'.

The ‘self-existent' is the one who is beyond this universe, the one who is unchanging, without destruction. It is the state of complete awareness.

[subAla], 2 says- The subtle rests in enlightenment. Enlightenment rests in what cannot be seen.

Start by knowing the body of the Lord – The Self, the environment and its activities

The state of ‘being beyond the universe’ and 'remaining ever-unchanged' constitute the state of the Self when it is dis-entangled from the material environment.

The 'environment' refers to the nature of this material world. This is the environment surrounding us - matter that is distinct from the Self, yet relates to the Self - consisting of all gross and subtle things and their influences. The fact that these are to be known is also mentioned in the [panchAgni vidyA].

A person desiring [Moksha](#Moksha) must know the environment as a set of things that can be acquired and given up.

The word 'activity' refers to the act of creating, which makes all beings and their experiences happen - such as the experiences that happen in a human body. A person who desires [Moksha](#Moksha) must know the act of creation that materialized these experiences. He must know other actions as well - which bring so much anxiety - and break free of their influence.

Later in this chapter, the Lord says this about the pure experience of the Self: 'Yearning for which, people practice celibacy and study ' ([Chap.8#11](#_11))

## 8-4

[

adhibhUtam kSharO bhAva: puruShashcha adhidaivatam |

adhiyajnO ahamEva atra dEhE dEhabhr'tAm vara || 4 ||

]

[dEhabhr'tAm vara] O best among the beings who have a body, [adhibhUtam] the entire material creation [kSharO bhAva:] has the effect of eventually wearing out. [adhidaivatam cha] Further, the ‘divine agent' [puruSha:] is the person who is above all forces of the universe. [adhiyajnO] The purpose of worship [ahamEva] is none other than Me, [atra dEhE] situated inside the body.

The entire material creation, which is to be known by people who yearn for wealth, is experienced to wear out. It is in the nature of material things - everything eventually wears out. This effect resides in stimuli such as sound and touch as well. The various sounds, touch, beauty, taste and smells are sought by people who yearn for wealth. Such people yearn for these stimuli, along with the things that stimulate.

The 'divine agent' is the supreme person - the one who is above all powers, the one who is the real enjoyer of all experiences. People who yearn for wealth must be in the quest of this state of enjoyment.

The purpose of all work and worship is Me. I am the one who is gratified by worship. I am situated as the basis of everyone's Self and [they are like My body](#universe_as_his_body). In this way, I am the one who is served when people gratify anyone by worship. The [three types of worshippers](#three_types_of_worshippers) must keep this in mind, while performing various forms of worship.

## 8-5

[

antakAlE cha mAmEva smaran muktvA kalEvaram |

ya: prayAti sa madbhAvam yAti nAsti atra samshaya: || 5 ||

]

[cha] Finally, [antakAlE] at the end of life, [ya:] the one who [prayAti] passes away [mAmEva smaran] while thinking about Me alone [muktvA kalEvaram] will give up his body and [sa: madbhAvam yAti] attain My state of existence. [nAsti samshaya:] There is no doubt [atra] in this matter.

Those who think of the Lord while leaving their body will attain the Lord

This too, applies to [each of the three types of worshippers](#three_types_of_worshippers). At the end of a life-time, the person who gives up his body and passes away while thinking exclusively of Me, will attain My status. Here, the phrase 'My status' refers to the nature of the Lord. At the end of a life-time, a person achieves the form that he focuses on. For instance, as illustrated in the scriptures, a person who thought about a deer at the time of death is born in the body of a deer.

The next Shloka describes this very fact unambiguously - the nature of the final thought is such that the thinker is re-born in the same form as the thought.

## 8-6

[

yam yam vA\_pi smaran bhAvam tyajatyantE kalEvaram |

tam tamEvaiti kauntEya sadA tadbhAva bhAvita: || 6 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [yam yam] whatever [smaran] a person thinks about [kalEvaram tyajati] when he leaves his body [antE] at the end of life, [tam tam Eva Eti] he obtains that very [tadbhAva bhAvita:] same state of existence that he thought of [sadA] always.

Whatever a person thinks at the end while leaving his body - he gets that very state of existence after dying. The source of this 'final thought' comes from the subjects frequently thought about during this life-time.

## 8-7

[

tasmAt sarvEShu kAlEShu mAmanusmara yudhya cha |

mayyarpita manO buddhi: mAmEvaiShyasi asamshaya: || 7 ||

]

[tasmAt] Hence, [mAm anusmara] remember Me repeatedly, thought after thought [yudhya cha] and fight. [arpita] Having given up [manO buddhi:] your mind and intellect [mayi] in Me, [asamshaya: EShyasi] you will certainly attain [mAm Eva] Me - none other than the Lord.

The final thought comes by habit. Make it a habit to think about the Lord.

Till you leave this body, remember Me constantly in each of your thoughts every day - the thought that you practice will cause the 'final thought' at the end. Do the work suited to your nature - such as learning, making war, administration, trade or service - actions that give you My thought constantly, one day after another.

Having given up your mind and intellect in Me in this way, you shall think of Me alone while leaving your body. In this way, you will attain Me in the manner that you desire - there's no uncertainty here.

The Lord stated that whatever we obtain is subject to our final thought. The Lord now begins to describe each of the [three types of devotees](#three_types_of_worshippers) in particular, their ways of worship and what they obtain.

In the next Shloka, The Lord describes the worship practiced by people yearning for wealth, along with the nature of the 'final thought' that comes with it.

## 8-8

[

abhyAsa yOga yuktEna chEtasA\_nanyagAminA |

paramam puruSham divyam yAti pArtha anuchintayan || 8 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [yuktEna] by being with [abhyAsa] practice [yOga] and focus, [chEtasA ananyagAminA] without allowing the consciousness to wander anywhere else, [yAti] he will attain [paramam puruSham divyam] the supreme divine being [anuchintayan] by thinking about it all the time.

With practice and focus every day, a person thinks about Me without allowing the consciousness to wander anywhere else. This person will think about Me at the end of his life and attain Me, as described in the next Shlokas.

If you yearn for wealth, think of the Lord as the owner of all wealth

This person becomes equivalent to the Lord - by being associated with ultimate wealth that is equivalent to the Lord's - just as in the example where a person thinks about a deer at the end of his life and gets that form.

Let's now examine the words 'practice' and 'focus' in this Shloka.

‘Practice' is the worship of the Lord in our minds at all times permitted by daily routine. It’s about making a habit of worshipping the Lord. ‘Focus' is the worship of the Lord every day at a dedicated time, in a manner that has been described before. ([Chap.6#13-14](#_13-14) and in [bhakti](#bhakti_a_defn))

## 8-9 to 8-10

[

kavim purANam anushAsitAram

aNOraNIyAmsam anusmatEt ya: |

sarvasya dhAtAram achintya rUpam

Aditya varNam tamasa: parastAt || 9 ||

prayANa kAlE manasA\_chalEna

bhaktyA yuktO yOgabalEna chaiva |

bhruvO: madhyE prANam AvEshya samyak

sa tam param puruSham upaiti divyam || 10 ||

]

[prayANa kAlE] At the time of leaving the body, [bhaktyA yukta:] he is filled with affectionate devotion. [yOgabalEna cha Eva] By the power of his focus itself, [prANam AvEshya samyak] having stationed life steadily [bhruvO: madhyE] in-between the eye-brows, [achalEna manasA] with an unwavering mind, [sa: anusmarEt] he meditates [anushAsitAram] on the Lord, [kavim] who knows everything, [purANam] who is ancient, [aNOraNIyAmsam] who is even more subtle than the imperceptible Self, [sarvasya dhAtAram] who is the creator of everything, [achintya rUpam] who has a form that cannot be realized in our thoughts, [Aditya varNam] who has the color of the Sun [tamasa: parastAt] and is beyond darkness. [ya:] The one who does this [upaiti] will come towards [tam divyam param puruSham] that superior divine person.

The Lord knows everything, is ancient, having been present since beginning-less time; He is the controller of the entire universe. The Lord is even more subtle than the Self (which itself isn’t perceptible).

He is the creator of everything. The Lord has a form that cannot be realized in our thoughts, since no other entity has a form that is similar to the Lord's. He has the color of the Sun and is beyond darkness - The Lord is distinct from the environment that we perceive; He has a lustrous form, which is completely unusual.

With focus and devotion, this person practices everyday with an unmoving mind. Perfecting this practice by regular habit, he holds his life-breath between his eye-brows. Meaning, he converges his thoughts to focus the divine Lord in the region between his eye-brows.

Such a person shall come towards the Lord - he converges to the same state of being and be equal in wealth to the Lord.

Next, the Lord describes how He is remembered by those who yearn to experience the Self.

## 8-11

[

yat akSharam vEdavidO vadanti

vishanti yat yatayO vItarAgA: |

yat ichChantO brahmacharyam charanti

tattE padam sangrahENa pravakShyE || 11 ||

]

[pravakShyE sangrahENa] I will now summarize [tE] to you [tat padam] that position, [yat] which [vEdavida:] the people who know the Vedas [akSharam vadanti] call as 'the indestructible'; [yat] that place, which [yataya:] people who persevere [vItarAgA:] without being driven by desire [vishanti] enter; [yat ichChantO] yearning for which, [charanti] people practice [brahmacharyam] celibacy and study.

If you yearn for timeless knowledge of your Self, think of the Lord as the core of the Self

The Lord continues- I will now tell you the essence of the position, yearning for which people study while practicing celibacy. People who know the Vedas call that position as ‘indestructible’. It is occupied by people who persevere without being driven by desire. This ‘position’ is a place where all consciousness goes. This is [My indestructible form](#consciousness_nature_of_the_Lord), which knows everything there is to know.

I now summarize the way in which this form is worshipped.

## 8-12 to 8-13

[

sarvadvArANi samyamya manO hr'di nirudhya cha |

mUrdhnyA AdhAyA\_tmana: prANam AsthitO yOgadhAraNAm || 12 ||

Omiti EkAkSharam brahma vyAharan mAm anusmaran |

ya: prayAti tyajan dEham sa yAti paramAm gatim || 13 ||

]

[samyamya] Restraining [sarva dvArANi] all the gateways of our experiences, [mana: nirudhya] holding the mind in check [hr'di] within the heart, [AdhAya] having placed [Atmana: prANam] his life-breath [mUrdhni] at the summit, [yOga dhAraNam Asthita:] maintaining the state of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being), [vyAharan] chanting [Om iti EkAkSharam brahma] the single syllable 'Om', which denotes the Lord, [mAm anusmaran] keeping Me in his thoughts [dEha tyajan] while giving up his body: [ya:] The one who [prayAti] leaves in this way [sa: yAti] attains [paramAm gatim] the ultimate goal.

A person who leaves his body while focusing all thoughts on Me would hold his life-breath at the summit and attain the supreme goal, chanting the single syllable 'Om' addressing Me.

This person restrains all sense organs from indulging. Sense organs such as ears and eyes are his doors of knowledge. He stations the mind to focus on Me, the indestructible one situated at his heart. He maintains the state of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) - a state where he positions himself immovably in Me alone.

Such a person obtains the Self in a form that's equal to Me, devoid of all limitations of the environment. He does not return from this ever again.

This is also mentioned later in this chapter. [Chap.8#20](#_20-21) says 'The one who doesn’t perish when all beings perish' and [Chap.8#21](#_20-21): 'The subtle one doesn’t wear out. He is called the ultimate destination'.

Up until now, the Lord described methods to worship Him - practiced by people who yearn for wealth and those who yearn for an experience of the Self. Each of them worships in a way that is in-line with their aspirations.

Next, the Lord describes a method of worship, which is practiced by the [one who knows](#jnAnI). The Lord also describes the way in which such a person attains the Lord.

## 8-14

[

ananya chEtA: satatam yO mAm smarati nityasha: |

tasyAham sulabha: pArtha nitya yuktasya yOgina: || 14 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [aham sulabha:] I am easily available [tasya] to a person [yO mAm smarati] who thinks about Me [satatam] at all times, [nityasha:] right from the time he starts his journey to achieve Me. [yOgina:] He is My devoted follower, [ananya chEtA:] and doesn't let his mind wander among other subjects. [nitya yuktasya] He is always attached to Me.

If you yearn for the Lord Himself, just adore him!

The Lord begins by saying -

I am easily available to the person who remembers Me at all times, without getting drawn towards other things, right from the time he starts his endeavor to attain Me. Due to limitless affection towards Me, this person cannot exist in his body without having My thought.

In this way, he thinks about Me with unbounded affection. I am easily available to such a devoted person, who yearns for ever-lasting attachment towards Me. This person is going to attain Me - not just equivalence in terms of wealth, joy or other attributes.

I will gratify him Myself, unable to tolerate any separation from him. I Myself will give him the quality of having excessive affection towards Me. I will grant him the ultimate form of My service, as appropriate to achieve Me. I will remove all obstacles that come in the way of rendering service to Me.

As said in the scriptures, in [muMDaka], 3-2-3: The Lord is achievable only to the people who are favored by the Lord.

It is also said in Chap.10#10 and Chap.10#11: To those who worship me with affection and are always attached to Me, I will give that intellect – [[buddhiyOga](#buddhiyOga_a_defn)] - using which they achieve Me. By My compassion towards them, I will station Myself in their minds. Shining as the lamp of knowledge, I shall destroy darkness that is generated by the ignorance in them.

In the remaining part of this chapter after the next Shloka, the Lord explains that the [people who know](#jnAnI) and those who yearn for an experience of the Self do not return to the limitations of this world. Those who yearn for wealth do return.

*Just as a reminder: Those who yearn for wealth, those who yearn for an experience of the Self and* [*those who know*](#jnAnI) *are the* [*three types of people*](#three_types_of_worshippers) *who worship the Lord.*

## 8-15

[

mAm upEtya punarjanma du:khAlayam ashAshvatam |

nApnuvanti mahAtmAna: samsiddhim paramAm gatA: || 15 ||

]

[mAm upEtya] Having attained Me, [nApnuvanti] they do not get [ashAshvatam] a temporary [punarjanma] birth again, [du:khAlayam] which is an abode of suffering. [mahAtmAna:] These great people [gatA:] have reached [paramAm] the ultimate [samsiddhim] state of complete attainment.

These people know My true nature and have excessive affection towards Me. They attain Me with their affection and shall never get a transient birth full of sorrows again.

With the intention to attain Me, knowing they cannot even exist without Me, these great people take refuge in Me and worship Me. They achieve Me, the ultimate goal.

Next, the Lord explains why people who yearn and achieve wealth will return to be born, while people who achieve the Lord don't return.

## 8-16

[

Abrahma bhuvanAt lOkA: punarAvartina: arjuna |

mAm upEtya tu kauntEya punarjanma na vidyatE || 16 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [lOkA:] all worlds [punarAvartina:] get destroyed and return again. [Abrahma bhuvanAt] That includes the world of Brahma, the engineer of the universe. [tu] However, [kauntEya] Arjuna, [mAm upEtya] having approached Me, [na vidyatE] there is no [punarjanma] re-birth.

The material universe keeps going in cycles. So does a person who yearns for material wealth

Everywhere in the universe, wealth and enjoyment are pursued - right from the world of Brahma, the engineer of this universe. All these worlds return again – after being destroyed periodically.

Thus, people who did achieve the wealth they desired will inevitably be destroyed – by the destruction of the position they attained.

This destruction does not happen to those who have attained Me - I have enormous compassion, My will is always realized, I know everything and My form always remains unchanged. The act of creation, existence and destruction of the entire universe is My game.

People who have Me as their abode do not go through cycles of destruction and return to this world.

Next, the Lord describes the time-lines of creation and destruction of the various worlds and their inhabitants, including that of Brahma, as brought-about by the will of the Lord.

## 8-17 to 8-19

[

sahasra yuga paryantam aharyat brahmaNO vidu: |

rAtrim yuga sahasrAntAm tE ahOrAtra vidO janA: || 17 ||

avyaktAt vyaktaya: sarvA: prabhavanti aharAgamE |

rAtryAgamE pralIyantE tatraiva avyaktasanjnakE || 18 ||

bhUtagrAma: sa EvAyam bhUtvA bhUtvA pralIyatE |

rAtryAgamE avasha: pArtha prabhavati aharAgamE || 19 ||

]

[tE janA:] The people [ahOrAtra vidO] who have learnt the measures of day and night [vidu:] know [yat brahmaNO aha:] that a day of Brahma (the primary engineer of the universe) [yat sahasra yuga paryantam] is equal to a thousand [four-yuga](#yugas) periods. [rAtrim] Similarly, his night [yuga sahasrAntam] lasts a thousand [four-yuga](#yugas) periods too.

[aharAgamE] When this day arrives, [sarvA: vyaktaya:] all of creation [prabhavanti] comes into being [avyaktAt] from the state of being imperceptible. [rAtryAgamE] When the night of Brahma arrives, [pralIyantE] they dissolve [tatraiva] into the same [avyaktasanjnakE] state of being imperceptible.

[pArtha] Arjuna, [sa Eva] The same [ayam bhUtagrAma:] world of beings [bhUtvA bhUtvA] gets created again and again [pralIyatE] and gets dissolved [rAtryAgamE] when the night comes. [aharAgamE] When the day arrives, [prabhavati] it comes into being, [avasha:] it’s unstoppable.

There is a great variety of beings in this universe – humans, other creatures, right up to Brahma, the engineer of the universe. The arrangement of day and night for various beings is different. People who are aware of this would know that one day of Brahma lasts a thousand [four-yuga](#yugas) periods. The duration of the night is similar to the day. It is so by My intent.

When such a day of Brahma arrives, everything in this world - the environment, bodies and organs, things that are to be experienced, the different individuals that experience them - come into being from an imperceptible state, which is situated in the body of Brahma.

*In this imperceptible state, they cannot be distinguished as individuals. The word [avyakta] means 'imperceptible', 'a state of being indistinct'*.

When the following night arrives, they dissolve into the same indistinct state inside the body of Brahma - they cease to be perceptible individuals.

The very same ecosystem of individuals comes into being repeatedly when the day arrives - an inevitable consequence of the deeds they committed in the past. They dissolve and become imperceptible at nightfall. They become perceptible again when the day arrives.

After the passage of 100 years consisting of such days and nights, which to humans means the passage of several thousand [yuga](#yugas), all worlds dissolve into Me, including the world of the principal engineer Brahma, including all individuals, including Brahma himself - as said in [subAla.2]: 'Solids dissolve in liquids, the liquids dissolve into energy'

Thus, the world dissolves into an imperceptible state, all the way till the indestructible and the invisible. It finally dissolves into Me alone.

In this way, everything other than Me is inevitably born and destroyed in a time-bound manner. It implies that those who yearn for wealth inevitably return again and again. On the other hand, those who have approached and achieved Me aren’t forced into this cycle of inevitable return.

Next, the Lord says that people who worship Him while yearning to experience the Self are freed from return too.

## 8-20 to 8-21

[

parastasmAt tu bhAvO\_nyO\_vyaktO\_vyaktAt sanAtana: |

ya: sa sarvEShu bhUtEShu nashyatsu na vinashyati || 20 ||

avyaktO\_kShara ityukta: tamAhu: paramAm gatim |

yam prApya na nivartantE taddhAma paramam mama || 21 ||

]

[para:] The one who is beyond [tasmAt tu avyaktAt] primordial matter, [anya: bhAva:] who has a different state of existence, [avyakta:] who cannot be perceived by techniques such as observation and inference, [sanAtana:] who is ancient, [ya: na vinashyati] who does not perish [sarvEShu bhUtEShu nashyatsu] when all beings perish - [sa:] He [ukta:] is called as [avyakta:] the subtle one [akShara:] and the one who does not wear out. [tam Ahu:] He is called [paramAm gatim] the ultimate destination. [yam prApya tat] Having obtained that [dhAma paramam mama] ultimate abode of mine, [na nivartantE] they do not return.

*As in Chap.8#11, this Shloka describes the nature of the Lord as manifested in the Self, in terms of being imperceptible and ever-lasting.*

There is a goal to achieve, beyond this universe made from primordial matter. It is entirely distinct from any matter, since it exists in the form of knowledge alone. It is not apparent to us and cannot be described in terms of anything else. It is unique in its form.

The Self is ever-lasting, so the one who yearns for the Self isn’t stuck in creation and destruction

It is ancient and not subject to creation and destruction - it lasts forever. Even while being inside everything in space, in everything that goes into creation, in everything that’s created, even when all of this is destroyed, it doesn’t perish. It is called imperceptible and imperishable in several Shlokas:

Chap.12#3: ‘those who focus on the indestructible, which cannot be distinguished, which isn't evident to our senses…’

Chap.15#16: ‘Staying like an anvil without deforming, it is said to be imperishable’.

Experienced people say that it is the ultimate goal, as said in Chap.8#13: ‘…the one who leaves his body attains the ultimate goal’

Thus, the one that's termed ‘the ultimate destination’ over here is the one that’s not destroyed. Meaning, this goal is the Self that's free from the influences of nature. People who realize the Self in this state do not return. The Lord says - this is My 'ultimate abode', the ultimate seat from which the Lord rules over this universe.

The non-conscious material environment is one seat from which the Lord rules. The Self in a state of attachment to the environment is the second seat.

Beyond this, the pure and free Self is the ultimate Seat of the Lord, from where He rules the universe - that is the seat meant by the phrase 'ultimate abode' here. It is detached from the environment. This abode does not go through cycles of creation and destruction.

The word 'abode' also denotes a state of lustrous existence. Here, luster is knowledge. When the Self is entangled in the environment, its knowledge is confined. When the Self is freed from the confines of the environment, it is an unbroken expanse of knowledge. This is the superior state of existence.

In the next Shloka, the Lord says that [those who know](#jnAnI) will aim to attain something that's totally distinct from what has just been described.

## 8-22

[

puruSha: sa para: pArtha bhaktyA labhyastu ananyayA |

yasyAnta:sthAni bhUtAni yEna sarvamidam tatam || 22 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [yasya anta:] the person in whom [sthAni bhUtAni] all beings exist, [yEna sarvam idam] by whom all this [tatam] is pervaded, [sa para: puruSha:] that ultimate person [labhya:] is obtained by [ananyA bhaktyA] undistracted devotion, not being attached to anything else.

The Lord has already described Himself in the following Shlokas:

Chap.7#7: ‘There is absolutely nothing else that is beyond Me. All of this is mounted in Me, just as beads are strung in a string’

Chap.7#13: ‘I am beyond the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) and every being that’s under their influence. I stay unchanged’

The person who adores the Lord gets the Lord Himself. He goes beyond all cycles

All beings exist inside the Lord. He is the ultimate being who pervades everything.

He can be obtained through devotion, practiced without attachment towards anything else - as said in Chap.8#14: ‘I am easily available to a person who thinks about Me at all times, right from the time he starts his journey to achieve Me. He is My devoted follower. He doesn't let his mind wander among other subjects. He is always attached to Me.’

The previous Shloka described the person who yearns to know the true nature of the Self – this person realizes the true nature of the Self and the Lord presiding over it. In this Shloka, The Lord described a person who yearns for the Lord Himself. Next, the Lord describes the path taken by both of them when they depart from the body.

Both types of people go on the ‘path of luster’. This path doesn’t put them on the inevitable cycle of return.

*There are two possible paths when we depart from our body. One path leads to rebirth, while the other leads to freedom from birth and death. The one that leads to rebirth is called [dhUmAdi mArga], literally ‘the path of smoke’. The other one called [archirAdi mArga], literally ‘the path of luster’, is the one that leads to* [*Moksha*](#Moksha) *- freedom from this cycle.*

The scriptures describe their path:

The [panchAgni vidyA] in [ChAndOgya], 5-10-1 says: 'Those who know the true nature of the Self in this way, as well as those who worship the Lord by dedicating their thoughts to Him will take the path of luster and meet the dawn of freedom'. It describes the path that leads to the Lord Himself.

It also says that the path doesn’t force you to return. [ChAndOgya], 4-25-6 describes the end-point of this path: 'The guide leads them to the Lord. Once they proceed, they do not return to the cycles of this human world'.

The knowledge described above in the [panchAgni vidyA] is not about knowing the Self. Such knowledge is described elsewhere in the scriptures – that is about knowing who you are and doesn’t lead to [liberation](#Moksha). Those who know the Self as an attribute of the Lord are the ones who attain [liberation](#Moksha).

Further in the [panchAgni vidyA], in [ChAndOgya], 5-9-1, it says that the Self gets associated with the elements of nature. In [ChAndOgya], 5-10-7, it says that virtue leads to a fortunate configuration of the elements, like a human body. Vice leads to unfortunate configurations such as a dog or a pig. In this way, the scriptures describe the temporary entanglement between the Self and a body and the distinction between them. [ChAndOgya], 5-10-7 continues to say that those who know this will take the path of luster and will not return to the birth-and-death cycle.

In this way, The Lord showed the distinction between the Self and the environment. We need to rise above the environment and gain consciousness that’s separate from the environment. In this way we take the path of luster and don’t need to return.

Having realized the true nature of the Self, a person knows that it has the Lord as its Self. The Self exists only for the Lord’s purpose. This is told in the [br’hadArAnyaka]. With this awareness, he gains a form that is equal to attaining the Lord Himself – just like a person who intends to attain the Lord directly.

## 8-23 to 8-24

[

yatra kAlE tvanAvr'ttim Avr'ttim chaiva yOgina: |

prayAtA yAnti tam kAlam vakShyAmi bharatarShabha || 23 ||

agnir jyOtir aha: shukla: ShaNmAsA uttarAyaNam |

tatra prayAtA gachChanti brahma brahma vidO janA: || 24 ||

]

[bharatarShabha] Arjuna, [vakShyAmi] I will now describe [tam kAlam] the space and time [yatra kAlE] in which [yOgina:] worshippers [prayAtA:] have travelled. [yAnti] They take [Avr'ttim] the path that returns [anavr'ttim cha] or the one that doesn’t.

[brahma vidO janA:] People who know the Lord, [prayAtA:] who leave this world and then travel [tatra] in the path [agnirjyOti:] of brightness, [aha:] then going on to the day, [shukla:] the bright half of the lunar month, [ShaNmAsA uttarAyaNam] the six months when our Sun shifts to the North of the equator [brahma gachChanti] - they reach the Lord.

Here, the word [kAla] describes the space and time of our journey from this body. The Lord says- I will now describe the path of the worshipper that doesn’t return to this world, along with the path of other virtuous people, which does return.

This Shloka uses phrases such as brightness, the day, the bright half of the lunar cycle, the six months when the Sun shifts northwards. These phrases illustrate the space and time of the path of luster.

## 8-25

[

dhUmO rAtristathA kr'ShNa: ShaNmAsA dakShiNAyanam |

tatra chAndramasam jyOti: yOgI prApya nivartatE || 25 ||

]

[yOgI] A virtuous person [tatra prApya] gets to go on the path starting with [dhUma:] smoke, [rAtri: tathA] followed by the night, [kr'ShNa:] the dark side of the lunar cycle, [ShaNmAsA dakShiNAyanam] the six months when our Sun moves to the South [chAndramasam jyOti:] and the light of the moon. [nivartatE] This person returns again.

The words such as ‘smoke’ and ‘night’ illustrate the path taken by many of our ancestors. This would be the journey of a virtuous person. This path returns to the material world.

In this Shloka, the word [yOgi] refers to virtuous people.

## 8-26

[

shukla kr'ShNE gatI hyEtE jagata: shAshvatE matE |

EkayA yAti anAvr'ttim anyayAvartatE puna: || 26 ||

]

[EtE gatI] These two paths - [shukla kr'ShNE] of luster and darkness - [shAshvatE matE] are considered to be eternally [jagata:] applicable to the people of this world. [EkayA anAvr'ttim yAti] In one path, you attain freedom from return. [anyayA puna: AvartatE] In another, you return again.

The path of light is the path of luster mentioned [before](#archiradi_dhumadi). The path of darkness is the [one described with smoke](#archiradi_dhumadi). The path of luster leads to freedom from return. The path of darkness eventually results in return.

The scriptures say that these two paths are eternal. Across cycles of creation and destruction, the paths of light and darkness are travelled by devotees and various people of virtue.

As quoted before in [ChAndOgya], 5-10-1: ‘Those who know the true nature of the Self in this way, as well as those who worship the Lord by dedicating their thoughts to Him will take the path of luster and meet the dawn of freedom’. Following that, in [ChAndOgya], 5-10-3: 'Those who serve by sacrifice, by doing virtuous work such as building canals to benefit others, by donating things and so on - they would get the [path with smoke](#archiradi_dhumadi)'

## 8-27

[

naitE sr'tI pArtha jAnan yOgI muhyati kashchana |

tasmAt sarvEShu kAlEShu yOgayuktO bhava arjuna || 27 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [kashchana] any [jAnan yOgI] devotee who practices [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) and knows [EtE sr'tI] these paths [na muhyati] will not get bewildered. [tasmAt arjuna] Hence, Arjuna, [yOga yuktO] be with [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being) [sarvEShu kAlEShu] at all times.

Any devotee who knows these two paths will not get confused at the time of leaving this world. Instead of being deluded at the time of death, he chooses to go on the path prescribed to him - the [path of luster](#archiradi_dhumadi). Hence, be with the knowledge of the [path of luster](#archiradi_dhumadi) and keep thinking about it.

The Lord illustrated many concepts in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8. In the next Shloka, He describes the benefit of knowing these concepts.

## 8-28

[

vEdEShu yajnEShu tapassu chaiva dAnE cha yat puNyaphalam pradiShTam |

atyEti tat sarvam idam viditvA yOgI param sthAnam upaiti chAdyam || 28 ||

]

[yat puNya phalam pradiShTam] The fortunate outcomes that were indicated - [vEdEShu] in the Vedas, [yajnEShu] in performing worship, [tapassu] in penance [dAnEShu cha] and in donating things - [tat sarvam atyEti] a person goes beyond all of it [idam viditvA] after knowing this. [upaiti] This person will reach [paramam sthAnam] the ultimate destiny, [Adyam] a place that has no beginning, which always exists.

This chapter and the one previous described the greatness of the Lord. A person who knows this greatness experiences joy that is beyond any other.

In this world, we experience joy by gaining something, by studying, contemplation, ceremonies, charity and so on. Even joys gained by meditation and the study of the Vedas are as insignificant as a blade of grass, in comparison with the joy of knowing the Lord’s greatness.

A person who realizes this attains the ultimate abode, the one that has always existed.

# Chapter 9

In the previous chapter, The Lord described the [four types of worshippers](#four_types_of_worshippers) and their distinctions.

This chapter explores the greatness of the Lord- He is the objective of any worship. It also explores the specialty of the devotee - [the one who knows](#jnAnI). After that, the Lord describes the characteristics of worship, which is called [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn).

Worship the Lord with devotion

## 9-1

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

idam tu tE guhyatamam pravakShyAmi anasUyavE |

jnAnam vijnAna sahitam yat jnAtvA mOkShyasE ashubhAt || 1 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord said - [anasUyavE] You are not jealous. [tE pravakShyAmi] I will tell you [idam jnAnam] this awareness [guhyatamam tu] which is extremely concealed, [vijnAna sahitam] along with the science to comprehend it. [yat jnAtvA] Knowing this, [mOkShyasE] you will be free from [ashubhAt] everything that's undesirable.

The Lord says- You are without jealousy even after you've heard about My great and limitless form, which is distinct from everything else. You acknowledge this as a fact and do not grudge it.

Now, I will tell you this secret awareness. You will be free of everything undesirable after knowing it by practice. Things are ‘undesirable’ when they come in the way of attaining Me.

Awareness comes out as devotion in very few people, though it’s easy to practice

This awareness is concealed. It comes in the form of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) and is called as worship, a service to the Lord. I will now tell you about it, along with the science of realization.

## 9-2

[

rAjavidyA rAjaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam |

pratyakShAvagamam dharmyam susukham kartumavyayam || 2 ||

]

[rAjavidyA] It is the king of all learning [rAjaguhyam] and the foremost among everything that's tough to find - it's the king of secrets. [idam uttamam] It is supreme [pavitram] and pure. [pratyakShAvagamam] It is there for us to experience. [dharmyam] It has virtue embedded in it. [kartum susukham] It's very easy to practice and perform. [avyayam] It never wears out.

This awareness is the foremost among all learnings - it is supreme among all that can be learnt. It is the foremost among everything that's tough to find. It is concealed the most, beyond everything that’s concealed from us.

The phrase [rAjavidyA] in this Shloka could also be interpreted as 'a learning fit for kings'. The word 'king' refers to someone with great depth and a vast, open mind. Such people are good at learning, discovering and preserving. What’s learnt stays with such people.

This awareness is supreme and pure. It takes away all faults that come in the way of attaining Me, not leaving any flaw behind. It’s there for us to experience - to comprehend using our sense organs and our thoughts. Written as the Lord's words: 'When I am worshipped with service in the form of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), I become perceptible to the person who worships Me'.

It also has virtue embedded in it - 'Virtue' is practiced to achieve glory. Achieving Me is the highest glory. By its very nature, this [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) is an excess of love that's impossible to describe in words.

You perceive Me with devotion. Though perceiving Me is excellent by itself, it's really a means to experience Me completely. You achieve Me in My unsurpassed form.

You could choose to practice it very easily, because it has an un-measurable amount of love in it.

It never wears out - even after achieving Me, it does not get spent. Even after presenting Myself to the person who worships Me in this way, I keep feeling that there’s something I still owe this person.

## 9-3

[

ashraddadhAnA: puruShA: dharmasya asya parantapa |

aprApya mAm nivartantE mr'tyu samsAra vartmani || 3 ||

]

[parantapa] O destroyer of enemies, [puruShA:] people [ashraddadhAnA:] who do not believe in [asya dharmasya] this practice [mAm aprApya] don’t attain Me. [nivartantE] They return [mr'tyu samsAra vartmani] to this material world, which is always subject to death and destruction.

I am the focus of this virtue called service and [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). I am adored beyond any comparison. In this way, this virtue is also superlative - it is excellence in its ultimate form. It is a means to achieve Me. People are capable of practicing it.

Even though they are capable, those who don't believe in its practice - those who don't trust it and don't have the urge to follow it - will not attain Me. They continue to remain in this material world, characterized by cycles of death and destruction.

It's indeed incredible that people still don't believe in its practice! That is the opinion expressed here.

Now listen to My greatness. It is meant to be attained, even though it cannot be grasped by thought.

## 9-4 to 9-5

[

mayA tatam idam sarvam jagat avyakta mUrtinA |

matsthAni sarva bhUtAni na chAham tEShu avasthita: || 4 ||

na cha matsthAni bhUtAni pashya mE yOgam aishvaram |

bhUtabhr't na cha bhUtasthO mamAtmA bhUtabhAvana: || 5 ||

]

[idam sarvam jagat] This whole world [tatam] is pervaded [mayA] by Me, [avyakta mUrtinA] with My imperceptible form. [sarva bhUtAni] All beings [matsthAni] are situated in Me [cha] and [aham] I [na avasthita:] do not have any dependency [tEShu] on them.

[cha] Moreover, [matsthAni na] I am not bound to carry [bhUtAni] all beings. [pashya] Look at [mE] My [yOgam] status [aishvaram] as being the owner of the universe. [bhUtabhr't] I support these beings [na cha bhUtastha:] without being bound in them. [mama AtmA] My intent [bhUta bhAvana:] causes all of them to be.

The will of the Lord causes all beings to ‘be’

This entire world, along with its conscious and non-conscious entities, is pervaded by Me. I pervade by being embedded in everything - in a form that's invisible and not accessible by any sense organ. I pervade this world to control and carry it forward.

This pervasive nature of the Lord embedded in everything is also described in:

[br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-3: 'The one who is on the Earth... whom the Earth does not know'

[br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-22: 'The one who is inside the Self... whom the Self does not know'. Thus, the way in which all beings are pervaded has been described - conscious and non-conscious beings have the Lord embedded in them, while they don't see it.

Then the Lord says it the other way around- 'All beings are in Me'.

In other words: ‘All beings are in Me, while I am embedded in them’.

Further, the [br’hadArAnyaka] describes the dependence of everything on the Lord. Every entity is controlled by Him, as though it were [His body](#universe_as_his_body): 'The One whose body is the Earth, The One who controls the Earth while being inside it' and 'The One whose body is the Self, The One who controls the Self from the inside'.

Then the Lord says: 'I am not contained in them'. With this, He states- ‘I am not in a state of dependence on these beings. I need no returns from them’.

The Lord continues: ‘I am not bound to carry all beings’ - when I say that I carry all beings, it isn’t similar to a pot that carries water for some purpose. Then how does all this exist? The universe exists by My will.

The Lord elaborates in this Shloka: ‘Look at My status as being the owner of the universe’. Look at this astonishing state of being. It is unique to Me and doesn’t exist anywhere else. What is this state of being?

The Lord clarifies in this Shloka – ‘I support these beings without being bound in them. My intent causes all of them to be' - I carry them and sustain them, while having no relationship of usefulness with them. I create, control and sustain purely by My intent - My intent is Mine alone, it does not depend on anything else.

Next, the Lord shows an example to illustrate that everything exists by his will.

## 9-6

[

yathA AkAshasthitO nityam vAyu: sarvatragO mahAn |

tathA sarvANi bhUtAni matsthAni ityupadhAraya || 6 ||

]

[mahAn] The great [vAyu:] wind [sarvatraga:] roams everywhere, [AkAshE sthita: nityam] while being situated in the sky always. [upadhAraya] Know [iti] that [yathA] the way in which [sarvANi bhUtAni] all beings [matsthAni] are situated in Me [taThA] is similar.

The great winds exist in space. Space doesn’t need anything to exist. It blows independently everywhere. Yet, know that its existence depends on Me.

I am the one who carries the wind and all beings. They do not experience this. All beings are situated in Me and I carry them.

The Vedas describe The Lord’s power: 'The formation of clouds, the way in which the sea is limited to the sea-level, the phases of the moon, the agitation of the wind, the way in which lightning strikes, the movement of the Sun - all these exist as manifestations of Vishnu's wonderful [power](#gods_and_other_powers)'. This amazing [power](#gods_and_other_powers) is unique to Vishnu, not present in anything else.

The scriptures describe it too:

[br’hadArAnyaka], 3-8-9 says: 'The sun, moon and others are carried forth by the Lord, who is called indestructible. They remain under His total control'

[taittariya], 2-8-1 says: 'The wind blows in submission to His will. The Sun glows in submission to His will. The atmosphere, sky, rain and fire perform their functions in submission to His will'.

Till now, it was stated that the state of existence of everything is brought about by the will of the Lord. The will of the Lord does not depend on anything other than the Lord Himself. Next, He says that their creation and destruction too are also brought about by His will alone.

## 9-7

[

sarva bhUtAni kauntEya prakr'tim yAnti mAmikAm |

kalpa kShayE puna: tAni kalpAdau visr'jAmyaham || 7 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [sarva bhUtAni] all beings [yAnti] end up [prakr'tim] in a dormant state [mAmikAm] inside My body [kalpa kShayE] at the end of a [kalpa](#kalpa_definition). [puna: kalpAdau] Again, at the beginning of the next [kalpa](#kalpa_definition), [aham] I [tAni visr'jaAmi] create them in various forms.

All moving and stationary beings are [like My body](#universe_as_his_body). At the end of a [kalpa](#kalpa_definition), the life of Brahma, the principal engineer of the universe comes to an end. All these beings attain a state of inactivity, a state in which they cannot be distinguished by names. They end up in this state by My will. I bring them back to form again at the beginning of the next [kalpa](#kalpa_definition).

As [manu], 1-5 says: 'All this was in a state of inactivity. He brought forth all of it from His body'

Also read in [subAla], 7: 'For whom subtle is the body' and in [subAla], 2: 'The subtle merges into the indestructible. That in turn merges into darkness'. In [aShTa], 2-8-9: 'At the beginning, darkness was present without any other characteristic'.

## 9-8

[

prakr'tim svAm avaShTabhya visr'jAmi puna: puna: |

bhUta grAmam imam kr'tsnam avasham prakr'tErvashAt || 8 ||

]

[visr'jAmi] I create [imam kr'tsnam] this entire [bhUta grAmam] system of beings [puna: puna:] again and again, [prakr'tim svam avaShTabhya] while keeping My material nature as the basis. [prakr'tErvashAt] Under the influence of the material world, [avasham] they are not free.

I create the various beings repeatedly over time, in the four forms of [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), humans, other animals and non-mobile beings, keeping My material nature as the basis. This material nature has varied forms and manifests in eight ways (see Chap.7#4). It is rich in the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and is very attractive. All types of beings are under the influence of this material world. Hence, they are deprived of freedom.

Now, you may doubt: If The Lord is so inconsiderate as to perform His act of creation in this way, doesn't this merciless behavior tarnish Him in any way? The next Shloka resolves this question.

## 9-9

[

na cha mAm tAni karmANi nibadhnanti dhananjaya |

udAsInavadAsInam asaktam tEShu karmasu || 9 ||

]

[dhananjaya] Arjuna, [tAni karmANi] those deeds [mAm na nibadhnanti] do not bind Me. [udAsInavadAsInam cha] Being neutral, [tEShu karmasu asaktam] I have no attachment towards those deeds.

The Lord doesn’t discriminate. He supervises.

The Lord continues- Yet, these actions such as the creation of the universe and its beings don't bind Me. They do not reward Me with anything. They do not result in accusations of being merciless. That's because the past deeds of conscious beings are reason for the inequalities among them. In this creation of variety, I stay without attachment, as though I am neutral.

As said in [vEdAnta sUtra], 2-1-34: 'In the disparity of creation, there is no mercilessness on the part of the Lord. The disparity arises due to the past deeds of the various beings'.

In [vEdAnta sUtra], 2-1-35: 'Variety comes from the eternal nature of the various beings and the influence of their deeds. The deeds didn’t come into being at the time of the Lord's creation'.

## 9-10

[

mayA adhyakShENa prakr'ti: sUyatE sacharAcharam |

hEtunA anEna kauntEya jagaddhi parivartatE || 10 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [prakr'ti:] the material environment [sUyatE] guides [jagat] this world [mayA] by My will, [sacharAcharam] including everything that’s stationary and moving, [adhyakShENa] with My supervision. [jagat parivartatE] This world goes through its cycles [anEna hEtunA hi] with this purpose itself.

In this way, My material nature guides this world in accordance with the deeds committed by conscious beings, including everything that moves and everything that doesn’t. I supervise and witness, being the one whose intention is always fulfilled.

In fact, My supervision is the reason for the Universe to run as per the deeds of all its beings. See My ownership, the realization of My every intent without flaws such as mercilessness, see me as the son of Vasudeva, see My wealth and My state of being.

[shwEtAshvatara], 4-9 says: 'From the environment, the Creator makes this world. The other conscious being is trapped in delusion. Know this delusion as the effect of the environment. Know the Creator as the Supreme Lord of the universe'.

## 9-11

[

avajAnanti mAm mUDhA: mAnuShIm tanum AshritAm |

param bhAvam ajAnantO mama bhUta mahEshvaram || 11 ||

]

[mUDhA:] People who are deluded [avajAnanti mAm] disregard Me. [ajAnanta:] They do not know [mama param bhAvam] My superior state [bhUta mahEshvaram] as the Lord of all beings, [mAnuShIm tanum AshritAm] the Lord who has taken a human form.

Ignorant people are deluded by the effects of their past deeds. They assume that I am a normal human being and disregard Me.

I am in the form of a human with great compassion. This form is for everyone to take refuge in Me, while My will is always fulfilled. Being the Lord of all beings, I am the all-knowing, single cause of the universe.

The ignorant do not know Me as the Supreme Lord of all beings, situated in a limitless amount of compassion and affection. Instead, they are biased by My human appearance, thinking of Me as just another human among them. So, they disregard Me.

## 9-12

[

mOghAshA mOgha karmaNO mOgha jnAnA vichEtasa: |

rAkShasIm AsurIm chaiva prakr'tim mOhinIm shritA: || 12 ||

]

[shritA:] They remain inside [prakr'tim] this material world, [AsurIm mOhinIm] which advocates the enjoyment of everything that's attractive. [chaiva rAkShasIm] This world will definitely devour them. [vichEtasa:] Without the ability to recognize reality, [mOghAshA] they have useless desires, [mOgha karmaNO] do useless activities [mOgha jnAnA] and have knowledge that's useless.

Without knowing this reality, people go behind imaginary goals

The material world conceals the supreme qualities of the Lord in His human form. His qualities, such as the abundance of compassion, aren’t apparent.

This world advocates the enjoyment of everything that's attractive and devours anyone who remains in it. People go behind useless desires - their wants lead them nowhere. They indulge in useless activities - they start work that is fruitless.

They have knowledge that's useless. They observe moving and stationary objects that belong to Me. Due to the adverse nature of their knowledge, the understanding they gain is contrary to reality. Such knowledge does not yield anything.

Without the ability to recognize reality, they are unable to learn the true nature of anything. They consider Me, the Lord of the universe, to be equivalent to others. With this conviction, whatever they set out to do in regard to Me will fail to yield anything.

## 9-13

[

mahAtmAnastu mAm pArtha daivIm prakr'tim AshritA: |

bhajanti ananya manasO jnAtvA bhUtAdim avyayam || 13 ||

]

[tu] On the other hand, [pArtha] Arjuna, [mahAtmAna:] great people [daivIm prakr'tim AshritA:] take refuge in My divine nature. [jnAtvA] Knowing [mAm] Me, [bhUtAdim] the origin of all beings, [avyayam] the One who never wears out, [bhajantE] they worship Me [ananya manasa:] without letting their minds wander among other subjects.

Worship and take refuge in The Lord – He is everything

People take refuge in Me. With many virtuous deeds, they get rid of all undesirable influences that come in the way of my refuge. They reside in the divine environment, knowing it to be one of My attributes.

Such people are great and have realized their Self well. They know Me as the origin of all beings, the One who never wears out, as the One who is inaccessible to speech and thought. My form and deeds cannot be expressed by names.

They know that I have stepped in as a human due to My vast compassion. They know I work for the protection of virtuous people.

Knowing all of this, they worship Me. They have abundant affection for Me and don’t let their thoughts wander. They find it impossible to carry forward their thoughts, their Self and their activities without worshipping Me. They worship Me purely for the sake of worship.

## 9-14

[

satatam kIrtayantO mAm yatanta: cha dr'DhavratA: |

namasyanta: cha mAm bhaktyA nityayuktA upAsatE || 14 ||

]

[upAsatE mAm] They worship Me [bhaktyA] with [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) [kIrtayanta: mAm] while praising Me, [dr'DhavratA:] while being firm in their vows [yatanta: cha] and in their endeavor to attain Me. [namasyanta: mAm] They regard Me with reverence [satatam] always [nityayuktA: cha] and are constantly in touch with Me.

With limitless amount of affection towards Me, they are unable to sustain themselves without My praise, My worship and My endeavor, even for a moment.

All their limbs bristle with delight when they listen to My names highlighting My qualities. This delight moves them so much that they are left speech-less. They keep praising Me with names such as 'Narayana', 'Krishna' and 'Vasudeva'.

They endeavor to achieve Me - they strive to be in worship and other activities that address Me. They maintain structures of worship that help in these activities. They do these activities with firm conviction.

Their mind, intellect and attitudes are weighed down by the intensity of their [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). Unmindful of dust, dirt and stones that touch their feet, palms and head, they fall back to My worship – Like a vertical stick that automatically falls to the ground. They desire to be in contact with Me constantly and worship Me, dedicating their entire Selves to My service.

## 9-15

[

jnAnayajnEna chApyanyE yajantO mAm upAsatE |

EkatvEna pr'thaktvEna bahudhA vishvatOmukham || 15 ||

]

[anyE cha api] Yet others [yajanta:] worship [jnAna yajnEna] through study. [mAm upAsatE] They worship Me [EkatvEna] in the form of a single person [vishvatO mukham] having the universe as His form, [bahudhA] appearing in many [pr'thaktvEna] different ways.

Other people, equally gifted, worship Me with systematic study, along with praise and other means. How do they do this? They worship Me as the Unique Person present in the form of this universe in numerous different ways.

This is what the Lord says here- Lord Krishna Himself existed with everything conscious and non-conscious in subtle form. They were so subtle that they couldn’t even be called out by names. The Lord willed to exist with great variety. His will is always fulfilled, of course.

He is now present with everything [as His body](#universe_as_his_body) - everything conscious and non-conscious in gross, non-subtle form. This variety includes all powers, animals, humans, non-mobile things. Thinking of the Lord in this way, they worship Him.

Next, Lord Krishna says- ‘I am the One who is present with this universe as My body’.

## 9-16

[

aham kraturaham yajna: svadhA aham aham auShadham |

mantrO aham aham Eva Ajyam aham agniraham hutam || 16 ||

]

[aham kratu:] I am the inspiration and the ceremony. [aham yajna:] I am worship. [aham svadhA] I am the offering given to elders. [aham auShadham] I am the preparation that's offered. [aham mantra:] I am the chant. [aham Eva Ajyam] I am the one who fuels the fire. [aham agni:] I am the fire. [aham hutam] I am the One into which the offering is made.

I am the inspiration and the ceremony - I am the action that’s prescribed to achieve a goal. I Myself am worship. I am the offering that is made out of respect. I am the preparation that's being offered. I am the chant. I am the one who fuels the fire.

These statements are representative of the actions we do. The Lord Himself is the energy that fuels activity. He is the object involved in the activity. He is the activity itself.

## 9-17

[

pitA aham asya jagatO mAtA dhAtA pitAmaha: |

vEdyam pavitram OmkAra: r'k sAma yajurEva cha || 17 ||

]

[aham] I am [pitA] the father [asya jagatO] of this world, [mAtA] the mother, [dhAtA] the founder, the bearer, [pitAmaha:] the grandfather. [aham Eva] Indeed, I am [vEdyam pavitram] the auspicious knowledge in the Vedas, [OmkAra:] the sound of Om, [r'k sAma yaju:] the Rig, Sama and Yajur Vedas.

The Lord says 'I am the one who is present in the form of a father, a mother, a grandfather, the founder and bearer of various moving and stationary things in this material world'. Here, the phrase 'founder and bearer' specially denotes the personality that brings forth the act of creation, in addition to the birth of every being from a mother and father.

The Lord continues: 'Any virtue that is learnt from the Vedas - that is nothing but Me. The sound of Om, which is the seed of the Vedas, which is the source of Vedic teachings, is Me alone. The Vedas themselves, consisting of Rig, Yajur and Sama are Me'

## 9-18

[

gatirbhartA prabhu: sAkShI nivAsa: sharaNam suhr't |

prabhava pralaya sthAnam nidhAnam bIjam avyayam || 18 ||

]

[gati:] The goal, [bhartA] the bearer, [prabhu:] the Lord, [sAkShI] the one who sees everything directly, [nivAsa:] a place to live in, [sharaNam] the refuge, [suhr't] the well-wisher, [prabhava pralaya sthAnam] the place in which creation and destruction occur, [nidhAnam] an investment, [bIjam] the seed, [avyayam] which does not wear out.

I am the goal - the various objectives that are to be achieved. I am the bearer - the one who carries the universe. I am the Lord who controls everything. I see everything directly.

I am a place where people stay, such as a home. I am the refuge - the person to whom you surrender for the experience of favorable things and the avoidance of the unfavorable. I am the well-wisher that you see around you.

A place where every creation and destruction happens - that is Me. Anything that's kept as an investment, which gets created and then gets spent, that is Me. A cause that does not wear out - that's Me.

## 9-19

[

tapAmyaham aham varSha nigr'hNAmi utsr'jAmi cha |

amr'tam chaiva mr'tyu: cha sadasat cha aham arjuna || 19 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [aham] I [tapAmi] give rise to heat [varSham nigr'hNAmi] I restrict rain [utsr'jAmi cha] and make it pour too. [aham] I am [amr'tam chaiva] life itself, [mr'tyu: cha] I am death, [sat asat cha] I am the real and the imaginary.

I cause heat in the form of the sun, a fire and so on. During times like the summer, I am the one who restricts the rains. Then, at the time of the monsoon, it is I who makes it rain. The entity by which all beings gain life and the one by which they die - both are Me.

I am the real and the imaginary - the 'real' refers to things that are present. The 'imaginary' refers to things which have happened in the past and those that have not yet happened.

There's no need to elaborate more. The Lord has said-

'All the conscious and non-conscious things, in all their states of existence, exist as [My body](#universe_as_his_body). In this way, I am the one who is present in all those different forms. My devotees worship Me with single-minded thought, knowing that I have the entire universe as My body - this universe, containing all types of things, which are divided and classified in many ways. They worship Me, knowing that I am the one who is present in the form of all those different entities'.

## 9-20 to 9-21

[

traividyA mAm sOmapA: pUtapApA:

yajnairiShTvA svargatim prArthayantE |

tE puNyamAsAdya surEndra lOkam

ashnanti divyAn divi dEva-bhOgAn || 20 ||

tE tam bhuktvA svarga lOkam vishAlam

kShINE puNyE martya lOkam vishanti |

Evam trayI dharmam anuprapannA:

gatAgatam kAmakAmA labhantE || 21 ||

]

[traividyA:] Those who know the three Vedas [mAm yajnyai: iShTvA] worship Me with ceremonies, [sOmapA:] consume the residue from the ceremony and [pUta pApA:] get rid of their misfortune. [svargatim prArthayantE] They pray for a world of comforts. [AsAdya] Having arrived [puNyam surEndra lOkam] in the world of comforts, [tE ashnanti] they enjoy [divyAn dEva bhOgAn] divine pleasures of the elite [divi] in that world.

[bhuktvA] Having enjoyed [tam vishAlam svarga lOkam] the vast world of comforts, [tE martya lOkam vishanti] they enter the world of ordinary humans [puNyE kShINE] once their virtues are spent. [Evam] In this way, [kAma kAmA:] people who crave for desirable things [anuprapannA:] and advocate [trayI dharmam] the three Vedas to gain these ends [labhantE] keep [gatAgatam] going and coming back.

The three Vedas refer to the knowledge contained in the form of the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas. People who are focused only on the three Vedas are different from the ones who focus on the Vedantas (also known as Upanishads), which are at the end of the Vedas.

Only people who focus on the Upanishads are truly great persons. They worship Me alone, in the manner [described before](#_14_1). Ultimately, I am the one who is to be known from all the Vedas. Knowing Me in this way, they recollect me repeatedly. Such recollection is inspired by excessive devotion towards Me. They worship Me and dedicate themselves to My study. They desire to achieve Me alone.

On the other hand, people who focus only on the three Vedas get free from misfortunes that prevent them achieving a world of comfort. Their method is to follow the rituals prescribed in the Vedas. Those rituals concern the forces of the environment. They consume the left-overs from those rituals.

Actually, with these rituals, they are appeasing forces that are a manifestation of My form. However, they don’t know it, so they end up craving for material comforts. They enter worlds that are auspicious - meaning they are not mingled in sorrow. They experience a vast amount of comfort. When the effect of their virtuous deeds wanes, they end up in the human world again, with all its attendant sorrows.

In this way, they miss the knowledge in the Vedantas - they do not know Me and end up craving for various comforts and desires. They merely follow the three Vedas and end up returning repeatedly - they only experience comforts that are small and temporary and return to the normal world again.

On the other hand, those who are gifted think of Me with unbounded affection. They attain Me, the supreme and ever-lasting joy. They do not return. Their specialty is described next.

## 9-22

[

ananyA: chintayantO mAm yE janA: paryupAsatE |

tEShAm nityAbhiyuktAnAm yOga kShEmam vahAmyaham || 22 ||

]

[yE janA:] The people who [paryupAsatE] worship Me constantly [mAm chintayanta:] while having Me in their thoughts, [ananyA:] without having any other objective in mind [nityAbhiyuktAnAm] desire to be united with Me forever. [aham vahAmi] I take care of [tEshAm] their [yOga] achievements [kShEma] and the preservation of what they have achieved.

The Lord takes care of those who take His refuge

The people described in this Shloka do not have any objective other than being united with Me forever - it is not possible for them to exist without My thought, hence they have My thought itself as their objective. These great people worship Me while keeping Me fixed in their minds as the one endowed with all great qualities and the one who has all the power. Their worship is whole and complete, without any malice. Such people desire to be united with Me forever. I take care of their achievements. Their ultimate achievement is Me. I take care of the preservation of their achievements by freeing them from the cycle of return into this material world.

## 9-23

[

yO tu anya dEvatA bhaktA: yajantE shraddhayA\_nvitA: |

tE\_pi mAmEva kauntEya yajanti avidhipUrvakam || 23 ||

]

[yO tu] On the other hand, those who [anya dEvatA bhaktA:] are devoted to other sources of power [yajantE] worship [shraddhayA\_nvitA:] in complete faith. [tE api] Even they [mAmEva yajanti] worship Me alone [avidhipUrvakam] without following the prescribed rules completely.

Followers of the three Vedas worship various sources of power with great faith. In reality, they worship Me too. That's because everything exists as [My body](#universe_as_his_body). The names of all gods and [various powers](#gods_and_other_powers) actually address Me.

However, these followers worship without following the prescribed procedure completely. They do not worship according to the Vedantas, which have laid out the fact that everything in the universe exists as the Lord's body.

Service to any source of power, when rendered with the thought that it exists as the body of the Lord, is worship according to the prescribed procedure.

On the other hand, service to anyone, rendered while seeing them as the recipient of the service isn’t according to the prescribed procedure. People who render service in this way practice Vedic philosophy that’s related to material comforts. They don’t know that the Lord is the One who is worshipped by all forms of service; that He alone is to be worshipped.

Such people attain limited results. After their achievement is done, it’s in their nature to fall back and lose the achievement. This is said in the next Shloka:

## 9-24

[

aham hi sarva yajnAnAm bhOktA cha prabhurEva cha |

na tu mAm abhijAnanti tatvEnAta: chyavanti tE || 24 ||

]

[aham hi] I am indeed [bhOktA] the enjoyer [cha] and [prabhurEva cha] the single Master [sarva yajnAnAm] of all services rendered to anyone or anything. [tE] Those who crave for material wealth [na abhijAnanti] do not know Me [tatvEna] as I am. [ata:] Hence, [tE chyavanti] they fall back.

With the phrase 'Single Master', the Lord state that He Himself appears as the benefactor wherever benefits are delivered.

Indeed, this strange distinction is astounding - Some people get stuck with minor results and keep falling from their place. Others end up enjoying uninterrupted, unlimited joy, in the form of eternal union with the Lord. They both are involved in the very same action. This distinction comes from their conviction. This is described next:

## 9-25

[

yAnti dEvavratA dEvAn

pitr'n yAnti pitr'vratA: |

bhUtAni yAnti bhUtEjyA:

yAnti madyAjinO\_pi mAm || 25 ||

]

[dEvavratA:] People who dedicate themselves to power [yAnti] will achieve [dEvAn] those powers. [pitr'vratA:] Those who dedicate themselves to their ancestors [pitr'n yAnti] join those ancestors. [bhUtEjya:] Those who persevere to achieve material gains [bhUtAni yAnti] will attain those materials. [madyAjina:] People who worship Me with the aim to achieve Me [api] while dedicating themselves to any cause [mAm yAnti] will achieve Me.

Here, the word 'dedication' is used in the sense of 'intent' and ‘conviction’.

'People who dedicate themselves to power' are those who work to please various [sources of power](#gods_and_other_powers) and devote themselves to those powers. They will achieve those powers. Similarly, those who commit to worship their elders and dedicate themselves to their service will join them. Those who persevere with the intent to achieve material gains will attain those materials.

The Lord lovingly accepts all offerings and activities of his devotees

On the other hand, those who commit to worship Me do the same things - they may devote themselves to gain power, serve their elders and persevere to achieve material gains. They do all this while knowing that they are worshipping the Supreme Lord Krishna, the ultimate Self who has all of this as [His body](#universe_as_his_body).

The Lord says 'People who worship Me in this way will definitely achieve Me. Those who intend to gain [power](#gods_and_other_powers) will achieve power, enjoy a little and eventually fall off when the power wanes. My devotees, on the other hand, achieve Me and never fall back. I am without birth or destruction. I know everything and My intent is always fulfilled. I am a great ocean of unlimited variety of great qualities, an abode of unbroken and infinite joy'.

Next, the Lord describes yet another aspect that's special in His devotees:

## 9-26

[

patram puShpam phalam tOyam yO mE bhaktyA prayachChati |

tadaham bhaktyupahr'tam ashnAmi prayatAtmana: || 26 ||

]

[yO] Anyone who [prayachChati] offers [patram] a leaf, [puShpam] a flower, [phalam], a fruit [tOyam] or water [mE] to Me [bhaktyA] with devotion - [aham] I [ashnAmi] will accept [tat] whatever [bhaktyupahr'tam] is offered with [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) [prayatAtmana:] by a person who is so dedicated to Me.

A devotee offers Me something with [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). It could be anything that’s easily available – like a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water. Such a devotee has limitless affection towards Me and can’t sustain himself without offering things to Me. To this person, making the offering itself is the reward.

Even though I am the Lord of everything, though the lifecycle of the universe is My sport, though all My desires are always fulfilled and My intent always realized, though I exist with limitless and unbroken favorable qualities of infinite variety, though My nature is one of infinite amounts of continuous joy, I accept this offering.

In fact, I accept it with all eagerness; like I finally got something I yearned for, which was out of My reach. That’s because it was made with devotion, dedication and a pure mind, without any intention other than making the offering to Me.

As stated in [mOkSha dharma], 353-64: Being engaged in our work, with our intellect working towards a single goal (to attain the Supreme Lord), any actions performed are accepted with great regard by the Lord Himself.

Gifted people [who know Me](#jnAnI) are special in a way that's not expressible by thought and speech. Be a [person who knows](#jnAnI). Weigh down your Self and everything that’s yours with the weight of [devotion described before](#bhakti_a_defn). Indulge in praise, work, worship and respect without interruption. While indulging in them, do your work in this world as follows-

## 9-27

[

yat karOShi yat ashnAsi jat juhOShi dadAsi yat |

yat tapasyasi kauntEya tat kuruShva madarpaNam || 27 ||

]

[yat karOShi] Whatever you do, [yat ashnAsi] whatever you consume, [yat juhOShi] whatever you sacrifice, [dadAsi yat] whatever you give away, [yat tapasyasi] any thought you concentrate on, [tat kuruShva] make it [arpaNam] a dedication [mat] to Me

The Lord states- ‘Dedicate everything to Me. That includes any remaining activities you do in this world till you depart from your body. Your daily routine, your responsibilities such as charity, focus and sacrifice, everything you consume to maintain your body- dedicate all of it to Me’.

‘Dedication' is to make an offering to the Lord.

What can we possibly offer the Lord of the universe?

As The Lord Himself stated- Your activities and responsibilities bring a feeling of having done something. They also bring enjoyment, experience and the sense of having rendered service. Do them in such a way that they are offered to Me.

In other words: You are a doer of your work. You have a purpose and experience the outcome. All of this belongs to Me and takes form, exists and sustains according to My will. So, leave all of it in Me, the ultimate controller and reason for all existence.

With abundant affection towards Me, your ultimate joy is in being under My control alone - stay in this thought always, knowing that you are being controlled by Me. Any other person or [power](#gods_and_other_powers) has this very same property.

## 9-28

[

shubhAshubha phalairEvam mOkShyasE karma bandhanai: |

saMnyAsa yOga yuktAtmA vimuktO mAm upaiShyasi || 28 ||

]

[Evam] In this way, [mOkShyasE] you will be free [karma bandhanai:] from the bondage of activity [shubhAshuba phalai:] with its favorable and unfavorable outcomes. [saMnyAsa yOga yuktAtmA] Be with the intent of letting-go. [vimukta:] You will be free and [mAm upaiShyasi] attain Me.

In this way, with the intention of letting-go, your joy is to perform under My will in My service. Then, all your activities become My worship. By arranging yourself in this way and doing your work, you get freedom from all expectations and outcomes.

Ordinarily, these outcomes seem favorable or unfavorable, going by your bondage to an endless list of past deeds. That becomes a barrier to attain Me.

When all your activities become My worship, you get free of all those barriers. You will attain Me.

Next, listen to My characteristic that goes beyond all activities of this world-

## 9-29

[

samO\_ham sarva bhUtEShu

na mE dvEShO\_sti na priya: |

yE bhajanti tu mAm bhaktyA

mayi tE tEShu chApyaham || 29 ||

]

[aham] I am [sama:] equal [sarva bhUtEShu] to all beings. [na mE dvEShO\_sti] I do not have hatred, [na priya:] neither do I have the attachment of love. [tu] However, [yE] those who [bhajanti mAm] worship Me [bhaktyA] with [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) [tE mayi] are situated in Me, [aham] I am [tEShu] within them [chApi] as well.

We see a great variety among humans, animals and all beings – in terms of their shape, form, status, abilities and their level of awareness. We see them ranging from high to being extremely low.

The Lord says - 'I look at all of them as being equal when they seek refuge in Me. I do not despise anyone due to their lowly shape, lack of awareness or inferior status. I do not reject them because they have acted against My instructions. Also, I do not have the attachment of love towards someone of high status and knowledge - unless they have surrendered to Me. They do not gain My acceptance just because they have good fortune. Their status doesn’t matter to Me.

On the other hand, those who worship Me with affection cannot stay without worshipping Me. They have My worship as their only goal. Their status, capability and knowledge may be high or low - they are all equal to Me. They are content to be in My thoughts. I value them more than Myself.’

Moreover:

## 9-30

[

api chEt sudurAchArO bhajatE mAm ananyabhAk |

sAdhurEva sa mantavya: samyak vyavasitO hi sa: || 30 ||

]

[api chEt] Even when [sudurAchAra:] a very offensive person [bhajatE mAm] worships Me [ananyabhAk] with unwavering devotion, [mantavya:] he needs to be considered as [sAdhu: Eva] virtuous indeed. [sa: hi] He definitely [samyak vyavasita:] has the appropriate determination.

Having been born as a certain type of being, there are certain ways to behave and certain misbehaviors to avoid. A person who doesn’t comply and crosses the line is considered very offensive.

When such a person worships the Lord with unwavering devotion, with the worship alone being the goal, he needs to be considered virtuous. He is a topper among the followers of the Lord, equal to the kind of people described in the previous Shloka.

How come?

In this Shloka, the statement 'he has made the appropriate resolution' says that his determination is true and proper. This person has firmly resolved- 'The Lord is the one and only origin of the entire universe. He is the ultimate creator. He is the goal of all humans. He is the master of all things moving and stationary. He is our controller, my guide, my friend and He gives ultimate joy'. Such a resolution is difficult and rare.

With this kind of resolution, a person is in constant worship of the Lord - with worship itself being the goal of his worship. Hence, this person must be considered virtuous indeed and be respected. Considering his resolve and consequent worship, the malicious deeds he commits are to be considered as minor imperfections. This person is not to be disrespected for those deeds. Instead, this person must be praised - this is the summary here.

Now, a question arises - Will the misconduct of this person not restrict the flow of devotion in future? As said in [kaThOpaniShat, 1-2-24]: 'Those who cannot keep off misconduct, those in whom desire and anger do not subside, even those whose mind does not have peace - such people cannot achieve Him through knowledge'. Will he still be capable of devotion?

This question is answered next -

## 9-31

[

kShipram bhavati dharmAtmA shashvat shAntim nigachChati |

kauntEya pratijAnIhI na mE bhakta: paNashyati || 31 ||

]

[kShipram] Very soon, [bhavati] this person becomes [dharmAtmA] an excellent devotee, who worships Me without flaw. [nigachChati] He attains [shAntim] peaceful existence [shashwat] forever. [kauntEya] Arjuna, [pratijAnIhi] resolve firmly within yourself that [mE bhakta:] My devotee [na praNashyati] shall not waste away.

Affection towards Me inspires My worship. When a person has no other objective, he gets rid of his flaws. By the same worship, he uproots the qualities of [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas) and [tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas). In this way he attains excellence quickly. Without delay, he is free of obstacles and is fully able to worship Me alone in his mind.

The word 'dharma' used in this Shloka to mean '[devoted worship](#bhakti_a_defn)' has also been used in the beginning of this chapter (Chap.9#3) in a similar manner.

A person who worships attains ever-lasting peace - he gets rid of behaviors and deeds that prevent him from attaining Me. Those deeds and behaviors never return.

Arjuna, now resolve to yourself - 'The Lord's devotee shall not waste away, even if he strays from the path of virtue and mingles with behaviors that are against My instructions. Instead, by the greatness of My devotion, he destroys all types of bondage. He attains ever-lasting freedom from them. He shall attain whole and complete devotion very soon’.

## 9-32 to 9-33

[

mAm hi pArtha vyapAshritya yO\_pi syu: pApayOnaya: |

striyO vaishyA: tathA shUdrA: tE\_pi yAnti parAm gatim || 32 ||

kim puna: brAhmaNA: puNyA: bhaktA rAjarShaya: tathA |

anityam asukham lOkam imam prApya bhajasva mAm || 33 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [yO\_pi striyO vaishyA: tathA shUdrA:] anyone, irrespective of gender and profession, [pApayOnaya: syu:] even those who've tread the path of malice - [tE\_pi] they will [parAm gatim yAnti hi] definitely attain the [supreme goal](#Moksha) [mAm vyapAshritya] after taking refuge in Me.

[kim puna:] It goes without saying that the same applies [puNyA:] to the virtuous, [bhaktA:] to My devotees, [brAhmaNA:] to those who seek to worship [tathA rAjarShaya:] and administrators who rule on My behalf. [bhajasva mAm] Worship Me, [prApya] now that you have obtained [imam lOkam] this world, [anityam] which is temporary [asukham] and is devoid of lasting joy.

Without exception, everyone can devote themselves to the Lord

Anyone can attain Me and reach the ultimate goal – Ladies, Gentlemen, people of various occupations, traders, those who serve other people, even those who may have tread the path of ill-will and misbehavior. It goes without saying that people who tread the path of virtue, who seek to worship Me, who administer on My behalf - they can equally take refuge by being devoted to Me.

You, Arjuna, are here in this temporary world. It is bombarded by the three types of miseries- those inflicted by others, those inflicted by ourselves, those brought on by effects beyond our limits. Hence, it lacks peace.

You are here to administer on My behalf. Worship Me.

Next, the Lord describes the characteristics of [bhakti](#bhakti_a_defn):

## 9-34

[

manmanA bhava madbhaktO madyAjI mAm namaskuru |

mAm EvaiShyasi yuktvaivam AtmAnam matparAyaNa: || 34 ||

]

[bhava madbhakta:] Be My devotee, having excessive affection towards me. [manmanA] Keep your mind in Me always. [madyAjI] Worship Me alone. [mAm namaskuru] Surrender to Me, [matparAyaNa:] have Me as your ultimate goal. [Evam] In this way, [AtmAnam yuktvA] by attaching your thoughts to Me, [mAm Eva EShyasi] you will certainly attain Me.

'Keep your mind in Me always' - Like the unbroken flow of oil, have an unbroken stream of thought that stays in Me.

I am the Lord of Lords, The One abode of all that's favorable, without a hint of a blemish. I am The One who knows everything. My every intent is fulfilled. I’m The Single Cause behind the entire universe, The Supreme Creator, The best among Men.

My eyes are wide and pure like lotus leaves. My appearance is like a flawless dark-blue cloud. I have the brightness of a thousand suns that rise simultaneously.

I am a great ocean of tasty nectar. I have four gentle and large arms; I wear a yellow garment of great brilliance, decorated with a flawless crown, ear-ring, a garland, with bracelets on the biceps and forearms.

I am an abode of enormous favorable qualities, limitless compassion, beauty, charm, generosity, grandeur and an innate nature to look at everyone equally with an ocean of affection;

I am a refuge for the entire universe without exception, accepting everyone who seeks refuge without considering any of their peculiarities.

I am the controller of everything.

Again, the Lord emphasizes - 'Be My devotee, have your thoughts stationed in Me with a limitless amount of love towards Me'. Once more, the emphasis is laid with the instruction 'Worship Me alone'- Experiencing Me is unlimited and uninterrupted joy. With such an experience, return to My worship always.

Worship is to let-go and run with the will of The Lord. Indeed, all actions like serving someone, transacting and experiencing are all different forms of serving the Lord. In this way, you will dedicate yourself to My worship - worship that is done out of excessive and unbroken affection towards Me, arising from your experience of Me.

In the same way, keep your thoughts in Me.

Once again, the instruction is emphasized as – [mAm namaskuru]: Occupy yourself with an intense and abundant spirit of surrendering to Me. Do this without opposing or intending to terminate the surrender - This surrender comes from an excess of affection towards Me - it comes from experiencing Me with limitless and uninterrupted joy.

'Have Me as your ultimate goal': The person who has Me as the ultimate goal is incapable of supporting himself without Me, hence he takes My refuge.

With this, fasten your mind and have Me as your ultimate goal. With an unbroken, limitless affection towards me, you get a mind that's capable of experiencing Me. With it, you will attain Me. You do this by thinking and meditating upon Me with your mind, experiencing and adoring Me, surrendering to Me and having Me as the ultimate goal.

Do your activities that are necessary to sustain your body, perform the duties prescribed in the scriptures and your daily routine. Do them for My pleasure, as work that I've effected, with My service as the driver. Always repeat My praise, be in the effort to achieve Me and surrender to Me out of love. Resolve that the entire universe is subject to My will. Being in My service is its only desire. Think of all My qualities. They give vast amounts of joy. Be present daily in this world and worship Me in the manner described before. You will definitely achieve Me.

# Chapter 10

In the previous chapter, The Lord described the art of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), along with its accompanying practices (*worshipping and taking refuge in Him*).

This chapter works to give birth to such [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) and enhance it. Here, the Lord illustrates His limitless auspicious qualities- such as His limitless wealth, the entire [universe being sustained as His body](#universe_as_his_body), His pervasiveness and His ownership.

## 10-1

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

bhUya Eva mahAbAhO shr'Nu mE paramam vacha: |

yat tE aham prIyamANAya vakShyAmi hita kAmyayA || 1 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said - [mahAbAhO] Arjuna, [shr'Nu] listen [mE paramam vacha:] to the greatest among My instructions, [yat aham vakShyAmi tE] which I will tell you [bhUya Eva] once again. [prIyamANAya] I’ll do this for you as a friend [hita kAmyayA] wishing your well-being.

The Lord said to Arjuna - 'After listening to My greatness, you have developed abundant love for Me. I wish your well-being- I shall initiate and expand My [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) within you. For this, I will now tell you the greatest teaching yet again, dealing with the vast expanse of My greatness itself. Listen to that with an attentive mind.

## 10-2

[

na mE vidu: suragaNA: prabhavam na maharShaya: |

aham Adirhi dEvAnAm maharShINAm cha sarvaSha: || 2 ||

]

[suragaNA:] Neither the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) [na maharShaya:] nor the great sages [mE vidu:] know Me. [aham] I am [Adi: hi] indeed the origin [sarvaSha:] of all the [dEvAnAm] [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) [MaharShINAm cha] and the great sages.

Unfortunately, nobody knows the Lord

People have varying levels of ability and awareness to recognize the universe beyond their senses. A scientist may recognize the existence of an atom; a sage may recognize the spiritual force behind life. Yet, they do not know My greatness. They do not know Me, My real form, My name, My actions, My characteristics and so on.

That's because I am the origin of all [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) and great thinkers. I am the origin of their form, their knowledge and everything else. [Powerful people, gods](#gods_and_other_powers) and great sages are in their positions due to their virtuous deeds. I have given them varying awareness in accordance with those deeds.

Their awareness has limitations. With this limited knowledge, they do not know My characteristics in their true sense.

The Lord's true characteristics cannot be recognized by thought, even by [powerful gods](#gods_and_other_powers).

Next, the Lord says that the awareness of His true characteristics shall free us from our misfortune – Our misfortune prevents us from starting our journey of [bhakti](#bhakti_a_defn).

## 10-3

[

yO mAm ajam anAdim cha vEtti lOkamahEshvaram |

asammUDha: sa martyEShu sarvapApai: pramuchyatE || 3 ||

]

[martyEShu] Among humans, [yO asammUDha: vEtti] a person who is free of misconceptions knows [mAm ajam anAdim cha] Me to be without birth and without an origin, [lOkamahEshvaram] the Lord of the universe. [sa:] Such a person [pramUchyatE] is freed from [sarva pApai:] all misfortune.

The Lord is without birth, He was never born. In this He is distinct from all inanimate things that keep transforming.

He is also distinct from the Self, which is attached to the material environment. The Self gets associated with the material world in accordance with its past deeds. This association is called 'birth'.

The Lord has no such birth - This distinction is described here with the word [ajam]. The phrase 'without an origin' means that the Lord is not someone who has attained [freedom](#Moksha) from birth and death. Those who have attained such freedom do have an origin, in that they attained freedom after being bound in the material world.

This is also evident from the [shvEtAshvatara upanishat], 6-19, where it says that the Lord exists without discontinuity.

In this Shloka, the Lord states - A person who knows Me in this way - as the Lord of the entire universe who is untouched by any flaw - is free of misconception.

'Misconception' is to consider the Lord as similar to something else. Unfortunately, such misconceptions prevent the start of [bhakti](#bhakti_a_defn). The person who does not have this opinion is free from misconception. Such a person is free from all misfortune that prevents the start of [bhakti](#bhakti_a_defn).

Any other wealthy or powerful leader is like another human. The person has attained that wealth and power due to deeds committed in the past. Same is the case with the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), their superiors and Brahma, the principal engineer of the universe. They are subject to the influence of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) too. The Lord is described as 'The one who created brahma' in [shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 6-8.

Similarly, a wealthy person also belongs to the same category of people who are bound to the environment.

The Lord of the universe is distinct from all causes and effects we see in inanimate things. He is distinct from all conscious beings, whether [free](#Moksha) or bound in the environment.

The Lord has the distinction of having absolute control, being the terminator of all misfortune, the single supreme controller and the single abode of an infinite variety of abundant favorable qualities. The person who knows the Lord in this way doesn’t think of the Lord as being similar to something else. This person is completely free of all misconceptions and misfortune.

In this way, the Lord described the removal of misfortune that prevents the birth of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). Such misfortune is removed by a study of the Lord's characteristics. He also said that the mere removal of such misfortune leads to [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), which then springs forth by itself.

Next, the Lord describes the growth of devotion by studying His attributes, His wealth and the world of auspicious qualities that reside in Him.

Let’s get to know the Lord

## 10-4 to 10-5

[

buddhi: jnAnam asammOha: kShamA satyam dama: shama: |

sukham du:kham bhavO\_bhAvO bhayam cha abhayam Eva cha || 4 ||

ahimsA samatA tuShTi: tapO dAnam yashO\_yasha: |

bhavanti bhAvA bhUtAnAm matta Eva pr'thak vidhA: || 5 ||

]

[pr'thak vidhA:] The various [bhAvA:] emotions [bhUtAnAm bhavanti] that take place in all beings [matta Eva bhavanti] arise from Me alone - [buddhi] recognition, [jnAnam] cognition, [asammOha:] freedom from misconception, [kShamA] forgiveness, [satyam] truth, [dama:] control over voluntary actions, [shama:] control over oneself, [sukham du:kham] comfort, discomfort, [bhava:] the state of having plenty, [abhAva:] the state of discontent, [bhayam] fear [abhayam Eva cha] and fearlessness too, [ahimsA] the desire to avoid harming anyone, [samatA] the attitude of equanimity, [tuShTi:] contentment, [tapa:] focus, [dAnam] charity, [yasha:] fame [ayasha:] and infamy.

*In the commentary that follows, each of the aspects in this Shloka are explained as a state of our being and our experience of that state.*

There are different emotions, experiences and states-of-being -

The feeling of ‘recognition’ happens when the brain notices similarity to something it knows. ‘Cognition’ is the experience of ‘knowing’ and identifying different conscious beings and non-conscious things

'Freedom from misconception' is to be free of ignorance and bias, which dull our ability to make distinctions. For example, ignorance about jewelry would make us bundle gold and pearl together. Bias would prevent us from learning the distinction between them. When we are free from bias and ignorance, we are free from misconception.

‘Forgiveness’ is a state where our mind isn’t deformed even in the presence of agitation.

‘Truth’ is to say it 'as it is', in a way that's beneficial to the listener. It is stated here as a tendency that enables us to do this.

‘Control over voluntary actions’ is to desist from unfavorable subjects. Similarly, ‘control over oneself’ is the experience of controlling our thoughts and feelings- instead of being controlled by them.

‘Comfort’ is the experience of things which are favorable to us, while ‘discomfort’ is the experience of something unfavorable.

‘The state of having plenty’ is a state of mind that causes the feeling of comfort. ‘The state of discontent’ is fatigue in our mind, which causes an unfavorable experience.

‘Fear’ is discomfort that comes from perceiving the cause of future misfortune. ‘Fearlessness’ is to be free of such fear.

The ‘desire to avoid harming anyone’ is the state of not being the cause of any misery.

The ‘attitude of equanimity’ is to view fortune and misfortune equally- whether it happens to us, to people we adore, or to those who oppose us

With the quality of ‘contentment’, we are always joyous towards everyone.

‘Focus’ is to be engaged in the occupation prescribed for us, even when comfort and enjoyment are restrained.

‘Fame’ is when we’re known for virtuous qualities; ‘Infamy’ is to have a reputation of lacking virtue. Here, 'fame' and 'infamy' indicate the dual states of our mind associated with such reputations.

Similarly, the other virtues mentioned, such as 'focus' and 'charity' refer to our preferences and tendencies.

All of us in this world keep going through these emotions, experiences and states-of-being. The Lord says - 'These emotions arise from Me'. Meaning, they are according to the Lord's will.

In the next Shloka, the Lord says that the [powers](#gods_and_other_powers) behind this world are also subject to His will.

## 10-6

[

maharShaya: sapta pUrvE chatvArO manavastathA |

madbhAvA mAnasA jAtA: yEShAm lOkE imA: prajA: || 6 ||

]

[sapta maharShaya:] The seven great sages, [pUrvE] our ancestors [mAnasA jAtA:] born of Brahma, [tathA] along with [chatvArO manava:] the four [Manus](#_1_-_3) [madbhAvA:] are an expression of My will. [imA: prajA:] All these descendants [yEShAm] from them [lOkE] live in this world.

Our ancestors, the seven great sages, including Bhrgu came into being from an idea of Brahma, the principal engineer of the universe. Their purpose was to keep the act of creation going. They ensured continuity from the previous [manvantara](#manvantara_defn) to this one.

To sustain the world, four [Manus](#_1_-_3) came into being. Their progeny now fills this world.

Till the time of destruction, they play their part as producers and caregivers to the next wave of conscious beings.

The Lord states- Sages such as Bhrgu and the Manus are an expression of My will. My intent itself is their intent. They exist according to My policies. They follow My intentions.

## 10-7

[

EtAm vibhUtim yOgam cha mama yO vEtti tattvata: |

sa: avikampyEna yOgEna yujyatE nAtra samshaya: || 7 ||

]

[ya: vEtti] The person who knows [EtAm mama vibhUtim] this expanse of My unlimited power [cha yOgam] and My associations - [sa:] such a person [yujyatE] sets to work and performs [avikampyEna] with unwavering [yOgEna] focus and discipline. [na atra samshaya:] Let there be no doubt about this.

The Lord gifts His awareness to those who want Him

The expanse of the Lord's unlimited power is such that the creation, state-of-being and the very existence of everything is subject to His will.

He says- 'A person perseveres with unwavering, focused [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) when he knows My associations in their true form – I associate with great favorable qualities, I destroy all that's unfavorable. Let there be no doubt in this matter’.

He goes on to state- ‘You will see for yourself- when you are aware of My powers and the vast expanse of My favorable qualities, your [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) to Me is enhanced' - that is the opinion expressed here.

Next, the Lord illustrates a state of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). We enter this state when the awareness about His qualities attains maturity.

## 10-8

[

aham sarvasya prabhavO matta: sarvam pravartatE |

iti matvA bhajantE mAm budhA bhAva samanvitA: || 8 ||

]

[budhA:] People with this awareness [mAm bhajantE] worship Me [iti matvA] with the conviction that [aham prabhava:] I am the origin [sarvasya] of everything; [sarvam] that every entity [pravartatE] gets stimulated [matta:] with the initiative given by Me. [bhAva samanvitA:] These people are filled with feelings of adoration for Me.

The Lord says - 'I am the cause of creation of this whole world with its great variety of different beings, both conscious and non-conscious.

[Those who know](#jnAnI) will recognize that every being initiates activity with My stimulation. They have conviction that I have this unlimited power by My very nature; that I have abundant favorable qualities such as affection, beauty and an equitable outlook towards everyone.

They are filled with feelings of adoration towards Me. They worship Me as the One with all favorable qualities. This feeling is a special state of mind - it makes them worship Me with yearning.

How do they worship the Lord? That is described next -

## 10-9

[

machchittA madgata prANA: bOdhayanta: parasparam |

kathayanta: cha mAm nityam tuShyanti cha ramanti cha || 9 ||

]

[machchittA:] With their awareness dedicated to Me, [madgata prANA:] their life runs with Me as the basis. [bOdhayanta:] They share awareness about Me [parasparam] among one another. [kathayanta: cha] Then they describe [mAm] Me [nityam] at all times. [tuShyanti cha] They enjoy it [ramanti cha] and take pleasure in listening.

The Lord describes the characteristics of their worship with the phrase: 'their awareness is dedicated to Me' - meaning, their mind is placed in The Lord; 'Their life runs with Me as the basis' – meaning, they are unable to sustain themselves without The Lord.

He continues- They experience My qualities in their own ways. They share awareness about such qualities among their friends. They describe My divine and delightful work.

They share, enjoy My description and take pleasure in it, without any other motive. Listeners take uninterrupted and unbound pleasure from this listening, being with deep adoration for Me.

## 10-10

[

tEShAm satata yuktAnAm bhajatAm prIti pUrvakam |

dadAmi buddhiyOgam tam yEna mAm upayAnti tE || 10 ||

]

[tEShAm] To those [bhajatAm] who worship Me [satata yuktAnAm] to be with Me always, [dadAmi] I shall give, [prIti pUrvakam] with great affection, [tam buddhiyOgam] that intellectual grasp [yEna] by which [tE upayAnti mAm] they attain Me.

These people worship Me and intend to be united with Me always. I shall give them that very intellect, which makes them do everything with a desire to attain Me. I shall give it in a complete and mature form with great affection. They shall attain Me with this intellect.

Moreover -

## 10-11

[

tEShAm Eva anukampArtham aham ajnAnajam tama: |

nAshayAmi AtmabhAvasthO jnAna dIpEna bhAsvatA || 11 ||

]

[anukampArtham] Due to compassion [tEShAm Eva] towards those very people, [aham] I [AtmabhAvastha:] stand as the subject of their thoughts, [nAshyAmi] destroying [ajnAnajam tama:] the darkness of ignorance [bhAsvatA] with the bright [jnAna dIpEna] light of knowledge.

For the benefit of these very people, who desire to be united with Me always, I stand as the subject of their thoughts. Standing in this way, I reveal My own favorable qualities and destroy darkness with the bright light of knowledge.

Here, 'darkness' is the tendency to shift attention towards material things, avoiding Me. This tendency stifles knowledge. It is born out of ignorance grown with past deeds. The 'bright light of knowledge' is My awareness, which gets rid of that tendency.

In this way, Arjuna listened to the expanse of the Lord's wealth and the variety of His favorable qualities. These qualities are unique to the Lord. They are in a different league altogether. Listening to them generates limitless joy. Having listened to them till now, Arjuna desires to know their complete expanse and says-

## 10-12 to 10-13

[

arjuna uvAcha -

param brahma param dhAma pavitram paramam bhavAn |

puruSham shAshvatam divyam AdidEvam ajam vibhum || 12 ||

Ahu: tvAm r'Shaya: sarvE dEvarShi: nAradastathA |

asitO dEvalO vyAsa: svayam chaiva bravIShi mE || 13 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said-

[sarvE r'Shaya:] All great thinkers who are devoted to You [tathA dEvarShi: nArada:] along with the divine sage Narada, [asita:] the dark, unbound [dEvala:] pious [vyAsa:] Vedavyasa [Ahu: tvAm] say that You are [param brahma] the supreme might, [param dhAma] the ultimate abode, [bhavAn paramam pavitram] You are the supreme purity, [puruSham] the greatest personality, [shAshvatam] ever-lasting, [divyam] unaffected by the material world, [AdidEvam] the root of all powers, [ajam] the One who is not created [vibhum] and the One with irresistible will. [svayam bravIShi mE] You tell this to me [chaiva] directly as well.

The Lord’s qualities cannot be understood. So how do we think of Him?

Arjuna says to Krishna - 'The scriptures speak about the supreme might, the ultimate abode and the supreme purity. You are that'.

Here are the scriptures that speak about these qualities:

[taittariya upanishad], 3-1-1 speaks about the Lord in the neuter gender- ‘From which all these beings originate, by which all beings take birth and live, in which they reside at the end - know It as the Mighty One, which is to be worshipped’.

[taittariya upanishad], 2-1-1 says what happens to the worshipper- ‘The person who worships this Mighty One will attain that very Might’

[muNdOkya upanishad], 3-2-6 says it as well- ‘The one who worships and sees the Lord will attain equality to the Lord’.

Arjuna continues - The One who is called the 'ultimate abode' is You alone. Here, the word 'abode' indicates the state of enlightenment. The ultimate form of enlightenment is described in the following scriptures -

[ChAndOgya upanishat], 3-13-7 describes the state-of-being enlightened with the Lord’s awareness- ‘It is the enlightenment that shines many times brighter than this daylight’.

[ChAndOgya upanishat], 8-12-2 describes the person who is enlightened- ‘Having attained the ultimate enlightenment, he comes forth in his own form’.

[br’hadArAnyaka upanishat], 4-4-16 describes how he is viewed- The powerful consider Him as the brightness in everything that's bright.

Likewise, the Lord is the supreme purity - One who purifies all. To a person who remembers Him, the Lord grants freedom from disgrace and related mistakes. As said in the scriptures -

[ChandOgya upanishat], 4-14-3 speaks about such a person’s mistakes- ‘Mistakes do not stick to a person who worships this way, just as water does not stick to a lotus leaf’.

[ChandOgya upanishat], 5-24-3 speaks about vice in such a person- ‘Just as cotton gets burnt into ashes when it falls into fire, all vice in this person gets burnt away’.

[mahAnArAyaNa], 21-3 talks about the supreme nature of the Lord- ‘Narayana is the supreme might. Narayana is the supreme element. Narayana is the supreme enlightenment. Narayana is the supreme Self’.

Arjuna continues- Great thinkers know the true nature of everything perceptible and non-perceptible. O Lord, they say You alone are the everlasting divine person, the origin of all [powers](#gods_and_other_powers), You are without an origin. You are the One who is all-pervading. The sage Narada and the unbound pious Vedavyasa too say the same. From the scriptures -

[harivamsha, vishNu parva], 123-62 describe Lord Krishna- ‘This Narayana has the sea of milk as his mansion, has Lakshmi by his side. He has left his serpent that serves as his resting place and has come down to Mathura city’.

[bhArata.araNya.], 86-28,25 says- ‘The city of Dwaraka is indeed fortunate, because Lord Krishna is present there. He is the Lord who can be seen, He is beginning-less, He is indeed the eternal and supreme law’.

[bhArata.vana.], 76-24,28 describes those who know Krishna- ‘Learned people who know the Vedas, those who are aware of the knowledge of the Self say that the great Lord Krishna is the eternal and supreme law. Govinda is the purest of the pure, the highest among all virtues and the most favorable among everything that's auspicious. The Lord is the entire universe and all the [powers](#gods_and_other_powers) in it. He is ancient, older than everything else. The Lord Hari, who cannot be grasped by thought, is now present here as Krishna.

In [bhArata.vana.], 90-28,32, Krishna Himself tells Arjuna- ‘Wherever the ancient and supreme being, Lord Narayana is present, that’s where the entire world is. It is home, with all the wholesome rivers. Such a place is virtuous. It is a place of focused thought. That is itself the ultimate entity, which extends through-out the universe. It is a place of powerful scholars, people with great achievements and those who have focused their thoughts... Lord Krishna, present as the origin of all power and as the great performer, is the most favorable of all places. Have no doubt in this matter’.

[bhArata.sabha.], 38-33 echoes- ‘Lord Krishna himself is the creation and destruction of all the worlds. Along with everything with consciousness and without, this entire universe exists only for His purpose’.

Finally, Arjuna recalls what Krishna said- ‘You have said so Yourself, in [Chap.7#4](#_4): This universe of Mine is divided into eight categories: Solids, liquids, gasses, energy, space, mind, the gross collections and the notion of individuality. Up until [Chap.10#8](#_8): People with this knowledge worship Me with the conviction that I am the origin of everything; Each and every entity gets stimulated with the initiative given by Me. They are filled with feelings of adoration for Me’.

## 10-14

[

sarvam Etat r'tam manyE yat mAm vadasi kEshava |

na hi tE bhagavan vyaktim vidu: dEvA na dAnavA: || 14 ||

]

[kEshava] Krishna, [manyE] I consider [sarvam Etat] all this [r'tam] as the truth- [yat mAm vadasi] everything You tell me. [bagavAn] O Lord, [na hi] indeed, nobody [vidu:] knows [tE vyaktim] your personality - [na dEvA:] neither virtuous people [dAnavA:] nor the vile.

From the description You give me about Your unbroken expanse of wealth and infinite favorable qualities, I got to know that they are Yours by nature, not characteristic of anyone else. I consider that to be a statement of fact, describing things exactly as they are. It was not an opinion of flattery.

Lord, You are the abode of infinite knowledge, power, strength, wealth, valor and brilliance. People of limited knowledge, whether virtuous or vicious alike, do not understand Your personality - they cannot grasp You in their minds.

## 10-15

[

svayamEva AtmanA AtmAnam vettha tvam puruShOttama |

bhUta bhAvana bhUtEsha dEvadEva jagatpatE || 15 ||

]

[puruShOttama] O best among men, [tvam Eva vEttha] You alone know [AtmAnam] Yourself [svayam AtmanA] with Your own mind. [bhUta bhAvana] You are the origin of all beings, [bhUtEsha] the controller of all beings, [dEva dEva] the supreme [power](#gods_and_other_powers), [jagatpatE] the Lord of the universe.

Arjuna tells Krishna - 'Best among men, You know Yourself with Your own awareness. You are the One who made all beings to come into existence. You control all beings. You are the most divine, the One supreme power.

The [divine forces of nature](#gods_and_other_powers) surpass others in qualities such as beauty and equanimity- qualities that we all desire. They surpass all humans, animals, birds, waterfalls, the moon and so on. You, the Lord of the universe, surpass all those divine forces in all favorable qualities.

## 10-16

[

vaktum arhasi ashEShENa divyA hyAtma vibhUtaya: |

yAbhi: vibhUtibhi: lOkAn imAm tvam vyApya tiShThasi || 16 ||

]

[vaktum arhasi] You must now describe to me [Atma vibhUtaya:] Your expanse of power [ashEShENa] entirely. [divyA hi] Your powers are indeed divine. [yAbhi: vibhUtibhi:] With these supreme powers, [tvam tiShThasi] You stay [vyApya] pervading [lOkAn imAm] these worlds.

Arjuna tells Krishna - 'You alone can describe those characteristics that are unique to You - only You can grasp those characteristics. With this infinite power and character, You are pervasive and stay as the controller of this universe'.

## 10-17

[

katham vidyAm aham yOgI tvAm sadA parichintayan |

kEShu kEShu cha bhAvEShu chintyO asi bhagavan mayA || 17 ||

]

[aham] I [yOgI] am in the quest of Your [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). [katham vidyAm] How do I know You, [parichintayan sadA] while thinking about You always? [bhagavan] O Lord, [kEShu kEShu cha bhAvEShu] in what forms and thoughts [chintyO asi] are You to be thought about [mayA] by Me?

I am in the quest of Your [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). Being in this quest, I have You in My thoughts always, I think of You with [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). While thinking of You in this way, how do I know You completely, along with everything that's Yours?

Other than the reasoning, knowledge and states-of-being You described [previously](#_4-5), in what ways should I think of You as the governor of the Universe - Ways that haven’t been described till now?

## 10-18

[

vistarENa AtmanO yOgam vibhUtim cha janArdana |

bhUya: kathaya tr'ptirhi shr'NvatO nAsti mE amr'tam || 18 ||

]

[janArdana] Krishna, [kathaya] Tell me [bhUya:] again [Atmana: yOgam] about Your greatness [vibhUtim cha] and Your supreme might. [shr'NvatO] While I listen [amr'tam] and drink its sweetness, [mE tr'ptirhi nAsti] I crave for more.

Your association with greatness - such as the act of creation - was described briefly, starting with Chap.10#8: 'I am the origin of everything; each and every entity gets stimulated with the initiative given by Me '.

Please elaborate this again, along with the extent of Your might and span of control. It is heartening to listen to Your great qualities as described by You. It is like the sweetness of nectar. However, it has left me craving for more.

‘You would know My craving’ - this is what Arjuna expressed to Lord Krishna.

## 10-19

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

hanta tE kathayiShyAmi vibhUtI: Atmana: shubhA: |

prAdhAnyata: kurushrEShTha nAstyantO vistarasya mE || 19 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said [hanta] Good! [kurushrEShTha] Arjuna, [kathayiShyAmi] I will tell [tE] you [prAdhAnyata:] what stands out in the [shubhA:] favorable [Atmana: vibUtI:] expanse of My might and My irresistible will. [nAstyanta:] There is no end [mE vistarasya] to My expanse.

Lord Krishna says- 'Arjuna, I will tell you what stands out in the favorable expanse of My might'. Here, the phrase 'what stands out' is used to mean 'the most important and the most distinguished'- in other words, the chief and the special aspects of His might.

This flows in later in this chapter as well (Chap.10#24) - 'I am the chief of the priests and advisors'.

The specialties of the Lord are endless

Lord Krishna says - 'I will now tell you the most famous manifestations of My might in this world - The entire expanse of My might is endless, so it's not possible to speak about it or listen to its elaboration'.

The Lord's ‘might' refers to His absolute ownership of the universe. [Earlier](#_4-5) in this chapter, after saying that the power to reason and other states-of-being come from Him, the Lord states in [Chap.10#7](#_7): 'The person who knows this expanse of My unlimited power and My associations - such a person sets to work and performs with unwavering focus and discipline'. There, the word ‘association’ meant Lord’s association with His activities such as the act of creation. The ‘might’ of the Lord is his pervasive ability to stimulate everything into activity.

Again, in [Chap.10#8](#_8), the Lord says - 'People with this awareness worship Me with the conviction that I am the origin of everything; that each and every entity gets stimulated with the initiative given by Me. They are filled with feelings of adoration for Me'.

The Lord’s control manifests as the stimulus for the activity in all beings. He controls by being present as the Self in each being. This is the way in which He pervades all beings and stimulates them into action- including their creation, sustenance and destruction. This is His yoga.

## 10-20

[

aham AtmA guDAkEsha sarva bhUtAshaya sthita: |

aham Adishcha madhyam cha bhUtAnAm anta Eva cha || 20 ||

]

[guDAkEsha] Arjuna, [aham] I am [sthita:] situated in [sarva bhUta] all beings [Ashaya] at their core [AtmA] as the Self. [cha aham] Moreover, I am [Adi:] the beginning, [antya cha] as well as the end [madhyam Eva cha] and everything in-between.

All beings are present [as My body](#universe_as_his_body). I am present at the core of all beings, inside the region of their heart. I am present as their Self. By 'Self', I mean the basis of existence, the controller and owner of the body in every way.

The Lord elaborates this in further chapters as well. In Chap.15#15: I am at the heart of everything. Knowledge, memory and the ability to reason come from Me'.

In Chap.18#61, He says: ‘Arjuna, the Supreme Lord sits at the heart of every being, spinning all beings, mounting them in the mechanism of the environment’.

[br’hadArAnyaka], 5-7-15 describes everything as the Lord’s body: 'The One who is present in all beings, who is distinct from all of them, the One whom all beings do not know, the One who has all beings [as His body](#universe_as_his_body), the One who controls all beings while being inside them - He is inside you too; He is the Self that doesn't perish'.

[shatapatha], 14-5-30 states that the Self is also the Lord’s body: 'The One who is present inside the Self, who is distinct from the Self, the One whom the Self does not know, the One who has the Self [as his body](#universe_as_his_body), the One who controls the Self while being inside it - He is the One who is within you and regulates your feelings; He is the Self that does not experience death.

In this way, being present [as the Self](#universe_as_his_body) in all beings, I am their beginning, their end, as well as everything in-between. Meaning - I am the ultimate cause of their creation, sustenance and destruction.

In the same way, the Lord explains that every word is synonymous with the Lord, since He is present as the Self inside everything. Knowing that every word addresses the Lord is a way to establish the uniqueness of His mighty expanse.

Indeed, all words ultimately conclude in the Lord, since they have the Lord as their 'Self'. They have the Lord as the basis and essence of their existence. While words such as 'person', 'bird', 'tree' are used to describe the material forms of those things, they address the 'essence' that constitute their being - their Self.

The Lord says that all words are bound to address Him, due to the fact that the Lord is [present as the Self](#universe_as_his_body)- the essence and the basis inside everything.

The Lord sums up His expanse in Chap.10#39: ‘An object in which I'm not present as its Self does not exist’. This is a statement of fact- it's impossible for anything to exist without the Lord being its basis.

Further, He states that this existence is subject to His will in Chap.10#8: Each and every entity gets stimulated with the initiative given by Me.

*From the next Shloka till the end of this chapter, the Lord illustrates several ways to relate to His greatness.*

You experience the Lord whenever you experience something special

## 10-21

[

AdityAnAm aham viShNu: jyOtiShAm ravi: anshumAn |

marIchi: marutAm asmi nakShatrANAm aham shashI || 21 ||

]

[AdityAnAm] In the [powers of nature](#gods_and_other_powers), [aham viShNu:] I am Vishnu, the all-pervasive. [jyOtiShAm] In all luminous things, [ravi: anshumAn] I am the sun that has the greatest brightness. [marutAm] Among the powers of war, [marIchi: asmi] I am the most powerful. [nakShatrANAm] Among the stars, [aham shashI] I appear as the moon.

Among the pervasive powers of nature, personified by the twelve gods who are sons of Aditi, I am the one called Vishnu - the supreme, all-pervasive.

In everything that's luminous, I am the sun having greatest brightness; I provide all the luminosity in this world.

Among the powers of war, I am the greatest one called Marichi.

Among the stars, I appear as the moon

Here, the word 'among' is not used in the sense of being ‘one among’, nor is it used to indicate that the Lord is special among similar things. Rather, it illustrates how the Lord is distinct in His pervasiveness and superiority, while being in the midst of everything. For instance, while the moon is present among the stars, the experience of moon-shine is especially intimate in contrast to distant starlight.

Continuing on the same thread, He says in the next Shloka: 'I am the consciousness in all beings'.

## 10-22

[

vEdAnAm sAmavEdO\_smi dEvAnAm asmi vAsava: |

indriyANAm manashcha asmi bhUtAnAm asmi chEtanA || 22 ||

]

[vEdAnAm] Among the Vedas, [sAmavEda: asmi] I am the Sama Veda. [dEvAnAm] Among the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), [vAsava: asmi] I am their Lord. [indriyANAm] Among our sense organs, [mana: asmi] I am the mind [cha] and [chEtanA asmi] I am consciousness [bhUtAnAm] in all beings.

Among the Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana Veda, I am the Sama Veda, which is the best of the Vedas. Among the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), I am their Lord.

Among the eleven organs of the body (*five sense organs, five organs of action and the brain, which is the organ of thought*), I am the organ of thought, which is the most important.

Even over here, the word 'among' is not meant to differentiate the Lord among similar things. Rather, it is used to express how He stands out in the midst of other things and how He is at the core of everything.

Further, the Lord says - Among the conscious beings that can think and comprehend things, I am the ability of thought and comprehension.

## 10-23

[

rudrANAm shankara: chAsmi vittEshO yakSha rakShasAm |

vasUnAm pAvaka: chAsmi shikhariNAm aham mEru: || 23 ||

]

[rudrANAm] Among manifestations of Rudra who destroys the unfavorable, [shankara: asmi] I am Shankara, the one who brings prosperity. [yakSha rAkShasAm] To the virtuous and vile who crave wealth and power, [vittEsha: asmi] I am the hugely wealthy one. [vasUnAm] Among the entities of the universe, [pAvaka: asmi] I am energy. [shikhariNAm] Among the peaks, [aham mEru:] I am the huge mountain that shines the brightest.

Among eleven manifestations of Rudra, the destroyer of the unfavorable, I am Shankara, the one who brings prosperity.

I am hugely wealthy to those who crave wealth and power.

Among the eight entities of the universe (liquids, stars, satellites, fire, space, dawn and luster), I am energy.

Among mountains that are endowed with peaks, I am the huge mountain that shines the brightest.

## 10-24

[

purOdhasAm cha mukhyam mAm viddhi pArtha br'haspatim |

sEnAnInAm aham skanda: sarasAm asmi sAgara: || 24 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [purOdhasAm cha mukhyam] among the chief priests and highly valued advisors, [mAm viddhi] know Me [br'haspatim] to be Brihaspati, the master of all great people. [sEnAnInAm] Among the commanders of armies, [aham skanda:] I am Skanda, the leader who is supreme in attack. [sarasAm] To all water bodies, [asmi sAgara:] I am the inexhaustible ocean.

The Lord says - 'To the great advisors of great leaders, I am the greatest advisor, the master, known as Brihaspati.

To the commanders of armies, I am their leader who is supreme in attack, called Skanda.

To all water bodies, I am the inexhaustible ocean'.

## 10-25

[

maharShINAm bhr'guraham girAm asmi Ekam akSharam |

yajnAnAm japa yajnO\_smi sthAvarANAm himAlaya: || 25 ||

]

[maharShINAm] Among the great sages, [bhr'gu: aham] I am Bhrgu. [girAm] Among all speech, [Ekam akSharam asmi] I am the first sound. [yajnAnAm] Among the various forms of worship, [japa yajna: asmi] I am the worship that takes the form of a prayer. [sthAvarANAm] Among the immovable mountains, [himAlaya:] I am the Himalaya.

Among the great sages who perform rituals to bring about excellence, I am Bhrgu, the one who started such rituals.

Speech is sound endowed with meaning. Among all speech, I am the sound of Om, the first sound.

Among all forms of worship, I am the worship that takes the form of a prayer - A prayer done by repeating the names of the Lord and praising Him. This is the simplest form of worship that does not cause harm to any being.

Among all the immovable mountains, I am the mighty Himalaya.

## 10-26 to 10-29

[

ashvattha: sarva vr'kShANAm dEvarShINAm cha nArada: |

gandharvANAm chitraratha: siddhAnAm kapilO muni: || 26 ||

uchchaishravasam ashvAnAm viddhi mAm amr'tOdbhavam |

airAvatam gajEndrANAm narANAm cha narAdhipam || 27 ||

AyudhAnAm aham vajram dhEnUnAm asmi kAmadhuk |

prajanashchAsmi kandarpa: sarpANAm asmi vAsuki: || 28 ||

AnantashchAsmi nAgAnAm varuNO yAdasAm aham |

pitr''NAm aryamA chAsmi yama: samyamatAmaham || 29 ||

]

[sarva vr'kShANAm] Among all trees, [aham ashvattha:] I am the Pepal. [dEvarShINAm] Among the sages who compose divine verse, [cha nArada:] I am Narada, who founded such compositions.

[gandharvANAm] To the Gandharvas, [chitraratha:] I am their chief. [siddhAnAm] Among accomplished people, [kapilO muni:] I am Kapila, the ascetic who founded the philosophy of logic.

[viddhi mAm] Know Me [amr'tOdbhavam] to arise from nectar. [uchchaishravasam] Know Me as the origin and king of horses [ashvAnAm] among horses; [airAvatam] as Airavata, the best elephant [gajEndrANAm] among the best of elephants [cha narAdhipam] and as the leader of humans [narANAm] among human beings.

[AyudhAnAm] In weapons, [aham vajram] I am the hard sharpness. [dhEnUnAm] In cows, [kAmadhuk asmi] I am the one who satisfies wishes. [kandarpa: asmi] I am the love [prajana:] which begets progeny. [sarpANAm] Among the snakes of this world, [vAsuki: asmi] I am Vasuki, who is the most worshipped snake, whom the gods and demons employed to churn the ocean.

[nAgAnam] To all snakes, [aham Ananta:] I am Adishesha. [yAdasAm] Among the beings who live in water, [aham varuNa:] I am Varuna. [pitr''NAm] To the ancestors, [aryamA asmi] I am a companion and friend. [samyamatAm] To the people who maintain control, [aham yama:] I am self-restraint.

Among trees, I am the revered Pepal tree.

Among the sages who compose divine verse, I am Narada, who has founded such compositions.

I am the divine cow Surabhi, who satisfies wishes.

I am the love that's responsible for progeny.

Vasuki is the supreme among single-headed snakes and Adishesha, on whom the Lord rests, is the supreme among multi-headed snakes. To the creatures who live in water, I am Varuna, the one who sustains all of them. To the people who maintain control, I am self-restraint.

## 10-30

[

prahlAda: chAsmi daityAnAm kAla: kalayatAm aham |

mr'gANAm cha mr'gEndrO\_ham vainatEya: cha pakShiNAm || 30 ||

]

[daityAnAm] Among the demons, [prahlAda: asmi] I am Prahlada, the friendly boy. [kalayatAm] To the calculative people who bring about destruction, [kAla: aham] I am death. [mr'gANAm] Among animals, [mr'gEndra: aham] I am their leader. [pakShiNAm] Among birds, [vainatEya: cha] I am Garuda, their chief.

In the midst of calculative people who inspire destruction, I am death.

The Lord is the pervasive essence that inspires

*The Lord is a leader who inspires discipline and order. As Pralhad, the friendly boy who destroys wickedness in demons, as the destroyer of destroyers and as a leader who keeps his followers in check, The Lord inspires.*

## 10-31

[

pavana: pavatAm asmi rAma: shastra bhr'tAm aham |

jhaShANAm makara: chAsmi srOtasAm asmi jAhnavI || 31 ||

]

[pavatAm] To things that have movement in their nature, [pavana: asmi] I am the wind. [shastra bhr'tAm] Among people who bear arms, [aham rAma:] I am Lord Rama, the ultimate gentleman warrior. [jhaShANAm] Among marine predators, [makara: cha asmi] I am the crocodile. [srOtasAm] Among rivers, [jAhnavI asmi] I am the river Ganga.

In those that have movement in their nature, I am the wind.

Among people who carry weapons, I am Rama. The ability to wield weapons is one of the Lord's attributes. Just as the sun, its planets and the entire universe is the Lord's body, such ability is also part of the Lord's body.

## 10-32

[

sargANAm Adiranta: cha madhyam chaivAham arjuna |

adhyAtma vidyA vidyAnAm vAda: pravadatAm aham || 32 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [sargANAm] among all things that undergo creation, [aham Adi:] I am the beginning, [anta:] the end [madhyam cha] and everything in-between. [vidyAnAm] In all knowledge, [adhyAtma vidyA] I am the fundamental knowledge about the Self, its relation to the Universe and the Lord. [pravadatAm] Among people who debate, [vAda:] I am the point that closes the argument.

The beginning of everything that's created is the cause that created them. At all times, at all places, I alone am the cause of all kinds of creation. In the same way, destruction too - at all times, the one who terminates the existence of everything is also Me. Sustenance happens in-between creation and destruction. I am the sustainer. All of this happens according to My will.

Among people who indulge in debates and arguments, I am the point that closes the argument.

## 10-33

[

akSharANAm akArO\_smi dvandva: sAmAsikasya cha |

aham Eva akShaya: kAlO dhAtAham vishvatO mukha: || 33 ||

]

[akSharANAm] In alphabets, [akAra: asmi] I am the primary element, the phonetic 'a'. [sAmAsikasya] Among the various methods of combining words, [dvandva:] I am the dvandva. [aham Eva] I alone am [akShaya: kAla:] the time that never wanes. [dhAtA aham] I am the One who brought about all creation, [vishvata: mukha:] having four heads, looking over all of My creation.

In alphabets, the phonetic 'a' is inside all speech, as said in the scriptures. I am this sound 'a', which is the basis for all sounds.

Among the various ways of combining words, I am the 'dvandva' variety. It's the only one that joins two words while enhancing the prominence of both of them - that is the specialty of dvandva.

I am the time that never wanes, having an endless sequence of appointments and happenings.

I am Hiranyagarbha, the four-faced engineer of the Universe who executed all of creation.

## 10-34

[

mr'tyu: sarvahara: chAham udbhava: cha bhaviShyatAm |

kIrti: shrI: vAkashcha nArINAm smr'tirmEdhA dhr'ti: kShamA || 34 ||

]

[aham mr'tyu:] I am the termination [sarvahara:] that takes away everything. [udbhava: aham] I am the act of creation [bhaviShyatAm] to things which will be created. [nArINAm] Among ladies, [shrI:] I am Lakshmi [kIrti: cha] and that which is called as luster. [vAka:] I am speech. [smr'ti:] I am memory-recall, [mEdhA] I am talent, [dhr'ti:] courage and resolve. [kShamA] I am [forgiveness](#forgiveness_the_defn).

The Lord says - 'I am the death that takes away every life. To those who are going to be created, I am the act of creation.

I am Lakshmi. I am the luster in ladies.

I am the recollection of memory and speech; I am talent, courage and resolve. I am [forgiveness](#forgiveness_the_defn)’.

## 10-35

[

br'hatsAma tathA sAmnAm gAyatrI ChandasAm aham |

mAsAnAm mArgashIrShO\_ham r'tUnAm kusumAkara: || 35 ||

]

[sAmnAm] Among calming and gentle tunes, [br'hatsAma] I am the one that spans all of thought and speech. [ChandasAm] Among the poetical metres, [gAyatrI aham] I am the Gayatri. [mAsAnAm] Among the months, [aham mArgashIrSha:] I am Margashirsha, when the rain-bearing clouds give way to pleasant and prosperous times. [r'tUnAm] Among the seasons, [kusumAkara:] I am the spring-time, the season when flowers bloom and all beings are comforted.

I am the best of all calming and gentle tunes.

Among poetical metres, I am Gayatri, considered the mother of all metres.

I am spring-time, the season when flowers bloom and all beings are comforted.

## 10-36

[

dyUtam ChalayatAm asmi tEja: tEjasvinAm aham |

jayOsmi vyavasAyO\_smi sattvam sattvavatAm aham || 36 ||

]

[ChalayatAm] Among people who intend to deceive, [dyUtam asmi] I am gambling. [tEjasvinAm] To the brilliant, [tEja: aham] I am brilliance. [jaya: asmi] I am victory. [vyavasAya: asmi] I am determination and perseverance. [sattvavatAm] To people who are endowed with wisdom and virtue, [aham sattvam] I am the wisdom and the virtue.

Among deceptive people who use pretense and inconsistency, I am gambling. I take various forms, for instance a game of dice.

To those who win, I am victory.

To those who persevere with determination, I am perseverance and determination.

To those who are endowed with wisdom and virtue, I am the wisdom and the virtue - I am broad-mindedness in its greatest form.

## 10-37

[

vr'ShNInAm vAsudEvO\_smi pAnDavAnAm dhananjaya: |

munInAm apyaham vyAsa: kavInAm ushanA kavi: || 37 ||

]

[vr'ShNInAm] Among the mighty and passionate, [vAsudEva: asmi] I am Krishna, the son of Vasudeva. [pAMDavAnAm] Among the Pandava, [dhananjaya:] I am Arjuna, who carries the bow. [munInAm] Among those who have realized the Self through knowledge and meditation, [aham vyAsa:] I am Vedavyasa. [kavInAm] Among teachers of strategy, [ushanA kavi:] I am Shukracharya.

The Lord refers to Himself as the son of Vasudeva over here to signify his incarnation.

He says 'Among the Pandava, I am Arjuna, who wields the bow. Among those who have realized the Self through knowledge and meditation, I am Vedavyasa. Among those who use knowledge to teach strategy, I am Shukracharya, who teaches great strategies.’

## 10-38

[

daMDO damayatAm asmi nItirasmi jigIShatAm |

maunam chaivAsmi guhyAnAm jnAnam jnAnavatAm aham || 38 ||

]

[damayatAm] To the people who punish, [da0nDa: aham] I am punishment. [jigIShatAm] To those who desire to conquer, [nIti: asmi] I am policy and prudence. [guhyAnAm] Among things that are inscrutable, [maunam asmi] I am silence. [aham jnAnam] I am knowledge [jnAnavatAm] to those who know.

To people who punish when rules are broken, I am the punishment they give.

To those who desire to conquer, I am the method to obtain victory. This method is in the form of policy and prudence.

Among secrets that are associated with the inscrutable, I am silence. I am knowledge to those who know.

## 10-39

[

yat chApi sarva bhUtAnAm bIjam tadaham arjuna |

na tadasti vinA yat syAt mayA bhUtam charAcharam || 39 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [yat chApi] whatever [bIjam] is the source [sarva bUtAnAm] of all beings, [tat aham] I am that. [tat na asti] It is impossible [charAcharam bhUtam] for any being, moving or stationary, [yat syAt] to exist [mayA vinA] without Me.

There is a huge variety of beings in this world. They exist in various different states. Whatever is the cause of these [states of existence](#_4-5) - whether seen or unseen - that is Me. It is impossible for anything to ‘be’, without Me being present as its Self.

The Lord started on this fact in Chap.10#20, where He stated- 'I am situated in all beings at their core as the Self'. He continued up until this Shloka, in which He says that it's impossible for anything to exist without Him.

The Lord illustrated that He resides in everyone as the ultimate Self.

All types of things in all states of existence have the Lord in their essence - He is the One we speak of, when we call anything by a name. In this way, the Lord announces the fact that 'He is present as the Self in everything'. That is how He is the basis for everything in the universe, He has simultaneous equivalence to everything and all words address Him.

## 10-40

[

na antO\_sti mama divyAnAm vibhUtInAm parantapa |

ESha tu uddEshata: prOktO vibhUtE: vistarO mayA || 40 ||

]

[parantapa] Arjuna, [na anta: asti] there is no end [mama divyAnAm] to my wondrous [vibhUtInAm] pervasive expanse. [vistara:] The expanse [ESha vibhUtE:] of this great power [mayA prOkta:] was told by Me [uddEshata:] as a summary.

The Lord continues- 'There is no end to My wondrous expanse. I summarized the expanse of My great power by drawing a few analogies to worldly specialties that you recognize'.

## 10-41

[

yadyad vibhUtimat sattvam shrImat Urjitam Eva vA |

tattad EvAgachCha tvam mama tEjO\_msha sambhavam || 41 ||

]

[yat yat] What ever [shrImat] is endowed with brilliance [Urjitam Eva va] or endowed with excellence - [AgachCha tvam] realize that [tat tat sattvam] every such entity [vibhUtimat] is under My control. [sambhavam] It has taken birth from [amsha] a piece of [mama] My [tEja:] brilliance.

The phrase ‘what ever is under My control’ would simply include all types of beings. They are all endowed with My control. Those which are brilliant, lovely, prosperous, or are reputed to start successful ventures: know that they arise from a piece of My brilliance. This 'brilliance' is the ability to overpower everything else.

Meaning, this specialty arises from a part of the Lord's ability to control everything, which is a part of His unthinkable might.

## 10-42

[

athavA bahunaitEna kim jnAtEna tavArjuna |

viShTabhyAham idam kr'tsnam EkAmshEna sthitO jagat || 42 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [kim] what's [bahunA] further elaboration [EtEna jnAnEna] of this knowledge [tava] to you? [aham] I [viShTabhya] support and control [idam] this [kr'tsnam jagat] entire universe, [EkAmshEna sthita:] which is situated in one part of My being.

What's the need to elaborate this knowledge I speak about? With a miniscule portion of My unbounded control, I pervade everything. Accordingly, the entire universe does not step outside My will - including everything in it, conscious and non-conscious.

I pervade them in every state - in the state of being a raw material or a finished product, being perceptible or imperceptible, in all their different forms, in steadfastness and in action to change.

As stated in [vishNu purANa], 1-9-53 by Parashara: One characteristic of the Lord is the ability to control without boundaries. One part of this unbounded control - the part is also unbounded - has the ability to pervade and control the entire universe inside it.

# Chapter 11

Until now, the Lord described His presence as [the Self in everything](#universe_as_his_body), along with all His favorable characteristics, all unique to Him. He did this to start our [association with devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) and to enhance it.

From this, we know that the entire universe [is His body](#universe_as_his_body), including everything that’s conscious and non-conscious. Their form, [state](#_4-5) and activity are subject to His will. The Lord is distinct from every other type of thing.

Arjuna got to know these unique characteristics of the Lord from the Lord Himself. He realized that the form, state and activity of this entire universe are subject to His will. Affirming this realization, Arjuna speaks of his desire to see the Lord in such a form. The Lord is pleased and Arjuna actually sees The Lord in this form.

All this will be described in this chapter. [Chap.11#11](#_10-11) says- ‘The Lord is full with every wonder, endless, facing every direction in the universe’; [Chap.11#13](#_13) says 'Arjuna saw the entire universe, with its manifold variety there, within one place inside the body of the Lord of Lords'.

## 11-1

[

arjuna uvAcha -

madanugrahAya paramam guhyam adhyAtma sanjnitam |

yat tvayOktam vachastEna mOhO\_yam vigatO mama || 1 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said - [yat vacha:] The teaching, which [tvayA uktam] You have imparted [mat anugrahAya] for my benefit, out of Love, [paramam guhyam] which is supremely concealed, [adhyAtma sanjnitam] is the knowledge of the Self. [tEna] By that teaching, [mOha: ayam] this confusion of mine [vigata:] is gone.

Arjuna says - 'I was confused that my body was my Self. You have told me everything that has to be known about the Self - this knowledge is extremely concealed.

You started imparting this knowledge, beginning with [Chap.2#12](#_12): 'At any point in time, it has never been that you did not exist. Even in future, there will never be a time when any one of us do not exist' up until [Chap.6#46](#_46) 'Hence, Arjuna, practice [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being)'.

You did that out of compassion, purely for my benefit. With this, all my confusion about my Self is resolved; my confusion has gone.

And -

## 11-2

[

bhavApyayau hi bhUtAnAm shrutau vistarashO mayA |

tvatta: kamala patrAkSha mAhAtmyam api chAvyayam || 2 ||

]

[kamala patrAkSha] Krishna, You have eyes as beautiful as lotus leaves. [mayA shrutau hi] I listened to [vistarasha:] the elaboration [bhavApyayau] of the creation and destruction [bhUtAnAm] of all beings, [tvatta:] which is brought about by You. [api] I also listened to [avyayam] Your unending [mAhAtmyam] greatness.

*The phrase [shrutau hi] over here is translated to ‘listened’. It indicates a desire to see and experience what we hear.*

Further, from the seventh till the tenth chapter, I learnt that all beings are created and destroyed, other than You. All this creation and destruction happens by You.

Lord with eyes as beautiful as lotus leaves, I listened to Your eternal control over everything conscious and non-conscious. I also listened to Your superiority, knowledge, strength and many more favorable qualities. You are the basis of all existence. You set in motion all voluntary and involuntary actions. I heard all this and more of Your unlimited greatness.

In this Shloka, the word 'listened' indicates the desire to actually see the Lord in that form. This desire is expressed in the next Shloka.

## 11-3

[

Evam Etat yathA Attha tvam AtmAnam paramEshvara |

draShTum ichChAmi tE rUpam aishvaram puruShOttama || 3 ||

]

[paramEshvara] O Lord of everything, [yathA] The way in which [tvam Attha] You described [AtmAnam] Yourself [Evam Etat] is a statement of fact. [puruShOttama] O Best Among Men, [ichChAmi] I would like to [draShTum] see [tE rUpam] Your form [aishvaram] with Your supreme [might](#_19), Your ability to pervade and control everything.

You are the ultimate Lord. The way You described Yourself - I firmly believe that it is a statement of fact, ‘told as it is’.

You are the Best Among Men, an ocean of affection towards people who have taken refuge in You. I would like to see and fully realize Your supreme [might](#_19), Your unique character of having lordship over the whole universe, the way in which You protect it, create and destroy it, support and nourish it.

I desire to see Your form having all favorable qualities, ultimate in its supremacy and beauty. It is unlike anything other than Yourself.

## 11-4

[

manyasE yadi machChakyam mayA draShTum iti prabhO |

yOgEshvara tatO mE tvam darshayA\_tmAnam avyayam || 4 ||

]

[prabhO] Lord, [yadi manyasE] if You believe [mat shakyam iti] that it's possible [mayA draShTum] for me to see it, [tata:] then [mE darshaya] show me [AtmAnam] Your undiminished self [avyayam] entirely. [yOgEshvara] You are the Lord of all favorable associations.

The word 'yoga' in this Shloka refers to the association mentioned further in this chapter (see [Chap.11#8](#_8_1)).

Arjuna requests Lord Krishna - If You believe that it's possible for me to see Your form, which creates and presides over everything, which is the basis of existence - then show it to me. I am requesting You, the Lord who has unbounded knowledge and all favorable associations.

Lord, You are the treasure of knowledge, strength, might, valor, power and brilliance. It’s impossible for anyone else to be this way. Show me Your form entirely - show me everything.

In this way, Arjuna, filled with curiosity, requested the Lord with his voice choked in joy and anticipation.

When we believe in the Lord, He will show Himself and give us the ability to see Him.

The Lord replies -

## 11-5

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

pashya mE pArtha rUpANi shatashO\_tha sahasrasha: |

nAnA vidhAni divyAni nAnA varNAkr'tIni cha || 5 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said -[pArtha] Arjuna, [pashya] see [mE rUpANi] My forms [shatasha: atha sahasrasha:] in their hundreds and thousands, [divyAni] they are extraordinary, [nAnA vidhAni] they are of many types, [nAnA varNAkr'tIni cha] having multitudes of colors and appearances

Lord Krishna tells Arjuna - Look at My various forms that support, sustain and have everything in them. Further, see the hundreds and thousands of varieties of species and configurations. See the multitude of colors and appearances. They are extraordinary.

## 11-6

[

pashyA\_dityAn vasUn rudrAn ashvinau marutastathA |

bahUni adr'ShTa pUrvANi pashyA\_shcharyANi bhArata || 6 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [pashya] look at [AdityAn] the suns, [vasUn] the forces of the universe, [rudrAn] the manifestations of the destroyer, [ashvinau] the stars [tathA] and [maruta:] the wind. [pashya] See [bahUni] the many [AshcharyANi] astounding things [adr'ShTa pUrvANi] that have not been seen before.

In one of My forms, see the various [powers](#gods_and_other_powers) like the suns, the forces of the universe, the manifestations of the destroyer, the stars and the winds. These powers are merely examples.

See all things in this world that can be witnessed, along with everything that can be inferred. See also all the other worlds and other forms of knowledge, many astounding things that haven’t been seen before.

## 11-7

[

ihaikastham jagat kr'tsnam pashyAdya sa charAcharam |

mama dEhE guDAkEsha yat cha anyat draShTum ichChasi || 7 ||

]

[guDAkEsha] Arjuna, [adya] now [pashya] find [kr'tsnam jagat] the entire world - [Ekastham] in a region [iha dEhE] within this body - [sa charAcharam] along with everything that moves everything that doesn’t. [cha] Further, see [yat anyat] anything else [draShTum ichChasi] that you wish to see.

See the entire world within this body of Mine. A small part of this body holds all moving and stationary things. Look at anything else you wish to see within that very part of My body.

## 11-8

[

na tu mAm shakShyasE draShTum anEnaiva sva chakShuShA |

divyam dadAmi tE chakShu: pashya mE yOgam aishvaram || 8 ||

]

[tu] However, [na shakShtasE] you are unable [mAm draShTum] to see Me [anEna chakShuShA] with these eyes [sva] of yours [Eva] alone. [dadAmi tE] I will give you [divyam chakShu:] divine sight; [pashya] See [mama] My [yOgam] association with all favorable qualities, [aishwaram] My splendor and power.

While I show the entire world in one part of My body, you are unable to see My limitless being, a form unlike anything else. These material eyes of yours can only grasp matter having limited boundaries.

I will give you divine sight - eyes that are beyond this material world, which enable you to see Me.

See My association with all favorable qualities, My splendor and power - See My unique association with qualities like infinite knowledge, infinite power and pervasive being.

## 11-9

[

sanjaya uvAcha -

EvamuktvA tatO rAjan mahA yOgEshvarO hari: |

darshayAmAsa pArthAya paramam rUpam aishvaram || 9 ||

]

[sanjaya uvAcha] Sanjaya narrated - [tatO rAjan] Then, my king, [EvamuktvA] having said this, [hari:] Lord Krishna - [mahA yOgEshvara:] who is the great Lord of [yoga](#yoga_is_to_realize) - [darshayAmAsa] showed [paramam] the ultimate [rUpam] beauty of His form [aishvaram] and His pervasive might [pArthAya] for the sake of Arjuna.

Sanjaya narrated to Dhrtarashtra - Having said this, Lord Krishna, who had taken the responsibility of driving a chariot, who is the master of astonishing characteristics, who is none other than the Supreme Lord Narayana, showed the ultimate beauty that's unique to Him. He showed it in all its pervasive might.

The Lord shows this for the sake of Arjuna, the son of Prtha, cousin on His mother's side.

The Lord's beautiful form is home to the entire universe with its huge diversity. It presides over everything. That form is as follows -

## 11-10 to 11-11

[

anEka vaktra nayanam anEkAdbhuta darshanam |

anEka divyAbharaNam divyAnEkOdyatAyudham || 10 ||

divya mAlyAmbaradharam divya gandhAnulEpanam |

sarvAshcharyamayam dEvam anantam vishvatOmukham || 11 ||

]

[dEvam] The Lord's form is seen [anEka vaktra nayanam] With many faces and many eyes, [anEkAdbhuta darshanam] with many extraordinary sights, [anEka divyAbharaNam] with supreme decorations, [divyAnEkOdyatAyudham] armed with many supreme weapons, [divya mAlyAmbaradharam] with supreme garlands and clothes, [divya gandhAnulEpayan] with supreme aroma smeared on His body, [sarvAshcharyamayam] full with every wonder, [anantam] endless, [vishvatOmukham] facing every direction in the universe.

The Lord showed His form. It has supreme luster and shines with great brilliance. It is endless and timeless - It is present during all the three stages of creation, sustenance and destruction. It is also the abode in which the entire universe is situated.

Hence, the Lord's form cannot be determined in the constraints of space and time. It faces every direction. The Lord’s form has decorations that suit its supremacy - clothes, aromas, garlands, accessories, weapons and so on.

The great brilliance of the Lord's form, which was mentioned in this Shloka, is described specially in the next Shloka.

## 11-12

[

divi sUrya sahasrasya bhavEt yugapat utthitA |

yadi bhA: sadr'shI sA syAt bhAsastasya mahAtmana: || 12 ||

]

[yadi] If [bhavEt] there would be [utthitA] a rising [sUrya sahasrasya] of a thousand suns [yugapat] simultaneously [divi] in the sky, [sA bhA:] the resulting brilliance [sadr'shI syAt] would perhaps be comparable to [bhAsa:] the brilliance [tasya mahAtmana:] of that Ultimate Self.

This Shloka illustrates the limitless nature of the Lord's brilliance. The fact that the Lord has a form of unending brilliance is stated here.

## 11-13

[

tatraikastham jagat kr'tsnam pravibhaktam anEkadhA |

apashyat dEvadEvasya sharIrE pAnDavastadA || 13 ||

]

[tadA] Then, [pAnDava: apashyat] Arjuna saw [kr'tsnam jagat] the entire universe [anEkadhA pravibhaktam] with its manifold variety [tatra] over there, [Ekastham] in one place [sharIrE] inside the body [dEvadEvasya] of the Lord of Lords.

This entire universe forms a small part of the Lord’s body

There, Arjuna saw the entire universe with its manifold variety, in one place inside the body of the Lord. Arjuna saw this with 'divine vision', which is the capability to see the Lord in this way, obtained by the compassion of the Lord Himself.

The Lord's form has infinite length and expanse. It has infinite arms, torsos, faces and eyes. It has limitless brilliance, infinite weapons that are not bound by the material world, with uncountable decorations that suit the Lord's form. It is adorned with extraordinary garlands and aromas.

In this limitless and astounding body of the Lord, Arjuna saw the entire variety of the universe, which is classified in many ways: Organisms that can experience things- such as [powerful](#gods_and_other_powers) people, ordinary humans, animals, stationary beings and so on; Places where things can be experienced: on the earth, under the earth, in the sky, on other heavenly bodies, at bottomless depths, below and above everything.

Arjuna saw the variety of environments with their varieties of experiences and instruments that enable each experience.

Arjuna saw the Lord as He described Himself, beginning at [Chap.10#8](#_8) ‘I am the origin of everything; Each and every entity gets stimulated with the initiative given by Me’, continuing in [Chap.10#19](#_19) ‘I will tell you what stands out in the favorable expanse of My might and My irresistible will’, [Chap.10#21](#_21) ‘In the [powers of nature](#gods_and_other_powers), I am Vishnu, the all-pervasive’, [Chap.10#39](#_39) ‘It is impossible for any being, moving or stationary, to exist without Me’, finishing with [Chap.10#42](#_42) ‘I support and control this entire universe, which is situated in one part of My being’.

## 11-14

[

tata: sa vismayAviShTO hr'ShTa rOmA dhananjaya: |

praNamya shirasA dEvam kr'tAnjali: abhAShata || 14 ||

]

[tata:] With that, [dhananjaya:] Arjuna [vismayAviShTO] was filled with wonder. [hr'ShTa rOmA] With his hairs standing in delight, [shirasA prNamya dEvam] he saluted the Lord by prostrating. [sa: abhAShata] Arjuna spoke [kr'tAnjali:] with folded hands.

Then, having seen the entire wonderful universe contained in a small part of the Lord’s body, having seen the Lord who sets everything into activity, who is the abode of astonishing boundless-ness, knowledge and all favorable qualities, Arjuna was filled with wonder.

With his hairs standing in delight, Arjuna prostrated headlong, as a stick would fall to the ground. He spoke with folded hands -

## 11-15

[

arjuna uvAcha -

pashyAmi dEvAn tava dEva dEhE

sarvAn tathA bhUta vishESha sanghAn |

brahmANam Isham kamalAsanastham

r'ShIn cha sarvAn uragAn cha divyAn || 15 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said - [dEva] Lord, [pashyAmi] I see [dEvAn] the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) [tava dEhE] in Your body, [tathA] also [sangAn] the whole lot of [bhUta vishESha] beings in their variety, [brahmANam] Brahma the principal engineer of the universe, [kamalAsanastham Isham] Lord Eshwara seated in the lotus posture, [r'ShIn cha sarvAn] even the entire set of sages [uragAn cha divyAn] and the divine serpents.

Arjuna tells Krishna - Lord, I see all the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) in Your body; Also, I see the whole lot of beings in all their variety, along with Brahma, the principal engineer of the universe.

I see Eshwara in lotus pose, situated in his work, this universe. I see all prominent sages of extraordinary wisdom and the brilliant serpents Vasuki and Takshaka.

## 11-16

[

anEka bAhUdara vaktra nEtram

pashyAmi tvAm sarvata: ananta rUpam |

nAntam na madhyam na puna: tavA\_dim

pashyAmi vishvEshvara vishvarUpam || 16 ||

]

[anEka] The many [bAhu] arms, [udara] torsos, [vaktra] faces [nEtram] and eyes - [pashyAmi tvam] I see you [ananta rUpam] in Your endless form [sarvata:] in every way. [vishvEshvara] O Lord of the universe, [vishvarUpa] You have [the universe as Your body](#universe_as_his_body). [na antam pashyAmi] I do not see its end, [Adim na] I do not see its beginning [puna: madhyam na] and I don't see a mid-point.

Arjuna continues to address the Lord - You have many arms, torsos, faces and eyes. Your form is endless. I see You in every way. You are the Lord of the universe. You have the [universe as Your body](#universe_as_his_body). As Your form is endless, I do not see an end, a start or a mid-point in Your form.

## 11-17

[

kirITinam gadinam chakriNam cha

tEjOrAshim sarvatO dIptimantam |

parshyAmi tvAm durnirIkSham samantAt

dIptAnalArka dyutim apramEyam || 17 ||

]

[pashyAmi tvAm] I see you [kirITinam] crowned, [gadinam] bearing a mace [chakriNam cha] and a disc. [samantAt durnirIkSham] You are impossible to see completely. [tEjOrAshim] You are abundant energy. [sarvata: dIptimantam] You are brilliant in every direction. [dIptAnalArka dyutim] You have the light of a blazing sun. [apramEyam] You are beyond quantification.

I see You, a mass of abundant energy, brilliant in every way. You are impossible to see completely. You have the light of a blazing sun. You are beyond measure. I recognize You - You wear a crown, wield a mace and the disc.

## 11-18

[

tvam akSharam paramam vEdidavyam

tvam asya vishvasya param nidhAnam |

tvam avyaya: shAshvata dharma gOptA

sanAtana: tvam puruShO matO mE || 18 ||

]

[tvam paramam akSharam] You are the supreme and ever-lasting One. [vEditavyam] You are to be known. [tvam] You are [paramam nidhAnam] the ultimate basis [asya vishvasya] of this universe. [tvam avyaya:] You never wear out, [shAshvata dharma gOptA] You are the protector of eternal values. [tvam sanAtana: puruSha:] You are the eternal person. [mE mata:] This is my belief.

It is stated in the Upanishads that the Lord is to be known and grasped - as stated in [muMdaka], 1-1-4: 'Two pieces of knowledge are to be known - the material and the superior'.

In this Shloka, Arjuna says to Krishna - 'The One who is mentioned in the Upanishads as the supreme, ever-lasting person is You. You are the ultimate basis of this universe. You do not wear out. Whatever Your form, qualities and all-pervasive natures are, You always stay that way.

You protect the eternal and constant values laid down in the scriptures. You do that through incarnations such as this one. You are the ever-lasting person mentioned in scriptures such as the [puruSha sUkta]: 'I know this great person' and the [muMdaka upanishat], 3-2-8: 'The person who is superior to all that's superior'. You are definitely the One - this is my firm belief.

Krishna, I have realized You in this form'.

## 11-19

[

anAdimadhyAntam ananta vIryam

ananta bAhum shashi sUrya nEtram |

pashyAmi tvAm dIpta hutAsha vaktram

svatEjasA vishvam idam tapantam || 19 ||

]

[anAdi madhya antam] Without a beginning, middle and an end, [ananta vIryam] with limitless valor, [ananta bAhum] with endless arms, [shashi sUrya nEtram] with eyes of the sun and the moon, [dIpta hutAsha vaktram] with a mouth that resembles a blazing fire, [pashyAmi tvAm] I see You, [tapantam] energizing [idam vishvam] this universe [sva tEjasA] by Your authority.

Arjuna describes the Lord as having no beginning, middle or end, having vast unbounded valor – the quality of valor is mentioned merely as an example. It is meant that the Lord is the abode of vast, unbroken spans of knowledge, force, power, valor, strength and brilliance.

The phrase 'endless arms' is used as an example to refer to the Lord's uncountable arms, torsos, feet, faces and so on.

'The eyes of the sun and the moon' describe the all-pervasive eyes of the Lord, which are pleasant as the moon or scorching as the sun. The Lord is pleasant to the virtuous who surrender to Him; He is scorching to others, who always look for their own benefit and don’t mind hurting others. This is said in [Chap.11#36](#_36): ‘The virtuous surrender to the Lord, while people who exploit for personal gain scatter and run in fear’.

'A mouth that resembles a blazing fire' refers to the Lord's capability to consume the entire universe during its destruction. The Lord energizes this universe by His authority - The word 'authority' refers to the Lord's ability to exercise control over anything. Having realized this, Arjuna says to the Lord - I see You energizing this universe by such authority.

Arjuna realizes the Lord as being ever-present - as the creator of everything, as the basis of existence, as the one who controls everything, as the one who destroys everything, as an ocean of limitless qualities such as knowledge and compassion, with a body that's not related to any material, being without a beginning, a mid-point or an end-point. Arjuna tells the Lord - I have realized You in the same way as You described Yourself before.

You can imagine the Lord anyway you like

How do we imagine a single body with many torsos and the like? We picturize it as the Lord having a hip of huge size, above which many torsos, heads and so on are present. Below this, many divine feet. It is even possible to imagine the many eyes as being two eyes in each of the many heads.

*Any form that lends itself to express the ever-present Lord with absolute control over the entire universe can be imagined. There is no limit to such imagination. Every such imagination is right.*

Next, Arjuna tells the Lord - Looking at You in this manner, I am greatly disturbed, along with others who see You in this way.

## 11-20

[

dyAvA pr'thivyO: idam antaram hi

vyAptam tvayaikEna dishashcha sarvA: |

dr'ShTvAdbhutam rUpam ugram tavEdam

lOkatrayam pravyathitam mahAtman || 20 ||

]

[mahAtman] Mighty Lord, [dyAvA pr'thivyO: antaram idam] the space that spans the earth and heavenly bodies [vyAptam hi] is indeed pervaded [tvayA EkEna] by You [dishashcha sarvA:] along with all the directions. [lOkatrayam] Three types of people [pravyathitam] are greatly disturbed [dr'ShTvA] by looking at [tava] Your [adbhutam] astounding [ugram] and formidable [idam rUpam] form in this way.

'The space that spans the earth and heavenly bodies' indicates everything above us and everything below. The space above and below contains the entire universe. In this Shloka, Arjuna addressed the Lord as the Mighty One, whose volition cannot be deciphered.

Arjuna says- the whole of this space and all possible directions are pervaded by You.

Your form is astounding and fearsome with an unending expanse. It has extreme splendor, great intensity and ferociousness. On seeing this, three types of people are greatly disturbed- the favorable, unfavorable and the indifferent. They include all those who came to see the war, such as the various powers, the generous, the selfish, the demons, the benevolent, the sages and elders - all of them are extremely frightened.

All these people were granted divine vision similar to the one granted by the Lord to Arjuna. It was for all of them to see His form, which is the abode of the entire universe. With what intent was it given? It was given to demonstrate the Lord's complete and absolute sovereignty to Arjuna.

*(The demonstration is that the Lord can give whatever he wishes to anyone without any motive. He inspires awe in everyone, no matter how powerful they are or what they think of the Lord)*

The Lord encompasses the whole world with all His activities.

In response to this, Arjuna says – Mighty Lord, looking at this form of Yours, which is both astounding and fearsome, all kinds of people are greatly disturbed.

## 11-21

[

amI hi tvA surasanghA vishanti

kEchit bhItA: prAnjalayO gr'Nanti |

svastItyuktvA maharShi siddha sanghA:

stuvanti tvAm stutibhi: puShkalAbhi: || 21 ||

]

[amI] These [surasanghA:] virtuous devotees [tvA vishanti hi] inevitably enter You. [kEchit] Some of them [bhItA:] are scared [gr'Nanti] and pray [prAnjalayO:] with folded hands. [maharShi siddha sanghA:] The groups of great sages and achievers [tvAm stuvanti] praise You [puShkalAbhi:] with many [stutibhi:] praises, [svasti iti uktvA] while articulating the auspiciousness of Your form.

These virtuous devotees, who have achieved excellence, see You in the form of the universe and are filled with joy. They enter You to be with You. Some of them are scared, seeing Your astonishing and extremely fierce form. They praise You With folded hands, with compositions of verses, spoken according to their awareness.

The great sages, achievers and those who can distinguish the Supreme Lord - all of them appreciate You with many praises that befit You.

## 11-22

[

rudrAdityA vasavO yE cha sAdhyA:

vishvE\_shvinau marutashcha UShmapAshcha |

gandharva yakSha asura siddha sanghA:

vIkShantE tvAm vismatA: chaiva sarvE || 22 ||

]

[rudrA:] The manifestations of Shiva, [AdiyA:] the powers of nature, [vasava:] the forces of the universe, [vishvE\_shvinau] the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) and physicians, [maruta: cha] the winds, [UShmapA: cha] our ancestors, [gandharva yakSha asura siddha] beautiful people, benign beings, thugs, achievers - [sangA: sarvE] all these communities [vIkShantE tvAm] look at You, [vismatA: chaiva] bewildered.

Everyone looked at You in bewilderment.

Though it’s not the dictionary meaning, the word [UShmapa] in this Shloka is used to mean 'ancestor', in accordance with a scripture that says that ‘UShma is meant for the ancestors'.

## 11-23

[

rUpam mahattE bahu vaktra nEtram

mahAbAhO bahubAhUru pAdam |

bahUdaram bahu damShTrA karAlam

dr'ShTvA lOkA: pravyathitA: tathOham || 23 ||

]

[mahAbAhO] Lord with powerful arms, [dr'ShTvA] seeing [mahat tE rUpam] this huge form of Yours, [bahu vaktra nEtram] with many faces and eyes, [bahubAhu] many arms, [uru pAdam] thighs and feet, [bahUdaram] with many torsos, [bahu damShTrAkarAlam] many canine teeth, [lOkA: pravyathitA:] people are scared. [aham cha] so am I.

At times we experience the universe as being terrible, due to the influence of past deeds.

Looking at Your form, with many canines and this terrifying appearance, all these people are extremely scared - whether they are favorable, unfavorable or indifferent. Along with them, I’m scared too.

## 11-24

[

nabha: spr'sham dIptam anEka varNam

vyAttAnanam dIpta vishAla nEtram |

dr'ShTvA hi tvAm pravyathitAntarAtmA

dhr'tim na vindAmi shamam cha viShNO || 24 ||

]

[viShnO] Lord Vishnu, you pervade everything. [na vindAmi] I lost [dhr'tim] the ability to sustain myself [shamam cha] and lost my tranquility [dr'ShTvA] on seeing [tvAm] You. [nabha: spr'sham] You touched the sky [dIptam anEka varNam] with many brilliant colors, [vyAttAnanam] with open mouths, [dIpta vishAla nEtram] with huge sparkling eyes. [pravyathita antarAtmA hi] Indeed, my very being is shaken.

The 'sky' mentioned in this Shloka is the abode of the Lord. It is a space that doesn’t deform, as stated in the Upanishads: 'The sky in which the imperishable is present'.

The same is stated in the [purushasukta]: 'The One who is the color of the Sun and is beyond the material world'; in [yajurvEda], 2-2-12-68: 'The One who is outside this perishable world - a world pervaded by the [quality of rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas)'; in [aShTa], 2-8-9-6: 'The space, which is the abode of the ultimate controller'.

So the word ‘sky’ talks about the ultimate space, which is beyond this material world and its [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). The Lord is the abode and refuge of everything, including inanimate things that keep transforming, as well as personalities that keep changing their nature.

Indeed, the Lord pervades everything above and below.

Arjuna says - Seeing You with many brilliant colors, with many open mouths and huge sparkling eyes, my very being is shaken - I am so scared that I can't stand firm. It feels like nothing can support my body. I do not find any peace in my mind or in my organs. O Vishnu, the all-pervasive, seeing You pervading everything in this astonishing and terrible form, I have lost control over my organs. All my limbs are frail.

## 11-25

[

damShTrAkarAlAni cha tE mukhAni

dr'ShTvaiva kAlAnalasannibhAni |

dishO na jAnE na labhE cha sharma

prasIda dEvEsha jagannivAsa || 25 ||

]

[tE] Your [mukhAni] faces [damShTrAkarAlAni] seem cruel with their terrible canines. [kAlAnalasannibhAni] They are equivalent to the great fire that brings ultimate destruction. [dr'ShTvaiva] Just by seeing, [dishO na jAnE] I cannot recognize any of the directions [sharma cha na labhE] and I have lost my comfort. [dEvEsha] O Lord of the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers) [jagannivAsa] in whom all the worlds reside, [prasIda] be pleased.

Your terrible faces are involved in destroying everything like the great fire which devours everything at the end of a [yuga](#yugas). Seeing them, I have lost my sense of direction and I don't find any comfort. O Lord of all [gods and powers](#gods_and_other_powers), in whom all the worlds reside, be pleased - return me to my original state - That is the desire expressed here.

In this way, Krishna demonstrated that the universe depends on Him for its continued state of being and functioning. He demonstrated that He alone will get the burden of this earth down, as per His liking.

He does this by destroying the elements that intend to cause harm for personal gain, who are in the guise of kings on either side - standing by the sons of Dhrtarashtra or joining hands with Yudhishtira.

Arjuna witnessed the overwhelming power of the Lord, His capability of creation and other activities. He saw a form that contains everyone inside it. He saw the destruction of Dhrtarashtra's sons and others in the Lord's form.

Arjuna could see this destruction - even though it hadn’t taken place yet - with the divine sight presented to Him by the Lord. Having seen this, Arjuna says:

## 11-26 to 11-27

[

amI sarvE dhr'tarAShTrasya putrA:

sarvai: sahaiva avanipAla sanghai: |

bhIShmO drONa: sUtaputra: tathAsau

sahAsmadIyairapi yOdhamukhyai: || 26 ||

vaktrANi tE tvaramANA vishanti

damShTrAkarAlAni bhayAnakAni |

kEchit vilagnA dashanAntarEShu

sandr'shyantE chUrNitai: uttamAngai: || 27 ||

]

[amI sarvE] All these [dhr'tarAShTrasya putrA:] sons of Dhrtarashtra [tvaramANA vishanti] rapidly enter [tE vaktrANi] Your many mouths [bhayAnakAni damShTrAkarAlAni] having terrifying canines. [sarvai: avanipAla sanghai: sa:] So do all groups of kings [tathA asau] followed by [bhIShmO drONa: sUtaputra:] Bhishma, Drona, Karna [asmadIyai: yOdhamukhyai: sa:] and our own captains of war. [kEchit] Some of them [sandr'shyantE] appear to [chUrNitai: uttamAngai:] have their heads powdered [vilagnA:] by getting stuck [dashanAntarEShu] between those teeth.

Duryodhana and other sons of Dhrtarashtra rapidly enter Your formidable jaws having ferocious canines, only to be destroyed. They are followed by Bhishma, Drona, Karna and all kings on their side, along with some chieftains from our side. It looks as though a few heads are being crushed between those teeth.

## 11-28 to 11-29

[

yathA nadInAm bahavO\_mbuvEgA:

samudram EvAbhimukham dravanti |

tathA tavAmI nara lOka vIrA:

vishanti vaktrANi abhivijvalanti || 28 ||

yathA pradIptam jvalanam patangA:

vishanti nAshAya samr'ddha vEgA: |

tathaiva nAshAya vishanti lOka:

tavApi vaktrANi samr'ddha vEgA: || 29 ||

]

[yathA] Just as [nadInAm bahava: ambuvEgA:] the many flows of the river [dravanti] run [samudram Eva abhimukhA:] down into the oceans, [tathA] so also [amI nara lOka vIrA:] these heroes of the earth [vishanti] enter [vaktrANi abhijvalanti] Your blistering mouth.

[yathA] Just as [patangA:] flies attracted to a flame [vishanti] enter [pradIpta jvalanam] the brilliant fire [samr'ddha vEgA:] with great speed [nAshAya] to be destroyed, [lOkA:] these people [vishanti] enter [tava vaktrANi] Your many mouths [samr'ddha vEgA:] with great speed [tathaiva api] in the same way too, [nAshAya] to be destroyed.

These kings and others enter your blistering mouth by themselves, to be destroyed - Just as the varied flows of a river run into the ocean, just as flies enter a blazing fire.

## 11-30

[

lElihyasE grasamAna: samantAt

lOkAn samagrAn vadanai: jvaladbhi: |

tEjObhi: ApUrya jagat samagram

bhAsa: tavOgrA: pratapanti viShNO || 30 ||

]

[viShNO] Vishnu, [lElihyasE] You are licking Your lips, [grAsamAna:] swallowing [lOkAn samagrAn] all these people [samantAt] entirely [jvaladbhi: vadanai:] with your flaming mouth. [tava ugrA: bhAsA:] Your terrific brilliance [ApUrya] fills [jagat samagram] the whole universe [tEjObhi:] with various energies [pratapanti] and they burn.

With great rage, You swallow all the groups of kings in your brilliant mouth. You lick your lips that are drenched in their blood, again and again. Your terrible brilliance overwhelms the entire universe, heating it up and burning it out.

## 11-31

[

AkhyAhi mE kO bhavAn ugra rupO

namO\_stu tE devavara prasIda |

vijnAtum ichChAmi bhavantam Adyam

na hi prajAnAmi tava pravr'ttim || 31 ||

]

[mE AkhyAhi] Tell me [bhavAn ka:] who You are [ugra rUpa:] in this terrible form. [dEvavara] Lord, You are supreme among the favorable. [nama: astu tE] Salutations to You. [prasIda] Be pleased. [na hi prajAnAmi] I have no idea [tava pravr'ttim] about your course of action. [vijnAtum ichChAmi] I wish to know [Adyam bhavantam] You, prevailing as You are from beginning-less time.

Arjuna concludes-

Lord, I asked You to show Your entire form with unbounded power ([Chap.11#4](#_4_1)). That resulted in uncovering this highly terrifying form. Tell me, what is the purpose of this terrible form? What have You set out to do? I would like to know that part of You.

I don't know Your course of action, please tell me. O Lord of everything, salutations to You! Be pleased! After describing the reason why this terrible form was uncovered, please assume Your original pleasant form again.

Lord Krishna demonstrated His ownership of the entire universe. This demonstration came from His limitless affection toward those who take refuge in Him.

The Lord, when asked about the motivation to uncover this terrible form, tells His motive in the next Shloka- My terrible form was uncovered as a reminder that even without Arjuna's efforts, I Myself have set out to kill all these kings headed by the sons of Dhrtarashtra. The intention of this reminder is to set Arjuna to work in His occupation of war.

## 11-32

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

kAlO\_smi lOka kShayakr't pravr'ddhO

lOkAn samAhartum iha pravr'tta: |

r'tEpi tvA na bhviShyanti sarvE

yE\_vasthitA: pratyanIkEShu yOdhA: || 32 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said - [kAlO\_smi] I am the count-down to destruction. [pravr'ddha:] I transformed into this terrible form. [lOka kShayakr't] This form of Mine causes the wear-out and destruction of the universe. [iha pravr'tta:] I have set to work [samAhartum] the destruction [lOkAn] of the warriors here. [r'tE\_pi tvA] Even without your involvement, [yE yOdhA:] all warriors who [avasthitA:] stand [pratyanIkEShu] among the unfavorable [na bhaviShyanti] shall not continue to exist.

The Lord says 'I am the count-down to destruction' - I count the remaining lifespan of the sons of Dhrtarashtra and other kings under their leadership. I have grown into this terrible form, which will destroy them. I have set out here to personally supervise their destruction.

Thus, by My intent alone, those warriors who stand unfavorable to you, with the sons of Dhrtarashtra at their head, shall not continue to exist. They will be destroyed. This shall be so, even without you and your efforts.

## 11-33

[

tasmAt tvam uttiShTha yashO labhasva

jitvA shatrUn bhunkShva rAjyam samr'ddham |

mayaiva EtE nihatA: pUrvamEva

nimitta mAtram bhava savyasAchin || 33 ||

]

[tasmAt] Given this fact, [tvam uttiShTha] you must get up. [yaja: labhasva] Gain fame and honor [shatrUn jitvA] by winning over your foes. [bhunkShva] Enjoy [samr'ddham rAjyam] this prosperous kingdom. [EtE] All obstacles [mayaiva nihatA:] are destroyed by Me alone. [savyasAchin] Arjuna, [nimitta mAtram bhava] merely be the instrument.

Given this (*The Lord's intent, mentioned in the previous Shloka*), get up and fight against them. Gain fame and honor by winning over those foes. Enjoy the prosperity of this kingdom, endowed with virtue.

These people, who have committed offence, are already killed. They are destined to die. Arjuna, merely be the instrument in their destruction. For those who are going to be destroyed by Me, be the means - in this case, assume the role of an instrument of war.

The word [savyasAchin] has been used to refer to Arjuna. It means a person who can arm the arrow on the bow with his left hand. In other words, it qualifies a person as being skilled in waging war with both his hands.

## 11-34

[

drONam cha bhIShmam cha jayadratham cha

karNam tathA\_nyAn api yOdha vIrAn |

mayA hatAn tvam jahi mA vyathiShThA:

yudhyasva jEtAsi raNE sapatnAn || 34 ||

]

[tvam jahi] You win your battles over [drONam] Drona, [bhIShmam] Bhishma, [jayadratham] Jayadratha, [karNam] Karna [tathA anyAn] and other [yOdha vIrAn api] valiant heroes as well. [mayA hatAn] All of them have already been killed by Me. [mA vyathiShThA:] Do not waver. [yudhyasva] Fight, [jEtAsi] you will win over [sapatnAn] your enemies [raNE] in war.

The Lord continues- All those who committed offence have been destined by Me to die. They include Drona, Bhishma and Karna. You win against them - kill them in war.

Do not waver and hesitate while fighting, thinking that you would kill your teachers, relatives and others. They are intent on enjoying this kingdom too.

Do not waver due to fear of doing right or wrong, due to attachment towards your relatives or due to sympathy. That's because those who committed offence have already been destined by Me to be killed by you.

Hence, fight without any doubt or hesitation. In war, you will win over your enemies. There is not even a scent of malice in their destruction. You will definitely experience victory.

## 11-35

[

sanjaya uvAcha -

EtachChr'tvA vachanam kEshavasya

kr'tAnjali: vEpamAna: kirITI |

namaskr'tvA bhUya EvAha kr'ShNam

sagadgadam bhIta bhIta: praNamya || 35 ||

]

[sanjaya uvAcha] Sanjaya said - [Etat shr'tvA] Listening to these [vachanam] words [kEshavasya] of the Lord, [kirITI] Arjuna [namaskr'tvA] performed salutations [vEpamAna:] while trembling [kr'tAnjali:] with folded hands [bhUya Eva] and once again [Aha kr'ShNam] spoke to Krishna [bhIta bhIta:] with great fear, [sagadgadam] with a voice choked with emotion, [praNamya] with a bowed head.

Listening to these words of Krishna, who is an ocean of affection towards those who have taken refuge in Him, Arjuna surrenders to Him. Trembling with great fear, with a voice choked with emotion once again, Arjuna says to the Lord with a bowed head -

## 11-36

[

arjuna uvAcha -

sthAnE hr'ShIkEsha tava prakIrtyA

jagat prahr'Shyati anurajyatE cha |

rakShAmsi bhItAni dishO dravanti

sarvE namasyanti cha siddha sanghA: || 36 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said- [hr'ShIkEsha] Krishna, [sthAnE] it’s appropriate that [jagat] the world [prahr'Shyati] experiences joy, [anurajyatE cha] devotion and affection [tava prakIrtya] through Your praise. [rakShAmsi] Those who exploit for personal gain [dishO dravanti bhItAni] scatter and run in fear. [sarvE] All [siddha sanghA:] types of virtuous people [namasyanti cha] bow to You.

It is appropriate that the virtuous who have come to witness the war, such as the [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), the achievers, the pleasant and benevolent, those with knowledge, musicians and other beings take joy in your praise. They adore You and are devoted to You.

On the other hand, people who cause hardships for personal gain will scatter and run in fear on seeing You.

All types of virtuous people bow to You. They are the favorable ones. This is the way the world is. Indeed, it is appropriate.

He elaborates this ‘appropriateness’ in the next Shloka-

## 11-37 part 1

[

kasmAt cha tE na namEran mahAtman

garIyasE brahmaNO\_pyAdikartrE |

]

[mahAtman] Lord, [kasmAt] why [na namEran] would anyone not bow [tE] to You? [AdikartrE] You are the origin [brahmaNa: api] of Brahma himself, the principal engineer of this universe, [garIyasE] towering over everything else.

Lord, why would anyone not bow to You, the origin of Brahma himself, the principal engineer of the universe, when You tower over everything else?

## 11-37 part 2 to 11-38 part 1

[

ananta dEvEsha jagannivAsa

tvam akSharam sadasat tatparam yat || 37 ||

tvam AdidEva: puruSha: purANa:

tvam asya vishvasya param nidhAnam

]

[dEvEsha] O Lord of [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), [ananta] You are outside the limits of space, time and material. [jagannivAsa] You are the abode in which the universe resides. [tvam akSharam] You are the imperishable. [sat] You are existence, [asat] non-existence [yat tatparam] and that which is beyond all of this. [tvam AdidEva:] You are the origin of all [powers](#gods_and_other_powers). [puruSha:] You are the one who is known as the Supreme Being. [purANa:] You are without a beginning. [param nidhAnam] You are the ultimate basis [asya vishvasya] of this universe.

O Lord of [gods](#gods_and_other_powers), You are outside the limits of space, time and material. You are the abode in which the universe resides.

You are the imperishable - the one that does not wear out. You are the Essence of the Self, as described in [kaTha upanishat]: 'The form of knowledge that is not born and does not die'. In other scriptures too, the Self is described as the one who does not perish.

You are existence, the outcome of creation. You are non-existence too, the state of the universe prior to creation. You are the matter that’s present as the origin, before creation. You are also the outcome of creation. This outcome is the universe that can be classified using names, forms and shapes. Matter was present as its origin, when nothing could be distinguished in this way.

Whatever is beyond this material world, along with every Self that’s in this material world - they are You. You are the essence of all that’s beyond the material world too. In this way, You are the origin of all [powers](#gods_and_other_powers). You are the person without a beginning.

You are the basis on which this universe rests. By having the [universe as Your body](#universe_as_his_body), You are its ultimate basis.

In this way, You are indeed the One who is addressed by all words and [powers](#gods_and_other_powers) like the sun and the wind. This is stated next-

## 11-38 part 2

[

vEttAsi vEdyam cha param cha dhAma

tvayA tatam vishvam ananta rUpa || 38 ||

]

[vEttAsi] You are the One who knows [vEdyam cha] and the One who is to be known. [param dhAma cha] You are the ultimate abode too. [ananta rUpa] You are the One with an unending form. [vishvam] The universe [tatam] is pervaded [tvayA] by You.

Everything that’s to be known in this universe and everything that has the ability to know, is You. In this way, You are present as the [Self in everything](#universe_as_his_body). You are the ultimate abode - You are the ultimate goal. The universe with its conscious and non-conscious beings is pervaded by You, with You being present as its Self.

## 11-39 part 1

[

vAyuryamO\_gni: varuNa: shashAnka:

prajApati: tvam prapitAmaha: cha |

]

[tvam] You are [vAyu] the wind, [yama] restraint, [agni:] fire, [varuNa:] the atmosphere, the ocean, [shashAnka:] the moon, [prajApati:] the leader of people, [prapitAmaha: cha] and their great-grandfather - their origin.

You are the great-grandfather of everyone - the 'father' is the predecessor of a person. The predecessor of all beings is Brahma, the principal engineer of this universe.

Lord, You are the predecessor of Brahma too, hence You are the great-grandfather. You are present [as the Self](#universe_as_his_body) in everything. Hence, you are the One who is addressed by all their names.

## 11-39 part 2 – 40 part 1

[

namO namatsE\_stu sahasrakr'tva:

puna: cha bhUyO\_pi namO namastE || 39 ||

nama: purastAt atha pr'ShThata: cha

namO\_stu tE sarvata Eva sarva |

]

[nama:] Salutations, [nama: tE astu] I bow to You [sahasrakr'tva:] a thousand times. [nama:] Salutations [puna: cha] yet again, [namO namastE] I submit to You with reverence and adoration [bhUyO\_pi] again and again. [purastAt nama:] Salutations facing You [atha cha] and [pr'ShThata:] following You. [sarva] You are everything. [tE namO\_stu] salutations to You [sarvata: Eva] in every single way.

Looking at the astounding form of the Lord, Arjuna expresses reverence and adoration in every way, with eyes sparkling in joy, while simultaneously experiencing fear.

## 11-40 part 2

[

ananta vIryAmita vikramastvam

sarvam samApnOShi tatO\_si sarva: || 40 ||

]

[tvam ananta vIrya] You have unlimited valor [amita vikrama:] and infinite might. [samApnOShi] You pervade as the Self in everything, [tata:] hence [sarva: asi] You are everything.

*‘Valor’ is the ability to perform great deeds while being unaffected as a result of doing them.*

With unlimited valor, You have infinite might and are present [as the Self](#universe_as_his_body) in everything. Hence You are everything. Since You pervade all conscious and non-conscious things as their Self, they are present [as Your body](#universe_as_his_body).

In this way, You alone are addressed by all words.

It was mentioned in [Chap.11#37](#_37_part_2) ‘You are the imperishable, You are the outcome and the origin’ and in [Chap.10#39](#_39_part_1) ‘You are the wind, restraint, fire, the atmosphere, the ocean, the moon, the leader of people, and their great-grandfather - their origin’. You have equivalence to everything - that's because You are present as the Self in everything. This is described appropriately in [Chap.11#38](#_38_part_2) ‘You are the One with an unending form; the universe is pervaded by You’.

## 11-41 to 11-42

[

sakhEti matvA prasabham yaduktam

hE kr'ShNa hE yAdava hE sakhEti |

ajAnatA mahimAnam tavEmam

mayA pramAdAt praNayEna vApi || 41 ||

yat cha apahAsArtham asat kr'tO\_si

vihAra shayyAsana bhOjanEShu |

EkO\_thavA\_pi achyuta tatsamakSham

tat kShAmayE tvAm aham apramEyam || 42 ||

]

[achyuta] Lord, [ajAnatA] without knowing [imam mahimAnam] this greatness [tava] of Yours, [sakhEti matvA] I considered You as a friend [yaduktam mayA] and said many things, [prasabham] exceeding my limits [pramAdAt] in a careless manner. [praNayEna vA api] At other times, out of friendship, [hE kr'ShNa hE yAdava hE sakhEti] I addressed You as 'Hey Krishna', 'Hey Yadava' or 'Hey friend'. [yat cha asatkr'tO\_si] There were also instances when I disrespected You [apahAsArtham] for fun [vihAra shayyAsana bhOjanEShu] while roaming, resting and while sleeping, [Eka:] while we were alone [athavA] or [tatsamakSham] in the company of others - [aham kShAmayE tvAm] I ask You to forgive [tat api] all of these too. [achyuta] O the ever-permanent One, [apramEya] You are not measurable in any way.

Arjuna continues to address Krishna - I did not know Your infinite valor and Your unending might - You pervade everything [as the ultimate Self](#universe_as_his_body). I did not know the extent of Your activities, such as creation and the like.

Without knowing this, whatever I said in irreverence - out of carelessness, out of familiarity that comes out of association, out of friendship, thinking of You as a companion of my age, addressing You as 'Hey Krishna', 'Hey Yadava' and 'Hey friend', even the disrespect shown in jest while having fun, when we were doing things together by ourselves or in a group, while roaming, resting or eating - I ask Your forgiveness for all this.

You are to be respected always. You are immeasurable in every way. You need to forgive me in Your compassion.

## 11-43

[

pitAsi lOkasya charAcharasya

tvam asya pUjya: cha guru: garIyAn |

na tvatsamO\_sti abhyadhika: kutO\_nyO

lOkatrayO\_pyi apratima prabhAva || 43 ||

]

[tvam pitAsi] You are the father [asya lOkasya] of this world [charAcharasya] with all its moving and stationary beings, [garIyAn] You are superior to all. [guru: pUjya:] As a teacher, You are revered by all. [apratima prabhAva] You have unmatched power, [anya: nAsti] There is no other person [tvatsama:] who is equal to You [lOka trayO api] in all the three worlds (the entire universe). [abhyadhika: kuta:] How can it even be conceived that anyone is greater than You?

Lord, you have unequalled power! You are the father of this entire universe with all its beings that are capable of moving and that aren't. You are the mentor and teacher of this world. Hence, You are the most revered being in the universe.

When nobody can match You, how can anyone even be conceived as greater in any world? Other than You, nobody can match You in compassion; or for that matter, in any other quality of Yours - definitely, nobody can be greater.

## 11-44

[

tasmAt praNamya praNidhAya kAyam

prasAdayE tvAm aham Isham IDyam |

pitEva putrasya sakhEva sakhyu:

priya: priyAyArhasi dEva sODhum || 44 ||

]

[tasmAt] That's why [aham] I [tvAm prasAdayE] please You with worship, [praNamya] by bowing to You [kAyam praNidhAya] and laying my body at Your feet. [Isham] You are the ultimate controller, [IDyam] You are to be praised. [dEva] Lord, [pitEva] Just as a father tolerates [putrasya] his son's flaws, [sakhEva] just as a friend tolerates [sakhyu:] a friend's flaws, [priya:] You are affectionate [sODhum arhasi] and can definitely tolerate the same, [priyAya] in Your love for me.

You are the father of everything, the mentor, teacher, the most revered and the greatest in compassion and other such qualities. You are the controller of everything and are to be praised. I gladden You by bowing to You and laying My body in Your surrender.

A father or a friend pardons when requested with humility, even if the son or friend has committed offence. In the same way, You can definitely pardon the offences I have committed- You have the greatest compassion and are very affectionate towards Me.

## 11-45

[

adr'ShTapUrvam hr'ShitO\_smi dr'ShTvA

bhayEna cha pravyathitam manO mE |

tadEva mE darshaya dEva rUpam

prasIda dEvEsha jagannivAsa || 45 ||

]

[dr'ShTvA] Seeing [adr'ShTapUrvam] what has not been seen before, [hr'Shita: asmi] I am thrilled. [cha] Also, [mE mana:] My mind [pravyathitam] is greatly disturbed [bhayEna] with fear. [jagannivAsa] You are the abode of the whole universe. [dEva] Lord, [prasIda] return to tranquility [mE darshaya] and show me [tat Eva] that [rUpa] form.

Arjuna continues - I am glad and thrilled to see Your astounding and terrifying form, which has never been seen before. Also, my mind is terrified with fear. Hence, show me that form of Yours, which is supremely pleasant. Be favorable towards Me, O controller of [all gods](#gods_and_other_powers), be pleased.

## 11-46

[

kirITinam gadinam chakra hastam

ichChAmi tvAm draShTum aham tathaiva |

tEnaiva rUpENa chaturbhujEna

sahasra bAhO bhava vishva mUrtE || 46 ||

]

[aham draShTum ichChAmi] I desire to see You [tathaiva] in the same way - [kirItinam] with a crown, [gadinam] a mace, [chakra hastam] with the disc in Your hand, [sahasra bAhO] O One with a thousand arms. [vishva mUrtE] O Lord who has the [universe as the body](#gods_and_other_powers), [bhava] be [tEnaiva rUpENa] with that form, [chaturbhujEna] which has four arms

We only need to request the Lord to step out of a terrible experience

Lord, I desire to see You in the way You showed Yourself before, with Your crown, mace, with the disc in Your hand. Hence, be with that same previous appearance, with Your four arms, O Lord with a thousand arms and the universe as Your body.

Instead of the form where You show Your thousand arms and the universe as Your body, show me the previous form.

## 11-47

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

mayA prasannEna tavArjunEdam

rUpam param darshitam AtmayOgAt |

tEjOmayam vishvam anantam Adyam

yat mE tvadanyEna na dr'ShTa pUrvam || 47 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord said - [arjuna] Arjuna, [idam param rUpam] this ultimate form [darshitam] was shown [tava] to you [mayA prasannEna] by Me, out of happiness. [tEjOmayam] It is filled with brilliance [vishvam] and has the universe inside it. [anantam] It is without any limits. [Adyam] It is the origin of everything. [AtmayOgAt] You saw it by the realization of My intent. [yat mE] This form of Mine [na dr'shTa pUrvam] has not been seen [tvadanyEna] by anyone other than you.

The Lord says -

I intended to show My form to you out of happiness. By My capacity to always realize My intent, I have shown it to you, My devotee.

Other than you, nobody has seen this form - My appearance is filled with brilliance, with the entire universe in it. It is without any beginning, mid-point or end. It is the origin of everything other than Me.

Next, the Lord says that any method that's performed without single-minded devotion is incapable of seeing Him as He really is.

## 11-48

[

na vEda yajna adhyayanai: na dAnai:

na kriyAbhi: na tapObhi: ugrai: |

Evam rUpa: shakya aham nr'lOkE

draShTum tvadanyEna kurupravIra || 48 ||

]

[na vEda yajna adhyayanai:] Not by the study of the Vedas, nor by performing rituals, nor by intense study, [na dAnai:] not by donations, [na kriyAbhi:] not by pious actions, [na tapObhi: ugrai:] not by severe penance, [shakya: Evam rUpa:] can this form [draShTum] be seen [tvadanyEna] by anyone other than you [nr'lOkE] in this world of humans, [kurupravIra] O valiant Arjuna.

The Lord continues- you are my devotee. It’s not possible for anyone else to see Me in this form, as I really am, merely by following the Vedas and rituals.

## 11-49

[

mA tE vyathA mA cha vimUDha bhAvO

dr'ShTvA rUpam ghOram Idr'k mamEdam |

vyapEtabhI: prItamanA: punastvam

tadEva mE rUpam idam prapashya || 49 ||

]

[mA tE vyathA] May you not be agitated [cha vimUDha bhAvO] and confused [Idr'k] in this manner, [dr'ShTvA] seeing [idam] this [ghOram rUpam] formidable form [mama] of Mine. [tvam prapashya] See [tadEva mE rUpam idam] My previous form [puna:] again. [vyapEtabhI:] Be without fear, [prItamanA:] with a cheerful mind.

Whatever be the agitation and confusion in your mind on seeing this terrible form, let it not be there. I will show you My previous form, which was gentle, the one you’re used to. See My familiar form.

## 11-50

[

sanjaya uvAcha -

ityarjunam vAsudEva: tathOktvA

svakam rUpam darshayAmAsa bhUya:|

AshvAsayAmAsa cha bhItam Enam

bhUtvA puna: saumya vapu: mahAtmA || 50 ||

]

[sanjaya uvAcha] Sanjaya said - [tathA] Then, [iti uktvA] having said this [arjunam] to Arjuna, [mahAtmA vAsudEva:] the great Krishna [darshayAmAsa] showed [svakam rUpam] His form [bhUya:] again. [AshvAsayAmAsa cha] He then reassures [Enam bhItam] this frightened soul [bhUtvA] by being [soumya vapu:] with a gentle body.

Having said this to Arjuna, The Lord showed His familiar form having four arms, born as the son of Vasudeva.

The great Lord's intent is always fulfilled. Arjuna was frightened by the sight of an unfamiliar form, so the Lord reassured him by regaining His familiar gentle form. Having four arms is the familiar form of the Lord, the supreme person who was born as the son of Vasudeva with the intention of favoring the world.

At birth, Krishna was requested by His father Vasudeva, who was afraid of Kamsa, to withdraw two of His hands. The hands were withdrawn till Kamsa was killed. After that, they appeared in their natural form.

Vasudeva's prayer is described in [vishNu purANa], 5-7-10 / 13: 'You are born, O Lord of gods, carrying Your conch and the disc. Be pleased and withdraw this divine form of Yours. Withdraw this form of Yours having four arms, O Lord who owns the universe'.

Shishupala, who hated the son of Vasudeva, always had Krishna's four-armed form in his mind as the object of hatred, as said in [vishNu purANa], 4-15-13: 'The One with four long and large arms, holding the conch, disc and the mace'.

It is the same four-armed form that Arjuna talked about, when He wanted to see the Lord's familiar form.

## 11-51

[

arjuna uvAcha -

dr'ShTvA idam mAnuSham rUpam tava saumyam janArdana |

idAnIm asmi saMmvr'tta: sachEtA: prakr'tim gata: || 51 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said - [janArdana] Lord, [dr'ShTvA idam] looking at this [mAnuSham rUpam tava] human form of Yours, [saumyam] which is gentle, [idAnIm asmi] I am now [sachEtA:] in my senses. [saMmvr'tta:] I am alive, [prakr'tim gata:] back in this environment.

Arjuna says to Lord Krishna - 'Looking at this human form of Yours, a form that is so gentle, I am now in my senses. This form is endowed with an unbroken expanse of limitless beauty, youth, charm and other qualities that are unique to You. I’m alive and can recognize this environment.

## 11-52

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

su durdarsham idam rUpam dr'ShTavAn asi yat mama |

dEvA api asya rUpasya nityam darshana kAnkShiNa: || 52 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said - [idam rUpam mama] This form of mine, [yat dr'ShTavAn asi] which you’ve seen, [su durdarsham] is extremely difficult to see. [dEvA api] Even the virtuous [nityam] constantly [kAnkShiNa:] crave for [darshana] a glimpse [asya rUpasya] of this form.

Lord Krishna told Arjuna - 'You have seen this form of Mine - it stands as the controller of everything, it is the abode of everything and is the origin of everything. This form is extremely difficult to see, making it impossible for anyone to see it. Even the most virtuous people crave for a glimpse of this form, but they have not seen it.

Why is that so? The Lord answers that next -

## 11-53 to 11-54

[

nAham vEdai: na tapasA na dAnEna na chEjyayA |

shakya Evam vidhO draShTum dr'ShTavAn asi mAm yathA || 53 ||

bhaktyA tu ananyayA shakya: aham Evam vidhArjuna |

jnAtum draShTum cha tattvEna pravEShTum cha parantapa || 54 ||

]

[na shakya] It is not possible [draShTum] to see [aham] Me [Evam vidha:] in this way - [yathA] the way in which [dr'ShTavAn asi] you have seen [mAm] Me - [na vEdai:] not by the scriptures, [na tapasA] not by penance, [na dAnEna] not by charity [na chEjyayA] and not by sacrifice.

[ananyayA bhaktyA tu] Only by single-minded devotion, [arjuna] Arjuna, [aham shakya:] am I possible [jnAtum] to be known [tattvEna] as I am, [draShTum] to be seen [cha] and [pravEShTum] to be entered [Evam vidha:] in this way. [parantapa] Destroy your rivals.

A person without devotion wouldn’t be able to see Me in My true being. I am not seen merely by following the scriptures, by instruction, by teaching, by studying, by listening, by chanting and by achievements such as ceremonies, rituals, charity and penance.

With single-minded devotion alone, it is possible to know Me from the scriptures as I truly Am, to see My true form and to actually enter Me. As said in the [kaTha upanishat], 2-23: 'This Self is not realized by teaching, not by intelligence, not by listening about it many times. It is realized by the one whom it chooses. This Self shall reveal itself to such a person'.

*The 'Self' mentioned here is the Lord,* [*who is the Ultimate Self of the universe*](#universe_as_his_body)*. From this it is known that the Lord only reveals Himself to the one He chooses. Of course, this brings a question: Does this not sound arbitrary? Whom does the Lord choose? The answer is: The Lord chooses those who choose the Lord - those who are devoted to Him, as said in this Shloka itself (*[*Chap.11#54*](#_53-54)*).*

## 11-55

[

matkarma kr't matparamO madbhakta: sanga varjita: |

nirvaira: sarva bhUtEShu ya: sa mAmEti pAnDava || 55 ||

]

[pAnDava] Arjuna, [ya:] the person who [mat karma kr't] dedicates all his actions to Me, [mat parama:] with Me as the ultimate goal [sanga varjita:] is [without attachment](#_24). [madbhakta:] He is My devotee. [sarva bhUtEShu nirvaira:] He doesn’t hate any being. [sa:] Such a person [mAm Eti] achieves Me.

A true [devotee](#bhakti_a_defn) of the Lord isn’t attached to anything other than the Lord, so doesn’t experience agitation.

A person who does all his work as My worship, including work such as the study of the scriptures, is a person who dedicates his actions to Me. To this person, I am the ultimate purpose in all endeavors and the ultimate goal.

In all actions, My [devotee](#bhakti_a_defn) is a person who can sustain himself only by singing My praise, having My thoughts, worshiping Me and surrendering to Me. Such a person works with Me as the only objective - due to excessive affection towards Me.

Due to this single-minded affection towards Me, such a person will not tolerate attachment towards anything else - he is without attachment.

This person is without hatred towards any being - it is in his nature to feel content when he is with Me and feel sorrow when I am not in his thoughts. Due to this, he considers his own offences as the instrument that causes sorrow in him. In this way, the person would not consider any other being as the cause of his sorrow, hence wouldn’t have feelings of hatred towards anyone or anything.

The person who exists in this manner shall achieve Me - he attains Me in My true being. By getting rid of all ignorance and all flaws without a trace, he experiences Me alone.

# Chapter 12

Arjuna wished to see the unbounded expanse of the Lord's pervasive power, which is realized by commitment to [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). The Lord showed him this power in its entirety.

Though the human senses cannot perceive such unbounded power, it was experienced.

This experience was due to the Lord's ability to realize all that He desires. The Lord enabled this experience from His unbroken, unlimited expanse of compassion, generosity, amiable nature and other favorable qualities.

It was also stated that [single-minded devotion with ultimate love](#bhakti_a_defn) is the only way to know and see the Lord in His actual form.

Next, The Lord states that His worship in the form of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) is superior in comparison to the [quest for the Self](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn). The superiority of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) lies in the speed of realizing its goal, in the ease and in the simplicity of its practice.

Let’s devote ourselves to the Lord

This chapter describes the practice of the Lord’s worship along with its accessories. It also describes the quest of the Self for people who are incapable of worship.

The Lord's worship is indeed superior - this is by virtue of the Lord's superiority, as said in [Chap.6#47](#_47): ‘The person who worships Me, having placed himself within Me with complete trust - I consider him to be the most focused, even in comparison to all those who persevere to realize the Self’.

## 12-1

[

arjuna uvAcha -

Evam satatayuktA yE bhaktA: tvAm paryupAsatE |

yE chApi akSharam avyaktam tEShAm kE yOgavittamA: || 1 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said- [Evam] In this way, [yE] those who are [bhaktA:] [devoted](#bhakti_a_defn) to You [paryupAsatE tvAm] worship You well. [cha api] On the other hand, there are also people [yE akSharam] who focus on the indestructible, which we know as our Self, [avyaktam] which is not perceptible to our sense organs. [tEShAm kE] Who among them [yOgavittamA:] is closer to realizing their goal?

How do we [realize](#yoga_is_to_realize) our goal? By being devoted to it, or by knowing everything about it?

At the end of the previous chapter, in [Chap.11#55](#_55), the Lord said: ‘The person who dedicates all his actions to Me shall achieve Me’.

In this chapter, Arjuna begins by responding to the Lord-

Your [devotees](#bhakti_a_defn) consider their ultimate goal to be You, in the manner You described- with all Your powers, with vast, unbroken amounts of limitless qualities like beauty, equanimity, all-knowing and always having Your intent fulfilled. These devotees worship You completely.

On the other hand, there are people who dedicate their effort towards the realization of the indestructible, which is evident as the Self inside each of us, which is otherwise imperceptible to our eyes and other sense organs.

Who is closer to realizing their goal: your devotees, or those who pursue the realization of the Self? Who will realize their goal sooner? In this Shloka, Arjuna uses the word [yOgavittama] to ask about the speed at which the goal is realized.

This is answered further in this chapter ([Chap.12#7](#_6_to_7)) - 'I’ll be there without delay for those who have placed themselves in Me'

## 12-2

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

mayyAvEshya manO yE mAm nityayuktA upAsatE |

shraddhayA parayA upEtA: tE mE yuktatamA matA: || 2 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said - [yE] People who [mAm upAsatE] worship Me [mayi AvEshya mana:] by committing their mind in Me [nitya yukta] are always engaged. [upEtA:] They are endowed with [parayA shraddhayA] complete trust and dedication. [mE matA] I consider [tE] them [yuktatamA:] to be closest to Me.

The Lord commences His response-

Being devoted is to trust and be with the Lord, recognizing that He is the ultimate purpose

People who commit their minds to Me do so with complete trust and dedication. They worship Me with extreme affection, with a desire to be with Me always. I consider such people to be closest to Me.

Meaning- they will reach the ultimate goal easily, without delay. I am the ultimate goal.

## 12-3 to 12-5

[

yE tu akSharam anirdEshyam avyaktam paryupAsatE |

sarvatragam achintyam cha kUTastham achalam dhruvam || 3 ||

saMniyamya indriya grAmam sarvatra samabuddhaya: |

tE prApnuvanti mAm Eva sarva bhUta hitE ratA: || 4 ||

klEshO\_dhikatara: tEShAm avyaktAsakta chEtasAm |

avyaktA hi gati: du:kham dEhavadbhiravApyatE || 5 ||

]

[yE tu] Others who [paryupAsatE] pursue [akSharam] the 'perpetual' [samabuddhaya:] have an attitude of equanimity [sarvatra] in every way. [sarvatragam] The object of their focus is present in every body. [anirdEshyam] It is inscrutable. [avyaktam] It isn't evident to our senses. [achintyam] It cannot be deciphered by thought. [kUTastham] It is unchanged like an anvil - [achalam] it is unmoved [dhruvam] and steadfast.

[saMniyamya] By controlling [indriya grAmam] the community of organs in the body, [tE prApnuvanti Eva] they shall certainly attain [mAm] Me. [sarva bhUta hitE ratA:] They are well-wishers of all beings.

[hi] Nevertheless, [adhikatara: klEsha:] it’s extra tough [tEShAm] for them [Asakta chEtasAm] to focus their interest on [avyakta] the 'unmanifest'. [avyaktA gati:] The goal of realizing the unmanifest Self [avApyatE] is achieved [du:kham] with great difficulty [dEhavadbhi:] by those who are predisposed to consider their body as themselves.

Knowing is about deciphering ourselves and our relationship with the Lord

Here, the words ‘perpetual’ and 'unmanifest' refer to the Self, which is self-evident in each of us.

It is inscrutable. Since it’s distinct from the body, it can’t be described by words that are used to describe the body. For instance, being male, female, ordinary or powerful doesn’t describe its properties in any way. Hence, it’s not perceived by sight, speech or any of our senses.

This Shloka states that it is present in every body and cannot be deciphered by thought. Though the Self is present in the body, it doesn’t have any characteristics of the body. Hence, it cannot be deciphered in terms of those characteristics.

By being distinct from the body, it remains unchanged like an anvil, even though its body keeps changing. By this, the characteristics of the Self remain unaffected by all the effects of its body. By virtue of remaining constant, it is termed as being 'unmoved and steadfast' in this Shloka.

Our body is a community of organs. When people focus on the Self, they control the body well. They employ their organs such as sight and hearing, instead of transacting to pursue their satisfaction.

They have an attitude of universal equanimity. While we perceive huge variety in our bodies, they know that the Self inside all bodies is present in the form of pure knowledge - no matter how small, large or powerful the being is.

With this attitude, they wish everyone well. They are free from all intentions that cause harm. That's because the intention to harm is a limitation, which comes by considering inequalities. The Self in each of us is identical.

By focusing on the Self, they will certainly attain Me - in addition to realizing their Self. This is stated in Chap.14#2: ‘Having gained this knowledge, they achieve My characteristics’. It is also stated in the [muMDaka upanishat], 3-1-3: [niranjana: paramam sAmyam upaiti] - 'Devoid of flaws, it attains ultimate equality with the Lord'.

Though the Self is permanent and achieves ultimate equality with the Lord, it remains distinct. This is said in Chap.15#16: 'The Self stays without deforming and is said to be the imperishable’, going on to Chap.15#17: ‘However, the Supreme Person is another one’.

The [mundaka upanishat], 1-1-5 narrates: A sage called Shyavanaka went to another sage called Angirasa and asked to be taught. Angirasa started his teaching with the statement: 'There are two types of learning, the material and the superior. Material science is about observations and creativity in the universe'. He goes on to say: 'Superior learning is the awareness by which the Supreme Lord can be attained'.

This teaching is called [akShara vidya] – ‘The science of the perpetual’. In the [akShara vidya], the word 'perpetual' has been used to denote the Supreme Lord, rather than the Self. The Supreme Lord is described to be the creator of all beings.

The word [akShara] - 'the perpetual' - has been used in the scriptures, to mean the Self in some places and the Lord in others. Even then, the Self and the Lord remain distinct – The Lord creates all beings and the Self does not.

Nevertheless, it’s extra tough to focus interest on the unmanifest Self. The goal of realizing the Self is reached with great difficulty, while being associated with a body. We are predisposed to consider our body as our Self.

Next, the Lord clearly asserts that He is always there for His worshippers.

## 12-6 to 12-7

[

yE tu sarvANi karmANi mayi saMnyasya matparA: |

ananyEnaiva yOgEna mAm dhyAyanta upAsatE || 6 ||

tEShAm aham samuddhartA mr'tyu samsAra sAgarAt |

bhavAmi na chirAt pArtha mayi AvEshita chEtasAm || 7 ||

]

[tu] Further, [yE] those who [mAm upAsatE] worship Me, [dhyAyanta] recollecting Me [saMnyasya] by dedicating [sarvANi karmANi] all activity [mayi] in Me - [matparA:] they have Me as their ultimate goal. [ananyEna Eva yOgEna] Their only motivation is to unite with Me.

[pArtha] Arjuna, [aham] I am [tEshAm] their [samuddhartA] savior [sAgarAt] from the sea [mr'tyu samsAra] of perishable material. [mayi AvEshita chEtasAm] For those who place their consciousness in Me, [bhavAmi na chirAt] I’ll be with them instantly.

Deciphering the Self is tough. Entrust yourself to the Lord – He accepts you directly.

The whole material world engages in activity. Activities such as eating are material activities, which are needed to sustain everyone’s journey in their body. Then there are activities prescribed to everyone - such as charity, rituals and meditation.

Those who dedicate all these activities to Me are the people who worship Me. They do so along with the dedication of their reasoning and intent. They are conscious about the true nature of the Self, desiring nothing but [union with Me](#Moksha), without attachment to other benefits.

They dedicate their thoughts to me with prayer, praise and worship, considering these activities themselves to be extremely enjoyable. Their performance itself is the benefit.

Without any delay, I will save them from all that prevents them from attaining Me. I will save them from the sea of this material world, which is bound by cycles of death.

## 12-8

[

mayi Eva mana Adhatsva mayi buddhim nivEshaya |

nivasiShyasi mayi Eva Ata Urdhvam na samshaya: || 8 ||

]

[Adhatsva] Station [mana:] the mind [mayi Eva] in Me alone. [nivEshaya] Keep [buddhim] your intentions [mayi] in Me. [ata: Urdhvam] After that, [navasiShyasi] you will be [mayi Eva] in Me alone, [na samshaya:] there is no doubt in this.

The Lord continues – I am the ultimate goal. I am achieved easily and quickly. Station your mind in Me. Settle down in My thoughts. Make Me your intent. Resolve that I am the highest among all achievements.

After that, you will be in Me alone - you will enter Me right after you resolve that I am the highest achievement and settle down in My thoughts.

## 12-9

[

atha chittam samAdhAtum na shaknOShi mayi sthiram |

abhyAsa yOgEna tata: mAmichChAptum dhananjaya || 9 ||

]

[dhananjaya] Arjuna, [atha] in case [na shaknOShi] you are unable to [samAdhAtum] contain and place [chittam] your mind [sthiram] firmly [mayi] in Me, [tata:] then [mAm Aptum ichChA] be with the desire to reach Me [abhyAsa yOgEna] through repeated practice, by making it a habit.

You may not be able to settle your thoughts in Me consciously, right at the first attempt.

In that case, do it through repeated practice by making it a habit. Make it a habit to enjoy My thoughts. It’s an enjoyment born out of love.

Enjoy repeatedly, while thinking about My natural, unlimited, unbroken expanse of qualities. Think of My qualities such as being ever-amiable, friendly, adoring, compassionate, delightful, grand, generous, beautiful, brave, being the Lord and the reason for everything. Within Me lies valor and the ability to overwhelm anything. I have all knowledge. My desires and intentions are always realized. I repel all flaws.

Generate love towards the Lord with repeated practice. With this, you fix your thoughts in the Lord and shall be with the desire to [achieve](#Moksha) Him.

## 12-10

[

abhyAsE api asamarthO\_si matkarma paramO bhava |

madartham api karmANi kurvan siddhim avApsyasi || 10 ||

]

[asamartha: asi] If you aren’t able [api abhyAsE] to practice as well, [bhava] be a person [matkarma parama:] who works for Me. [siddhim avApsyasi] You will attain the goal [kurvan] by doing [karmANi] your actions [madartham] for Me.

Even if you’re unable to practice My thoughts, be a person who works for Me. Do all activities out of great love for Me, whether it is construction of temples, gardens, lighting lamps, sweeping, sprinkling water, mopping, offering flowers, conducting prayers, chanting the name of the Lord, traversing a circumference around Him or bowing respectfully.

By doing everything out of great love for Me, you quickly gain the practice of being in My thought. You will station your consciousness in Me and reach the goal of [achieving Me](#Moksha).

## 12-11

[

athaitat api ashaktO\_si kartum madyOgam Ashrita: |

sarva karma phala tyAgam tata: kuru yatAtmavAn || 11 ||

]

[madyOgam Ashrita:] While being devoted to Me, [atha] in case [ashakta: asi] you are unable [Etat kartum api] to do this as well, [tata:] then [tyAgam kuru] leave [phala] the outcomes [sarva karma] of all actions. [yatAtmavAn] Be a person who perseveres.

While being devoted to Me, let’s say you’re unable to do this as well - meaning, you’re unable to work for Me with [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). Let’s say you’re unable to cultivate unwavering love towards Me, being unable to constantly keep thinking of My qualities.

In case you are unable to do all of this, embrace the pursuit of the Self. This was described in the first six chapters. Such pursuit generates ultimate [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). As described in those chapters, be without attachment to the outcome of all actions.

Your love towards Me gives rise to the intention of achieving Me, only when all flaws have withered away. Keep persevering, irrespective of your senses and their desires.

Do your activities without attachment to their outcomes. Do them solely as My worship. Such activities enable you to focus on the Self. With this focus, your ignorance and all other obstacles are removed.

You will realize that the Self exists for My purpose alone. With this realization of the Self in you, ultimate [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) comes forth by itself.

Further, this is summarized in Chap.18#46: 'A person achieves the goal by worshipping Him with his actions', going on to Chap.18#53: 'Being free of possessiveness, he gains peace and aspires to [achieve equivalence to the Lord](#Moksha). Once he achieves this equivalence, he gains joy. He is free from desire and sorrow. Considering everyone to be equal, he gains ultimate devotion to Me’.

## 12-12

[

shrEyO hi jnAnam abhyAsAt jnAnAt dhyAnam vishiShyatE |

dhyAnAt karma phala tyAga: tyAgAt shAntiranantaram || 12 ||

]

[jnAnam] Knowledge [shrEyO hi] is certainly superior [abhyAsAt] to mere practice. [dhyAnam] Focus [vishiShyatE] is special [jnAnAt] in comparison to knowledge. [dhyAnAt] Beyond such focus [karma phala tyAga:] lies the ability to leave the outcomes of our actions. [shAnti: anantaram] Tranquility results soon after [tyAgAt] such renunciation.

When it isn’t possible to adore the Lord or decipher the Self, [work without attachment](#karmayoga)

It’s extremely difficult to practice the Lord's thoughts without supreme love for Him. When compared to this difficulty, the quest for the true nature of the Self, followed by its realization is more effective in uplifting the Self.

Realization of the Self is tough as well, since the Self isn’t really evident to us. In comparison, the method of meditation - focusing thought on the Self to realize it - is special.

However, even this isn’t easy. In comparison, [working without attachment](#karmayOga_a_defn) is superior in its simplicity. Such work is a means to achieve the Self and the Lord.

People get rid of all flaws and gain tranquility by working without attachment to outcomes. In such a tranquil mind, they gain the ability to focus thoughts on the Self. With this focused thought, they gain the realization of the Self. Ultimate [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) comes from that realization.

In summary: Focusing on the Self is definitely recommended for those who aren’t capable of ultimate devotion. However, focus isn’t possible without a tranquil mind. In that case, it’s preferable to just work without attachment to outcomes - the knowledge of the Self is embedded in such work. This helps in achieving [the goal](#Moksha).

The next Shloka describes the admirable qualities of a person who is dedicated to [working without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) to outcomes.

## 12-13 to 12-14

[

advEShTA sarva bhUtAnAm maitra: karuNa Eva cha |

nirmamO nirahankAra: sama du:kha sukha: kShamI || 13 ||

santuShTa: satatam yOgI yatAtmA dr'Dha nishchaya: |

mayi arpita manO buddhi: yO madbhakta: sa mE priya: || 14 ||

]

[advEShTA] Without hatred [sarva bhUtAnAm] towards any being, [Eva] with only [maitra:] friendship [karuNa cha] and compassion, [nirmamO] without possessiveness, [nirahankAra:] without considering the body as the Self, [sama du:kha sukha:] with the same outlook towards comfort and discomfort, [kShamI] ever-forgiving, [satatam santuShTa:] ever content, [yOgI] being in touch with his Self, [yatAtmA] he exercises control over himself. [dr'Dhanishchaya:] Being firm in his conviction, [arpita] he dedicates [buddhi: mana:] his mind and intellect [mayi] in Me. [yO madbhakta:] Such a devotee of Mine [sa mE priya:] is dear to Me.

A devotee of the Lord has no hatred towards any being - including those who hate him and those who are unfavorable. Such a person knows that some will dislike him and be unfavorable sometimes. He considers it to comes from past misdeeds. The Lord wills them to behave this way.

Hence, he is friendly towards all beings, including those who are unfriendly and are seen to cause harm. He has compassion towards those who suffer.

He doesn't have any possessive feeling towards his body, his organs or anything related to them. Since he is without the confusion that his body is his Self, he has the same outlook towards comfort and discomfort - he is without ecstasy and agony in the presence of favorable and unfavorable sentiments that are willed by the Lord.

Even when this devotee encounters unavoidable forms and feelings, he doesn’t get agitated. He has an attitude of tolerance and forgiveness. He is cheerful, being content with whatever is obtained to sustain his body.

He is always in touch with his Self, constantly recognizing that it is different from the environment. He has control over his mind. He believes in scriptures that deal with the Self and Me.

He has dedicated his mind and intellect to Me. He has conviction that I am the One who is worshipped by [working without attachments](#karmayoga), knowing that he will realize the Self by this worship.

This devotee of mine, who worships Me with [karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga), is dear to Me.

## 12-15

[

yasmAt na udvijatE lOkA:

lOkAt na udvijatE cha ya: |

harShAmarSha bhayOdvEgai:

muktO ya: sa cha mE priya: || 15 ||

]

[yasmAt] The person due to whom [lOkA:] people [na udvijatE] do not get agitated, [ya:] who [na udvijatE] doesn't get agitated [lOkAt] by this world, [ya: mukta:] who is free [harShAmarSha bhaya udvEgai: cha] from ecstasy, anger, fear and agitation - [sa mE priya:] Such a person is dear to Me.

In this Shloka, the Lord describes another kind of person who is dear to Him-

The world does not get agitated when this person [works without attachment](#karmayoga), simply being [the instrument](#_33) in an action.

This person doesn’t do anything to distress others. This person does not get agitated by the world. The world, having determined that he does no harm to anyone, will not do anything to agitate him.

This comes from the belief that nothing is adverse- everything happens for My purpose. With this, he is free of ecstasy, anger, fear or agitation towards anyone. This type of person is also dear to Me.

## 12-16

[

anapEkSha: shuchirdakSha: udAsInO gatavyatha: |

sarvArambha parityAgI yO madbhakta: sa mE priya: || 16 ||

]

[madbhakta:] A devotee of Mine [anapEkSha:] doesn’t expect anything. [udAsIna:] He is neutral, [shuchi:] clean [dakSha:] and diligent. [gatavyatha:] He is without agitation, [sarvArambha parityAgI] leaving the notion that he makes everything [happen](#happenings)- [ya:] such a person [sa mE priya:] is dear to Me.

My devotee has no expectation in anything other than the Self. He is clean, sustaining his body as per the rules laid down in the scriptures. He is diligent in his duties. He isn't worn out by cold, heat and other harsh experiences, which are unavoidable while discharging his duties. He remains neutral when subject to such experiences.

He doesn’t start any endeavor that is not part of his duty to worship Me.

Such a person is dear to Me.

## 12-17

[

yO na hr'Shyati na dvEShTi na shOchati na kAnkShati |

shubhAshubha parityAgI bhaktimAn ya: sa mE priya: || 17 ||

]

[ya:] Whoever [shubha ashubha parityAgI] leaves favorable and unfavorable experiences [na hr'Shyati] is not ecstatic, [na dvEShTi] doesn’t hate, [na shOchati] is neither sad [na kAnkShati] nor lustful. [ya: bhaktimAn] Such a devotee [sa mE priya:] is dear to Me.

Experiences that normally make humans happy do not affect a person who [works without attachment](#karmayoga). Neither does he experience hate, when deprived of such experiences. He is not saddened even when separated from loved ones or wealth – such experiences normally cause sorrow in humans. Neither does he lust for those experiences when deprived of them.

He has given up the distinction between the favorable and unfavorable, realizing that both good and bad perceptions are binding in nature. Such a devotee is dear to Me.

## 12-18 to 12-19

[

sama: shatrau cha mitrE cha tathA mAna apamAnayO: |

shItOShNa sukha du:khEShu sama: sanga vivarjita: || 18 ||

tulya nindA stuti: maunI santuShTO yEna kEnachit |

anikEta: sthiramati: bhaktimAn mE priyO nara: || 19 ||

]

[sama:] Being unbiased [mitrE] among friendly [shatrau cha] and unfriendly people, [tathA] as well as [mAna] in fame [apamAnayO:] and disgrace; [sama] being consistent [sukha du:khEShu] in comfort and discomfort, [shItOShNa] cold and heat; [sanga vivarjita:] being free of attachments;

[tulya nindA stuti:] treating praise and reprimand in the same way, [maunI] being silent, [yEna kEnachit santuShTa:] satisfied with whatever comes his way, [anikEta:] uninterested in establishing his residence and territory; [sthiramati:] being with conviction - [bhaktimAn nara:] this devotee [mE priya:] is dear to Me.

Starting with Chap.12#13, The Lord described the virtues of leaving hatred towards enemies and attachment to friends, along with other characteristics of a devotee. Though redundant here, the Lord emphasizes the virtue of 'being unbiased', even when in the company of desire.

In this Shloka, the Lord states- A person who has firm conviction in the Self is not bound by needs – such as the need to ‘belong’ to a place of residence. By the same conviction, he is unbiased in situations of fame and disgrace. Such a devotee is dear to Me.

This Shloka described a person who has focus on the Self. Next, the Lord summarizes the superiority of a devotee over this person, just as He did at the beginning of this chapter.

## 12-20

[

yE tu dharmyAmr'tam idam yathOktam paryupAsatE |

shraddadhAnA matparamA: bhaktAstE atIva mE priyA: || 20 ||

]

[tu] While all devotees are dear to Me, [yE bhaktA:] those devotees who [paryupAsatE] diligently practice [idam] this [dharmyAmr'tam] eternal duty of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), [matparamA:] considering Me to be the ultimate goal to be achieved [shraddadhAnA] with complete faith, [yathOktam] as described- [tE] they [atIva mE priyA:] are extremely dear to Me.

Adoring the Lord is special. Aspire to adore.

The practice of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) is a duty that never perishes. This [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) is equal to the goal it achieves - The Lord Himself. People who practice devotion were described earlier in this chapter, in [Chap.12#2](#_2): ‘Those who commit their mind in Me and worship Me - they are with Me always'.

The Lord concludes this chapter by saying- They are extremely dear to Me.

# Chapter 13

The first six chapters described Krishna as the Supreme Lord and the [ultimate achievement](#Moksha). To achieve Him, those chapters described [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) as a part of the Lord's worship. They also described the techniques of [contemplation](#jnAnayOga_a_defn) and [activity](#karmayOga_a_defn) as ‘means’ to achieve that devotion.

The second set of six chapters described The Lord as the ultimate goal, His true form and His greatness. They recommended abundant and single-minded love for Him in the form of devotion. Awareness of the Lord leads to such devotion.

It was also stated that devotion is effective in achieving great wealth in this world, the curiosity to experience the Self and other goals as well.

Devotion in this world

The next six chapters offer clarity about the material environment and the Self. They also describe how their combination forms this world. These chapters also clarify the methods to achieve our goal, along with the associated actions, awareness and devotion – which were stated in the last twelve chapters.

This is the thirteenth chapter and it describes the nature of the Self and the body. This chapter clarifies the true nature of the body and lays down the means to achieve the Self, separate from the body. It gives clarity on the characteristics of this Self.

This chapter also explains why the Self is attached to inanimate matter. It describes methods to distinguish these attachments.

## 13-1

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

idam sharIram kauntEya kShEtram ityabhidhIyatE |

Etat yO vEtti tam prAhu: kShEtrajna iti tadvida: || 1 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said- [kauntEya] Arjuna, [idam sharIram] this body [abhidhIyatE] is said to be [kShEtram] the field of action.

[tadvida:] People who know this [prAhu:] would term [yO vEtti] the one who is aware of [Etat] this body [kShEtrajna iti] as ‘the knower of the field’.

This body tends to be equated to the Self, resulting in opinions such as 'I am powerful', 'I am human', 'I am fat' or 'I am thin'.

However, the body and the Self are distinct. The Self is the one who experiences. This body is to be experienced by the Self. That’s why the body is called the 'field' where experiences are made - those who know the true nature of the body say this.

The person who is aware of this is known to have distinguished the Self. He is aware of something inside, which says 'I know this', while being covered by organs and being in association with them.

The person who has realized the true nature of the Self recognizes that the body is to be known, that the Self is the 'knower' and is distinct from the body.

The knower of the body is not the body, it is the Self.

When we deal with things that are separate from our body - such as a clay pot - it is common to distinguish it from ourselves. We’re aware that 'I am a human' and that 'I know it's a pot'.

While we tend to equate the one who knows - the Self - with our body, we still perceive that we know our body. We realize that 'I know my body'. This is illustrated in experiences which make us say things like 'I feel pain in my stomach'.

Like the pot, the body is separate from the Self. The Self is the one who 'knows' and the body is the one which is 'known'. Thus, the body is distinct from the Self. Likewise, the Self is distinct, being the 'knower of the field'. It is the knower of the body and the environment.

The belief that they both are equivalent comes from the presentation of the body as an inseparable attribute of the Self, like 'cowness' is an inseparable attribute of a cow.

The unique qualities of the Self, as the knower, are not apparent to organs such as our eyes. Our minds are formed by contact with the environment, with the environment being a source of experiences. People who don’t know the nature of the Self and the environment see the body as the 'knower'. The body is actually a part of the environment.

As said in Chap.15#10: 'The body is a product of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Ignorant people are unable to recognize the Self – The Self is the one who experiences. Its experiences are painted with these [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), while being in the body and initiating activities like eating. While in ignorance, they are unable to recognize that the Self departs from the body at the time of death.

On the other hand, those who have the sight of knowledge do see this Self as being distinct'.

## 13-2

[

kShEtrajnam chApi mAm viddhi sarva kShEtrEShu bhArata |

kShEtra kShEtrajnayO: jnAnam yat tat jnAnam matam mama || 2 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [viddhi] know [mAm] Me [kShEtrajnam] to be the knower [cha api] as well, [sarva kShEtrEShu] in every body. [yat jnAnam] The knowledge [kShEtra kShEtrajnayO:] about the field and its knower [tat jnAnam] is itself knowledge - [matam mama] this is My doctrine.

*The following commentary illustrates the relationship of the environment, the body and the Lord. Name anything in the environment; it has a Self embedded in it. The environment needs a Self to be recognized. In that context, the body is an inseparable attribute of the Self. The Self uses the body to experience the environment. The Lord is the controller. Though the Self and the environment* [*exist as the body*](#TwoNatures_univrs_and_ultimate) *of the Lord, they are distinct with their own characteristics. However, the Lord has said in this shloka: Know me to be the knower. Does it mean He is the Self within us? Or is the Self distinct from the Lord? To clarify this, many scriptures are quoted, many questions are asked and answered in the following commentary.*

That which knows the Self is the Lord. Doesn’t that make the Self redundant? Is it same as the Lord?

The capability to 'know' is the single characteristic of the Self in every body. It doesn’t depend on the characteristics of the body – whether it’s ordinary, powerful, intelligent, ugly or beautiful.

The Lord is the essence of the Self. Krishna tells Arjuna to know this.

In this Shloka, the phrase 'as well' in the statement 'Know Me to be the knower as well' implies that the Lord must be known as the '[knower](#field_and_knower_of_field)' as well as the '[field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field)'.

A living body merely qualifies the Self and doesn’t exist without it. When we point out someone’s body, we address their Self. They are both referenced in the same way. Similarly, the body and the Self exist as inseparable attributes of the Lord. The Lord refers to the Self as Himself in this Shloka.

Our body is a combination of the five elements of the environment - solids, liquids, energy, gasses and space. Both our body and the Self exist [as the body of the Lord](#universe_as_his_body). They don’t have any other existence. In other words, both of them have the Lord as their essence.

This is stated in many scriptures, which are listed here:

The [br’hadArAnyaka, 3-7-3] states: 'The One who is inside all matter, while being distinct it; The One whom matter cannot encode; The One who has all matter [as his body](#universe_as_his_body); The One who controls all matter from the inside - Such a Self is all-pervasive and ever-lasting'.

Starting with that statement, it finishes describing the concept in [br’hadArAnyaka, 3-77-22]: 'The One who is present inside the Self, who is distinct from the Self; The One whom the Self does not know; The One who has the Self [as His body](#TwoNatures_univrs_and_ultimate); The one who controls the body from within - that is the essence of your Self, it is ever-lasting'.

The Lord is all-pervasive and is present as the essence of every Self. Hence, when we point out anything, we are actually addressing the Lord. It is stated in the following Shlokas:

Chap.10#20: ‘I am situated in all beings at their core as the Self. Moreover, I am the beginning, as well as the end and everything in-between’

Chap.10#39: ‘Whatever is the source of all beings, I am that. It is impossible for any being, moving or stationary, to exist without Me’

Chap.10#42: ‘I support and control this entire universe, which is situated in one part of My being.’

In the second half of the tenth chapter, the Lord described that he is the Self, the essence of everything. In the midst of that description, the Lord described Himself as many special things by saying ‘I am Vishnu’, ‘I am the sun’ and so on. For instance, He says in Chap.10#21: ‘In the [powers of nature](#gods_and_other_powers), I am Vishnu, the all-pervasive. In all luminous things, I am the sun that has the greatest brightness. Among the powers of war, I am the most powerful. Among the stars, I appear as the moon’

The difference between kshetra and kshetrajna and the fact that I am the Self to both of them – that is the awareness you must have.

In this Shloka, He says - 'Learn to differentiate the [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field) and the one who experiences this field. I recommend you to realize that I am the essence of both'.

*The following paragraph tries out an opposing explanation, which ends in contradiction.*

In this Shloka, the Lord has said - 'Know Me to be the knower'. This can be interpreted as a statement of equivalence, to mean that the Lord and the Self are the same entity. The Self within us hasn’t realized that it is the Lord. This leads to the conclusion that the Lord, being present as the Self, does not realize Himself to be the Lord - due to ignorance.

We could hypothesize that such statements of equivalence are meant to get rid of such ignorance: For example, we may mistake a rope to be a snake. When someone shows us that it’s only a rope, our ignorance is gone. In the same way, what if our awareness that 'I am aware and I’m distinct from the Lord' is ignorance and this Shloka aims to remove such ignorance?

*Now the contradiction is presented.*

Those who argue in this manner say that the Lord and the Self are the same entity. They are to be questioned: 'The Lord, who has taught us all this - Lord Krishna - is He free from the so-called ‘ignorance’, which says that the Self and the Lord are distinct? Or not?

If He is free of such ‘ignorance’, then His Self has the characteristic of pure knowledge. Being devoid of any other attribute, there is no possibility to consider Arjuna to be distinct from Himself. Hence, there’s no possibility to explain anything and get rid of anyone’s ignorance.

On the other hand, if we consider that Krishna is not free of ignorance, not having realized the Self, then the possibility to teach the subject of the Self does not arise.

It was said in Chap.4#34: ‘Those who know and show the way will preach this knowledge to you’ – people learn to be aware of the Self.

Thus, such arguments, which say that the Lord and the Self are not distinct, go against the scriptures and other Shlokas in the Gita itself. They make the great scriptures self-contradictory. They must not be accepted, since they only serve to mislead everyone.

*What can we conclude from this reasoning?*

The concept to be grasped from this discussion is: There exists inanimate matter, the conscious Self and the Supreme Lord. Inanimate matter is to be experienced, the conscious Self is the one who experiences and the Lord is the controller.

*Let’s learn about the Lord, the Self and the environment*

There are many statements in the scriptures that speak about their distinguishing characteristics:

[shwEtAshvatara upanishad], 4-6 *illustrates that the Lord is distinct from those who are bound by their deeds*: The amazing Lord creates this universe out of the [subtle singularity](#subtle_singularity) at the time of creation. There is another, who is bound by his past deeds.

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 4-10 *illustrates that the Lord and the environment are distinct*: Know this environment as an amazing creation and the Lord as the amazing creator.

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 1-10: The environment keeps changing. The one who assumes that he is the enjoyer of environment is the unchanging Self. There is One Lord who controls both of them. The Lord removes the ignorance that the Self controls the environment.

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 6-9: He is the cause; He is the Lord of the owner of the body; Nobody has given birth to Him; Nobody has control over Him.

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 6-13: He is the Lord of the environment and the one who knows the field of action; He is the lord of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 1-9: He is the Lord of the universe and of the Self; He is ever-lasting, auspicious and never diminishes. He is the unborn Lord of those who know and those that don't.

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 1-3: He is the ever-lasting consciousness among the many ever-lasting consciousness, He is the one who grants their wishes (*meaning, the Lord is present inside the Self, present as the ever-lasting entity in each conscious being, the One who grants their wishes*).

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 1-5: The one who experiences, that which is experienced and the One who inspires everything - they are respectively the Self, the environment and the Lord.

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 1-6: The [devotee](#bhakti_a_defn) attains [immortality](#Moksha) through the Lord by pleasing Him. The Self is distinct, having the Lord as inspiration and purpose.

[munDaka upanishat], 3-1-1: Two birds are friends. They exist together in a tree. One of them tastes the fruit of the tree, while the other stays without eating, shining brilliantly. *The tree is like our body. The bird that tastes the fruit is the Self, which experiences the results of its actions. The one that shines forth brilliantly is the Lord, who is not under the influence of His deeds, hence does not have to eat the fruits of His actions*.

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 4-5: The eternal [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) – the white [sattva](#satva_rajas_tamas), red [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas) and dark [tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas) - give rise to many bodies, which are in turn loaded with those qualities. An eternal Self lies happily in this environment. An eternal Self that practices [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) leaves this environment.

[chUlakOpanishat], 5: The environment, which is without a beginning and an end, gives rise to the bodies of all beings.

[shwEtAshvatara upanishat], 4-7: The Self is trapped in the body. Without control, it is saddened due to ignorance. Once it realizes the other controller inside the same body, it realizes The Lord in all His greatness. It is gladdened and is rid of all sorrow.

These were some of the scriptures in which the relation between the Self and the Lord is depicted, along with the fact that they are distinct from each other and distinct from the environment too.

*Let’s look at our origin*

Even in the Gita, there are many verses that state the origin of the Self and the universe:

Chap.7#4, Chap.7#5: ‘This universe of mine is divided into eight categories: Solids, liquids, energy, gasses, space, mind, the gross collections and the notion of individuality. However, this universe I just described is not the ultimate one. Know My ultimate nature, which is something distinct, in the form of a conscious being by whom this world is sustained’

Chap.9#7, Chap.9#8, Chap.9#10: ‘All beings end up in a dormant state in My body at the end of a [kalpa](#kalpa_definition). Again, at the beginning of the next [kalpa](#kalpa_definition), I create them in various forms. I create this entire system of beings again and again, while keeping My material nature as the basis. Since they are under the influence of the material world, they are not free. These activities of mine don’t bind Me. Being neutral, I have no attachment towards those activities. The material environment guides this world with all its stationary and mobile beings according to My will. I am the supreme controller. This world goes through its cycles for this purpose itself’

Chap.13#19: Know the environment and the Self to be without a beginning.

Chap.14#3: This huge universe is my creation. In that, I give birth. Then, the birth of all beings takes place.

Meaning - The huge universe arises from the subtle matter, which is an attribute of mine. In this environment, which is without consciousness, I place the womb of consciousness. This association of the conscious Self and the non-conscious environment happens by My will. Such association gives rise to all beings in the material world, from the mighty and powerful right up to the immobile.

In this Shloka, the environment - the huge universe - is called [brahma]. It doesn't mean that it's the same as The Lord, who is also called by the same word. The word [brahma] is used to refer to our environment in other scriptures as well. For example, [muMDaka] 1-1-9 says: 'From that, the universe called as [brahma], arises'.x

In this way, the conscious and non-conscious exist as those who experience and that which is experienced. They exist in this way in all states of being. The Lord is the inseparable essence of their existence. Several scriptures state this fact and they are quoted here once again:

[br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-3: The One who is situated in the earth and pervades it; The One whom the earth does not know; The One whose [body is the earth](#universe_as_his_body); The One who controls the earth from its core.

*Let’s look at our relationship with the Lord.*

Similarly, other scriptures describe how the Lord is related to the Self:

[br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-22: The One who is situated in the Self and pervades it; The One whom the Self does not know; The One whose [body is the Self](#universe_as_his_body); The One who controls the Self from its core.

Identical statements are present in [subAla upanishat], illustrating that the universe, our environment and the Self are the [body of the Lord](#universe_as_his_body): 'The One who is active inside the earth; The One [whose body is the earth](#universe_as_his_body); The One whom the earth does not know', 'The One who is active in the Self; The One [whose body is the Self](#universe_as_his_body); The One whom the Self does not know' and 'The One who is active in the perishable; The One [whose body it is](#universe_as_his_body); The one whom the perishable does not know.

In this way, Lord Narayana is the core Self of all beings, untainted by actions, distinct from the material world, shining forth, the one and only supreme entity.

This Upanishad uses the word 'perishable' to refer to everything without consciousness, which existed in [subtle form](#subtle_singularity) before creation. It is also called [tamas]. The usage of the word [tamas] to mean the [subtle environment](#subtle_singularity) is evident in the same Upanishad: 'The body perishes in the Self and becomes subtle, taking the state of [tamas]'.

These statements are reiterated in in [ya.A], 3-11-2: 'The Lord is the Self inside everyone, controlling them'.

In this way, everything exists [as the Lord's body](#universe_as_his_body), be it conscious or non-conscious, in every state of being. In fact, everything is a form of the Lord Himself. The Lord Himself exists as the origin of the universe, as a [subtle singularity](#subtle_singularity) before creation. He exists as the effect as well, which is the entire universe after creation.

The Lord is both the effect and the cause

Here are a few scriptures that remind us of this fact. They state that both the cause and the effect are the Lord Himself:

Starting with [ChAndOgya], 6-2-1: [sadEva saumyEdamagramAsIt EkamEvAdvitIyam]

Prior to creation, this universe was present as [sat] - a subtle form, indistinguishable from the Lord. It alone existed, there was nothing else.

[ChAndOgya], 6-2-3: [tadaikShata bahusyAm prajayEyEti tattEjO\_sr'jata]

It willed to become many. It created energy and the material world.

[ChAndOgya], 6-8-6: [sanmUlA: sOmya imA: sarvAn prajA: sadAyatanA: satpratiShThA:]

It is the origin of everything and everyone. It - this [sat] - is the place of residence for all beings, The One in which all beings return when the universe perishes.

[ChAndOgya], 6-8-7: [aitadAtmyam idam sarvam tat satyam sa AtmA tat tvam asi shvEtakEtO]

This is at the core, present as the Self inside everything. This is the truth. You are such a Self.

The [taittarIya], 2-6 starts with 'He willed to be many beings. He gave thought to it. He created all of this by his thought', going on to state: 'The Ultimate Consciousness became the conscious and the non-conscious'.

This is repeated in the Chandogya Upanishad, as in [ChAndOgya], 6-3-2:

I enter the core of the three powers - energy, liquids and solids - and enable them to be called by names and be recognized by form.

The [taittarIya], 2-6 also states: Creating this universe, It entered and pervaded that universe itself; having pervaded, It gave rise to the Self and its association with the environment, the power to discern and the lack of it too. This [sat] is The Lord. He became the conscious Self and the non-conscious environment.

Before the time of creation, only an undivided entity existed without the possibility to distinguish and name anything. Only after the Lord's act of creation, this entity was separated into things that could be distinguished and named.

[br’hadArAnyaka], 1-4-7 also states the same:

All of this existed without being distinct, before the time of creation. The Lord made them distinct, after which they could be called by names.

Hence the gross universe, which is the effect of creation, as well as the [subtle cause](#subtle_singularity) that existed before creation, all conscious and non-conscious things [are the Lord's body](#universe_as_his_body). The effect is not different from the cause. In this way, by knowing the cause, we know everything that's created out of it. It is appropriate to say that knowledge of one gives the knowledge of everything.

*For example: A pot is made out of clay. It’s possible to consider the pot as clay, while acknowledging that they have different characteristics and uses. Knowing the properties of clay enables us to know a pot and everything else that’s made out of clay.*

Quoting [ChAndOgya], 6-3-2 again:

'I enter the three powers - energy, liquids and solids - by being at the core of every Self and distinguish them to be called by names' - The 'three powers' here denote the non-conscious elements in the environment. The Lord enters them as the core of the Self in each object, which enables them to be distinguished, recognized and named.

In this way, every sound and expression addresses the Lord, who is adorned with the Self and its inanimate matter. Thus the Lord, who is present as the ultimate cause, has equivalence with everything that's created - this is the primary meaning embedded here.

*If the Lord has equivalence to everything, does it mean He has ignorance as well?*

It is already said that the Lord is the material cause of the universe with its conscious beings and non-conscious things. He is the subtle form before creation as well as the gross result of creation - the universe we are in. Being the material cause implies that the Lord Himself became the conscious Self and the non-conscious environment.

Though the Lord has the Self and the environment [as His body](#universe_as_his_body), even though He is the material cause of their association, He remains distinct from them - the characteristics of the Lord are not mixed up with the characteristics of the Self or the environment.

*How is it possible that the Self and the environment remain distinct, even though they are part of the Lord’s* [*body*](#universe_as_his_body)*? Here’s an analogy:*

Just as colorful threads that are white, black or red come together to create cloth, the thread and the cloth remain distinct with different characteristics. While threads are the only material cause of a colorful cloth, each color is localized to the thread that went into making the cloth - even in the resulting cloth, the colors don't mix. The characteristics of the cloth are distinct from those of the threads.

The Self and the environment are effects of the Lord’s creation

The Self, the environment and the Lord combine to be the material cause of this world. While they are effects of the Lord's creation, their characteristics don't get mixed up. The Self remains the one who experiences; the environment is the one that’s experienced and the Lord is the One who controls.

Threads, which normally remain separate, are woven together at the will of a weaver at some instant. These threads are both the material cause and the effect.

Similarly, the Self and the environment in all states of being - either the subtle form before creation or the gross form after creation - are the [body of the Lord](#universe_as_his_body). They exist as entities only in the form of the [Lord's body](#universe_as_his_body). Their form is the Lord Himself, both as the cause and the observed effect. He is the One addressed by all words, all the time - This is His specialty.

The environment, the Self and the Lord have distinct characteristics – The environment is inanimate, without consciousness; The Self is knowledge, which is limited in its expression according to the actions committed by the Self; The Lord always has infinite knowledge.

As in the case of threads combining to make cloth, their characteristics remain distinct and don’t get mixed up. Given this, it's easy to recognize that the Lord's characteristic remains unchanged even after He enters everything in the created universe.

We realize again: In addition to being the cause, The Lord is also the effect of creation with its variety of entities that have various names and classifications. The Lord is present as the Ultimate Self inside everything. The word 'effect' just means that a different state of being is attained.

Those who vouch for the Lord as being 'without form and without qualities' mean that the Lord is devoid of any limiting qualities.

[ChAndOgya, daharavidyA], 8-1-5 describes that the following qualities are present in a small space inside our hearts: First, it is stated that this space is without limitations: Without flaws, without ageing, without death, without sorrow, without hunger, without thirst. The Lord is present in this space. His auspicious qualities are described: He has everything He wished; His every will is realized.

The Lord is without limitations. The word ‘[qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas)’ often refers to our limitations. Hence the statement is made in some scriptures that 'The Lord is without qualities'.

Certain scriptures describe the Lord as having a form of pure knowledge. They refer to the form of the Lord, who knows everything and is all-powerful, as being represented by pure knowledge that shines forth by its own strength. The form of the Lord is knowledge; He is devoid of limitations and has all auspicious qualities.

As said in [muNDaka], 1-1-9:

He knows the broad expanse of knowledge and has depth in each subject.

In [shvEtAshvatara], 6-8:

The Lord's ultimate strength is heard in many different ways. This strength is natural to Him, so are his knowledge, power and activities.

[br’hadArAnyaka], 2-4-14 remarks:

With what should we know the One who is the knower? This question reflects that we can know the Lord, who knows everything and is knowledge Himself, only with His grace.

The statement in [taittarIya], 2-1: [satyam jnAnam anantam brahma]

'The Lord is the truth, knowledge and is without an end' - Refers to the Lord in the form of knowledge that shows itself. When we are rid of the influence of our deeds, this knowledge shines forth by itself and we realize the Lord.

Many scriptures state that the Lord became the universe with all its beings. Let's look at them next:

[taittarIya], 2-6 says: 'The Lord wished to become many'. So also does the [ChAndOgya], 6-2-3: 'The Lord willed to be many' and the [br’hadArAnyaka], 1-4-7: 'It distinguished itself into many forms and names'. All of them state that the Lord Himself is present in many forms by His own will - this constitutes all of the various states and forms in which we see things.

Several scriptures state that nothing exists without having the Lord at the core of its Self. The existence of many independent things is a myth:

[kaThOpanishat], 2-2-10 starts with: 'The person who sees differently over here will go from one death to another' and goes on to say: [nEha nAnA\_sti kinchana] - 'Many different things don't exist here'.

Similarly, [br’hadArAnyaka], 2-4-14 says: 'The person who believes that there is a second thing separate from the Lord will see various different things. The person who believes that everything has the Lord as the ultimate Self - what does he see, using what does he see?'

*Meaning, both the eye and the object of sight have the Lord as their Self.*

Quoting [ChAndOgya], 6-2-3 again: 'It gave rise to many'.

The Self and the environment have their own characteristics, while being part of the Lord’s form.

Scriptures like these state that the many things we experience are the Lord's form, created by the Lord's will. Of course, this does not deny the existence of the Lord in multiple forms, resulting in the experience of multiple things.

Statements like the one in [br’hadArAnyaka], 4-5-15: 'When a person sees everything as his Self' - may seem like they deny variety. Yet, their meaning is realized by keeping in mind that everything is a form of the Lord. Further reinforcing this, [br’hadArAnyaka], 2-4-6 says: 'All knowledge stands against a person who believes that there are things that don't have the Lord as the Self'

[subAla], 2 says: All Vedas are just the breath of the great Lord.

In this way, the scriptures that describe the distinct forms and characteristics of the Self, the environment and the Lord do not contradict the other scriptures that hold out the singularity of cause and effect, describing everything as the Lord Himself.

The Self and the environment exist [as the body of the Lord](#universe_as_his_body) always. They have the Lord at the core, controlling them. This holds good in the subtle form in which they were present before creation - when they could not be distinguished by form and name. It also holds in their explicit form after creation, when they can be distinguished by names. This is known from all scriptures.

If we take the scriptures stating the singularity of the Lord literally, then the Self would itself be the Lord, then the Lord would have ignorance. This goes against all knowledge in the scriptures. There is no scope of maintaining this kind of singularity.

This was a very elaborate and sufficient discussion of the subject.

## 13-3

[

tat kShEtram yat cha yAdr'k cha yat vikArI yata: cha yat |

sa cha yO yat prabhAva: cha tat samAsEna mE shr'Nu || 3 ||

]

[tat kShEtram] That [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field) - [yat cha] What is it made up of? [yAdr'k] What are its characteristics? [yat vikArI] What are its changes? [yata: cha] What is its origin? [yat] What is its form? [sa cha] Then we talked about the [knower of the field](#field_and_knower_of_field) - [ya:] What is his form? [yat prabhAva: cha] What is his scope of influence? [tat mE shr'Nu] Listen to it from Me [samAsEna] in summary.

Our body is our [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field). What material is it made of? What does it host? What are its changes? What is the cause, due to which it is created? What is its purpose? What is the form of this body?

Who is the [knower of the body](#field_and_knower_of_field) - who is the Self? What is the form of this Self? What is the scope of influence of the Self - what is the extent of its control? Listen to this summary from Me, says the Lord.

## 13-4

[

r'Shibhi: bahudhA gItam ChandObhi: vividhai: pr'thak |

brahmasUtra padai: chaiva hEtumadbhi: vinishchitai: || 4 ||

]

[pr'thak] The fact the body and the Self are distinct [bahudhA gItam] has been told in many ways- [r'Shibhi:] by many Rishis, [vividhai: ChandObhi:] by various Vedas, [brahmasUtra padai:] by the verses of the Brahmasutra. [vinishchitai:] They state this fact with full conviction, [hEtumadbhi:] along with the reasoning and logic that goes with it.

The true nature of the body and the Self has been told by Rishis such as Parashara in many ways.

*Parashara was a great sage who described the three elements in the Vishnu Purana - the Self, the environment and the Lord. In that, he also described the achievement of* [*Moksha*](#Moksha)*.*

*There, he explains the three elements through an anecdote: There was once a king called Bahuguna. He set out on a palanquin, normally to be carried by four people. On that day, only three had turned up. Three people couldn’t hold it. Hence, the king called on Jadapradha, who was standing by the side. Jadapradha was a sage with vast knowledge, but looked quite ordinary. Hence the king mistook him for a commoner. Jadapradha lifted the palanquin. However, due to lack of practice, he did not lift well.*

*The king reprimanded him and Jadapradha replied - 'When you told me to lift this, did you tell my body or my Self? What lifted it? The body or the Self? What are you and what am I? Hearing this, the king realized that the person is no commoner. He requested Jadapradha to teach him. A part of that teaching follows now:*

In the [vishNu purANa], 2-13-69,70,71: ‘O King! You, I and others have been conceived with the elements. All our bodies are bogged down by the flood of three qualities. These qualities - [sattva, rajas and tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas) - are dictated by the past deeds we committed.

The deeds that we commit are born out of ignorance. *Ignorance is of two types - One is a belief that our body is our Self; Another is that the Self is independent of the Lord*. This is true of all beings. The Self is pure, peaceful and never wears out. It is not made from [the three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), it is superior, beyond any material’.

This is continued in [vishNu purANa], 2-13-89,102,103: ‘The Self is separate from the body, which is made up of the head and various other organs. Given this, what do I address, by the word 'me'? Are you this head? Or the chest? Or the stomach? Or the collection of legs and other organs?

O King, you are distinct from all these parts of your body. Think about who you are. Focus your intelligence on this. These two distinct entities - the Self and the environment - both have the [Lord as the Ultimate Self](#universe_as_his_body)’.

This is also summarized at the end of the Vishnu Sahasranama: The organs, the mind, the intellect, the elements, energy, strength, steadfastness - all of them have the Lord as their Ultimate Self - as does the body and the Self.

The distinction between the body and the Self has been told in the other Vedas as well.

The origin and nature of the body is described in [Anandavalli], 1: 'Space came into being from this Ultimate Self; Space carries fields (*such as gravitational and electromagnetic fields*); From these fields, energy came into being; From energy, fluids arose; Fluids became solids and planets. From the material of the planets arose organic compounds. Food in the form of vegetation is formed out of these compounds. From this food, the body of a person comes into being. Thus, a person is made from food and liquids'.

The Upanishad described the nature of the body as being made out of food. It goes on to state that the body has the breath of life and is pervaded by a mind. The Self resides in the body that’s pervaded by the mind. Yet, it is distinct from the body and the mind.

Having described the nature of the Self in this way, it goes on to say: ‘This Self has the Ultimate Self residing in it, being with infinite knowledge and filled with pure joy’.

In this way, the Vedas clearly state the distinction between the nature of the body and the mind. They state the fact that both of them have the Lord at their core. The Lord is the Ultimate Self.

The verses of the Brahmasutra describe the Lord as the owner of the Self and the body. They do so with conviction and logic. They start by establishing that space itself did not exist forever, that it came into existence at the time of creation. They go on to describe the nature of the body - the [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field). Then they describe the true form of the Self - the Self always exists in the form of awareness.

Finally, they describe the relation between the Self and the Lord, by saying that the Self is a doer of actions. That doership is entirely under the will of the Lord. The Lord sets the Self into action – even in this way, the Self has the Lord at its core.

The reality of the Self and its field of action have been elaborated in various scriptures in many ways. The Lord says - 'Now listen to Me, I will describe it in a clear and brief way'.

## 13-5 to 13-6

[

mahAbhUtAni ahaMkArO buddhi: avyaktam Eva cha |

indriyANi dashaikam cha pancha cha indriya gOcharA: || 5 ||

ichChA dvESha: sukham du:kham sanghAta: chEtanA dhr'ti: |

Etat kShEtram samAsEna savikAram udAhr'tam || 6 ||

]

[chEtanA dhr'ti:] The existence of a conscious being [sanghAta:] comes from a combination of the following:

[mahAbhUtAni] The five elements - solids, liquids, energy, gasses and space;

[ahaMkAra] the universe that existed before them, in which particles formed;

[buddhi:] the state before that, when the singularity expanded;

[avyaktam Eva cha] and the state before that, when the universe was subtle within that singularity;

[indriyANi dashaikam cha] the ten organs along with the mind;

[pancha cha indriya gOcharA:] and the five stimuli of the organs;

[ichChA] the desire to have what we like;

[dvESha:] the desire to avoid what we hate;

[sukham] comfort; [du:kham] pain.

[Etat kShEtram] This [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field) - your body - [udAhr'tam] has just been described [samAsEna] in summary, [savikAram] along with the changes it undergoes.

*The origin of the body has been explained in this Shloka by quoting the stages in cosmic inflation:* *Cosmic inflation is the expansion of the* [*subtle singularity*](#subtle_singularity)*, which existed before creation. Here, the subtle singularity is called [avyaktam]. The next states are [buddhi] (also called [mahat]), the plasma that resulted from the inflation, [ahaMkAra] the state in which subatomic particles were formed, [tanmAtra] the atoms and [mahabhUta], the five elements.*

The body is a collection of elements formed since the birth of the universe

This Shloka begins with: 'The five elements; prior to those, the sub-atomic particles; before that, the state of expansion; before creation, the universe in subtle form'. This list described the ingredients involved in the origin of the body. The body is made from the five elements - solids, liquids, energy, gasses and space. These five elements originated from the particles that were formed during creation. These particles resulted from the state of expansion, also termed as cosmic inflation.

Before the state of expansion, all of this existed in a subtle form, incapable of being distinguished with names. That is the ‘subtle singularity’.

The 'ten organs with the mind and the five stimuli' are the entities that have the body as their home. Our ears, nose, eyes, tongue and skin are the five sense organs. Speech, hands, legs and the two excretory organs are the organs of action. The mind has the body as its home too, as do the five stimuli of the senses - sound, touch, form, taste and smell.

Feelings of desire, hatred, comfort and sorrow are associated with the body. Hence, they are considered to be variations in the state of the body.

To clarify: Though desire, hatred, comfort, sorrow are experienced by the Self, those experiences come out of its association with the body. Since these experiences are effects of the body, they are considered as different states of the body. This is stated later in this chapter, [Chap.13#20](#_20_1): 'The Self experiences comfort and sorrow by virtue of being associated with the body'.

A combination of all these elements constitutes the body, which exists as a base on which the Self can experience feelings such as comfort and sorrow. The body is the base for worldly experience as well as the achievement of [Moksha](#Moksha). That is why this Shloka states that 'The body supports the existence a conscious being'.

In this way, the [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field) - our body - started with the environment in the [subtle singularity](#subtle_singularity) and ended up in this world. It is made out of the five elements, contains the organs and undergoes change due to love, hatred, comfort or pain. It is a combination of all these entities, existing as a base for the conscious Self to have its experiences. This is our body in brief, along with its various states.

Next, the Lord describes the virtues that go with Self-awareness. These virtues are present in the activities of our body.

When we recognize the body for what it is, we live the life we’re meant to live

## 13-7

[

amAnitvam adambhitvam ahiMsA kShAnti: Arjavam |

AchArya upAsanam shaucham sthairyam Atma vinigraham || 7 ||

]

[amAnitvam] Without a sense of superiority, [adambhitvam] without hypocrisy, [ahiMsA] with no intention to harm anyone, [kShAnti:] being without agitation [Arjavam] with consistency in thought, speech and deed, [AchArya upAsanam] with respect and adoration for the teacher, [shaucham] with cleanliness, [sthairyam] being steadfast, [Atma vinigraham] with self-discipline.

Let's now examine each of the virtues mentioned in this Shloka, which go with Self-realization.

Being ‘without a sense of superiority’ is about being without disrespect towards great people;

Being ‘without hypocrisy’ - hypocrisy is when the path of duty is followed for the sake of gaining fame. This is about being free from the goal of achieving fame;

Having no intention to harm anyone, either through speech, deeds or thought;

‘Being without agitation’ is about having an unchanged attitude towards those who trouble and provoke;

‘Consistency in thought, speech and deed’ - saying what we intend, doing what we say;

‘Respect and adoration towards the teacher’ is about committing to respect, inquire and serve a teacher who bestows Self-awareness;

‘Cleanliness’ is the awareness of the Self - keeping the body, mind and speech fit to achieve that awareness;

Being ‘steadfast’ in the quest for the knowledge of the Self;

‘Self-discipline’ is to restrain the organs from subjects that are opposed to the awareness of the Self.

## 13-8

[

indriyArthEShu vairAgyam anahaMkAra Eva cha |

janma mr'tyu jarA vyAdhi du:kha dOShAnudarshanam || 8 ||

]

[vairAgyam] Without indulging the desire [indriyArthEShu] for the enjoyment of our organs, [anahaMkAra] without the misconception that the body is the Self, [anudarshanam] considering [du:kha dOSha] that flaws and sorrows [janma mr'tyu jarA vyAdhi] such as birth, death, old age and disease are inevitable consequences of the body.

Considering that the enjoyment of our organs is unrelated to the realization of the Self; that it is tainted with flaws, staying away from them;

Without the misconception that the body is the Self – not only the body, this applies to any other entity that can be confused with the Self;

Events that cause sorrow - such as death and disease - are inevitable as long as we are associated with our body.

## 13-9

[

asakti: anabhiShvanga: putra dAra gr'hAdiShu |

nityam cha sama chittatvam iShTAniShTa upapattiShu || 9 ||

]

[asakti:] Not bound by attachments, [anabhiShvanga:] being without possessiveness [putra dAra gr'hAdiShu] towards a son, wife or a home, [sama chittatvam] having the same attitude [nityam] at all times, [cha] even on [upapattiShu] encountering [iShTa aniShTa] the favorable and the unfavorable.

Not bound by attachment to anything other than the Self;

Fulfilling the duties towards a son, wife or home, without stepping over to become possessive about them;

Having the same attitude at all times, even on encountering the favorable and the unfavorable - Often we intend something, after which favorable or unfavorable events [happen](#happenings). This is about being without ecstasy or agony in those situations.

This comes from the fact that the intent is ours and the outcome is a result of our past deeds.

## 13-10

[

mayi cha ananya yOgEna bhakti: avyabhichAriNE |

vivikta dEsha sEvitvam arati: janasamsadi || 10 ||

]

[mayi bhakti:] With devotion in Me, [ananya yOgEna] not bound to any other purpose; [avyabhichAriNE] Without deviating to other goals and other sources of power; [sEvitvam] Honoring [vivikta dEsha] a place of solitude; [arati:] Being free of attachment [janasamsadi] in the company of many.

This Shloka speaks about the virtues of having unshakeable devotion in the Lord, being content in a place of solitude and being free of attachment in the company of many.

## 13-11

[

adhyAtma jnAna nityatvam tatva jnAnArtha darshanam |

Etat jnAnam iti prOktam ajnAnam yadatO\_nyathA || 11 ||

]

[nityatvam] Being persistent [adhyAtma jnAna] in the quest of Self-awareness; [chintanam] Reflection [tatva jnAnArtha] to realize the truth - [Etat] This [jnAnam iti prOktam] is said to be awareness. [yat] Anything [ata: anyathA] other than this [ajnAnam] is ignorance.

Having the virtue of persistence in the quest of the Self;

The character of ‘reflection to realize the truth’ is about dedication towards those thoughts, whose purpose is to know the true nature of everything - Such awareness leads to the discovery of the Self.

The Lord described a set of virtues starting with Chap.13#7. He began with the statement ['being without a sense of superiority](#virtues_amanitvam)'. Such virtues are useful to everybody in the quest for Self-awareness.

What obstacles come in the way of our lives?

Any work that doesn't comply with these virtues is called ignorance (*for example, work done for fame and superiority, or due to attachments*) - it blocks Self-awareness.

In the first Shloka of this chapter, the Lord described the Self as 'the one who is aware'. Next, He clarifies the nature of the Self along with its awareness.

## 13-12

[

jnEyam yat tat pravakShyAmi yat jnAtvA amr'tam ashnutE |

anAdimat param brahma na sat tat nAsaduchyatE || 12 ||

]

[pravakShyAmi] I will explain [tat yat jnEyam] that awareness, [jnAtvA yat] with which [amr'tam ashnutE] people achieve [freedom from the cycle of death](#Moksha). [brahma] The Self expands [mat param] to realize that I am supreme. [na sat] This state is not the one in which the Self is bound to this environment. [na asat uchyatE] It is also not the state when the Self is present in the [subtle singularity](#subtle_singularity).

The Lord continues -

The Self is always evident to us. Its nature must be grasped by the [virtues described before](#virtues_amanitvam) in Chap.13#7.

I will clarify the nature of the Self now. You will grasp the Self with this knowledge.

By nature, the Self is not subject to the laws of the material world. It is free of birth, old age and death. It has no beginning, likewise no ending either. This is said in [kaTha upanishat], 2-18: 'It is not born, does not perish, it is full of wisdom'.

The Self realizes My supremacy, as I said in Chap.7#5: ‘Know My ultimate nature in the form of a conscious being, by whom this world is sustained’

By being the [body of the Lord](#universe_as_his_body), It is in the very nature of the Self to enjoy being under the service of the Lord. This is said in the [br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-22: ‘The One who is situated in the Self and pervades it; The One whom the Self does not know; The One whose [body is the Self](#universe_as_his_body); The One who controls the Self from its core’.

And in [shvEtAshvatara], 6-9: He is the Controller of the one who controls the organs. He has no origin, He has no controller. In [shvEtAshvatara], 9-16: He is the owner of both the Self and the environment; The Lord of all qualities.

The knowledge in the Self is infinite. It is distinct from the body and not bound by it. As said in [shvEtAshvatara], 5-9: The Self is able to achieve the state of boundlessness. Being bound to a body is the outcome of the actions committed by the Self. When the Self is free from the bonds of action, it [reaches infinity](#Moksha).

The word [brahma] in this chapter refers to the unbound Self. The word [brahma] is used this way in other Shlokas too - as in Chap.14#26: 'With focused devotion, a person completely overcomes the three qualities and is cut out to [brahmabhUya] – the experience the Self in its true form’ and in Chap.18#54: 'Having realized the Self, with a serene mind, he doesn't get upset and doesn't yearn. Such a person realizes the equivalence among all beings. He attains ultimate [devotion to Me](#bhakti_a_defn)’.

The last part of this Shloka says - 'This state is not the one in which the Self is bound to this environment. It is also not the state when the Self is present in the [subtle singularity](#subtle_singularity)'.

When [liberated](#Moksha), the Self is not associated with being the cause, nor the effect. The words ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ don’t relate to the state of the Self. While interpreting this Shloka, the word '[sat]' is mapped to the state after creation, where things can be distinguished and be named. '[asat]' is the state before creation, when this could not be done.

This interpretation is supported by the scriptures:

[Anandavalli], 7: '[asat] was the state that existed before all this. Then [sat] was born' and [br’hadArAnyaka], 1-4-7: 'At that time (before creation), this world was undivided. The Lord created the classifications with names and forms'

Ignorance prevents the Self from expressing its completeness

The terms 'cause' and 'effect' are applicable to the ignorance that sticks to the Self, by the influence of past actions. They are not characteristic of the Self. Hence, these terms don't describe the nature of the Self.

The phrase '[asat] was the state that existed before all this' says that the universe and its beings were the [body of the Lord](#universe_as_his_body) before creation, though in subtle form.

Before creation, the Lord had His body (the universe) in subtle form. That was a state in which nothing could be distinguished by a name. Even in this state, the Self is still bound to the material world due to its actions. That does not describe its true nature.

## 13-13

[

sarvata: pANi pAdam tat sarvatO\_kShi shirO mukham |

sarvata: shrutimat lOkE sarvam Avr'tya tiShThati || 13 ||

]

[tat] It [sarvata: pANi pAdam] has all possible arms and feet, [sarvata: akShi shirO mukham] all possible eyes, heads and faces [sarvata: shrutimat] and all possible activities. [tiShThati] It is [sarvam Avr'tya] all-pervasive [lOkE] in this world.

The pure and [liberated](#Moksha) Self is capable of doing anything that can be done by our organs. It has eyes, heads and faces everywhere. It accomplishes all activities of these organs.

In the scriptures, [svEtAshvatara] 3-19 describes the Lord in this way: 'He moves about without using any legs, grasps without hands, sees without eyes, listens without ears'. It means the Lord can accomplish anything we do with our organs, while not being bound by them.

When [liberated](#Moksha), the pure Self is equivalent to the Lord. It can accomplish the same without needing any organs.

The equivalence is mentioned in the scriptures, as in [muMDaka upanishat], 3-1-3: 'The one who practices devotion gives up both virtue and flaw, becomes pure, achieving equality with the Ultimate'. It is also said in Chap.14#2: 'Having gained this knowledge, they achieve My characteristics'.

This Shloka ended with: 'It is all-pervasive in this world' - It pervades every entity that exists in this world. In its pure form, the Self does not have constraints of space. Hence it pervades everything.

## 13-14

[

sarvEndriya guNAbhAsam sarvEndriya vivarjitam |

asaktam sarva bhr't chaiva nirguNam guNa bhOktr' cha || 14 ||

]

[sarvEndriya guNAbhAsam] It gives all organs their specialty, [savrvEndriya vivarjitam] yet remains distinct from all those organs. [asaktam] It is free of attachment, [sarva bhr't chaiva] while being capable of donning any body. [nirguNam] It is free of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), [guNa bhOktr' cha] while being capable of experiencing those qualities.

The Self is the one which illuminates all organs - these organs sense, act and are involved in an experience, only if a Self is associated with them.

The Self is capable of knowing even without the organs. When [freed](#Moksha) from the boundaries of the organs, the Self naturally knows everything.

By nature, the Self is not attached to any body - not also the body of a [powerful god](#gods_and_other_powers). Yet, the Self is capable of donning any body, as said in [ChAndOgya], 7-16-2: 'When the Self is liberated, it can take one form, three forms...'

The pure Self is naturally free of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Yet, it is capable of experiencing the effects of those qualities.

## 13-15

[

bahiranta: cha bhUtAnAm acharam charam Eva cha |

sUkShmatvAt tadavijnEyam dUrastham chAntikE cha tat || 15 ||

]

[tat] This pure Self [bahi:] is outside [anta: cha] and inside [bhUtAnAm] all beings. [charam] It moves [acharam] while being unmoved. [tat avijnEyam] It is not recognized [sUkShmatvAt] because it is subtle. [dUrastham cha] Even while being far away, [tat] the Self [antikam] is close by.

In its [liberated](#Moksha) state, the Self is rid of the elements - being free from all forms of solids, liquids, gasses, energy and space, the Self has no body. It is then outside of all bodies. It can choose to be inside any body it wishes, as said in [ChandOgya], 8-12-3: 'it plays and enjoys, passing time with friends'.

By nature, it isn’t bound by space and time - it is unmoved. When it owns a body, it moves about.

We do not recognize the Self, even though it is present in our body. That’s because it is extremely subtle. Though it is endowed with every capability and all knowledge, those who are bound to this world do not recognize it as being distinct from their bodies.

This Shloka ends by saying: 'Even while being far away, the Self is close by'.

The Self seems a far reach to those who aren’t capable of the [virtues described before](#virtues_amanitvam) (Chap.13#7-11). For example, someone with a sense of superiority is far from realizing the Self, even though it is present in their own body.

Those with the virtues described in the same shlokas (Chap.13#7-11), like those  [without a sense of superiority](#virtues_amanitvam) would find the Self close by, right within their grasp.

## 13-16

[

avibhaktam cha bhUtEShu vibhaktam iva cha sthitam |

bhUta bhartr' cha tat jnEyam grasiShNu prabhaviShNu cha || 16 ||

]

[tat] The Self, [jnEyam] which is to be recognized, [sthitam] is present [bhUtEShu] in all beings [avibhaktam] without variation. [cha] Yet, [vibhaktam iva] it seems like the Self in each being is varied in nature. [bhUta bhartr'] It wears the form of the being it owns. [gr'siShNu] It is the one that absorbs [prabhaviShNu cha] and the one that thrives.

The Self is pure knowledge

The Self is identical in all beings, in the form of pure knowledge. To the ignorant, it seems to vary based on the form of the being - some beings have a powerful form, some don't and so on.

Usually, the Self is equated to the body, when we say 'I am powerful', 'I am ordinary' and so on. Yet, it is distinct from the body - it is capable of awareness, while the body isn’t.

It is possible to know the Self, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (Chap.13#2). It is possible to know the Self as being distinct from the variety of bodies it occupies - this is expressed here by the phrase 'It wears the form of the being it owns'.

We must realize that the one who wears the body - the Self - is distinct from the body itself. The body is formed by bringing the elements of nature together. It is possible to know that the wearer of the body is distinct from the body which is worn.

This is illustrated in the Shloka with an example: Our body absorbs nature. We eat things made from the elements of nature, such as rice. It is possible to know ourselves as those who eat, distinct from the food being eaten.

The Self in our body causes the transformation of food. The food we eat transforms into tissues, blood and other parts of the body, producing the experience of thriving growth and sustenance.

The Self is distinct from that food, before and after this transformation. This is evident by the fact that a dead body does not transform food into anything. So, the combination of elements that form the body cannot be the cause of this transformation.

## 13-17

[

jyOtiShAm api tat jyOti: tamasa: param uchyatE |

jnAnam jnEyam jnAnagamyam hr'di sarvasya viShThitam || 17 ||

]

[tat jyOti:] It is brilliant [jyOtiShAm api] even among those which are bright. [uchyatE] It is said to be [param] beyond [tamasa:] the bounds of the environment. [jnAnam] It is knowledge, [jnEyam] it must be recognized. [viShThitam] It is specially situated [sarvasya] in everyone [hr'di] at their heart. [jnAnagamyam] This Self can be grasped by awareness.

The Self alone shines brilliant, even when it is among lamps, the sun and other bright things. It throws light on them - The Self is what makes the experience of brightness happen. Things that give light remove the darkness that blocks sight, nothing more. The Self alone recognizes and experiences brightness.

The word [tamas] used in this Shloka refers to the inanimate environment in its subtle state before creation. The environment doesn't have the capability to know and experience.

The Self is beyond the bounds of this environment.

The Self itself is awareness. We must recognize it. The Self can be grasped by practicing the virtues that were described in Chap.13#7-11, such as [being without a sense of superiority](#virtues_amanitvam).

The Self is specially embedded at the heart of all beings.

## 13-18

[

iti kShEtram tathA jnAnam jnEyam chOktam samAsata: |

madbhakta Etat vijnAya mat bhAvAya upapadyatE || 18 ||

]

[iti] In this way, [kShEtram] the [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field), [jnAnam] the knowledge [tathA jnEyam] and what must be known [uktam] were stated [samAsata:] in brief. [Etat vijnAya] Knowing this, [madbhakta] My devotee [upapadyatE] steps up to achieve [mat bhAvAya] equality with Me.

In this way, the entity we call 'our body' was described briefly in [Chap.13#5,6](#_5_to_6).

After this, the achievement of Self-awareness was described starting from [Chap.13#7](#_7_2) up until [Chap.13#11](#_11_1).

The true nature of the Self was described in brief, starting with [Chap.13#12](#_12_1) and concluding with [Chap.13#17](#_17). The Self was described as the one that must be recognized.

After this, the Lord says - 'Knowing these - the body, the Self being distinct from the body and the means to grasp the true form of the Self - My devotee steps up to achieve equality with Me. He steps up to achieve My characteristics, being independent of the material world. This is his natural state’.

The material environment and the Self have vastly different characteristics. The next Shloka describes the beginning-less bond between them, how they work in bondage and the reason for their bonding.

## 13-19

[

prakr'tim puruSham chaiva viddhi anAdi ubhau api |

vikArAn cha guNAn chaiva viddhi prakr'ti sambhavAn || 19 ||

]

[viddhi] Know that [ubhau] both [prakr'tim] the material environment [puruSham cha] and the Self [anAdi] are without a beginning [api] too. [viddhi] Know that [vikArAn] the changes we undergo [guNAn cha] and our [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) [prakr'ti sambhavAn] are born out of the material environment.

Know that the material environment and the Self that's bound to it are without a beginning. Know also that their bond is without a beginning too.

The states we traverse - such as the states of desire and hatred - bind us to the environment. Virtues such as [being without a sense of superiority](#virtues_amanitvam) lead to freedom.

Both of them – the states that bind us and the [virtues](#virtues_amanitvam) that free us - are born out of an association with the body and the environment.

Use the body to get entangled or liberated – it’s your choice

The body is made up of the elements of the environment. When it is associated with the Self, it goes through various states such as desire and hatred. This causes the Self to get entangled.

When the same body goes through [states of humility and so on](#virtues_amanitvam), it can bring the [liberation](#Moksha) of the Self.

## 13-20

[

kArya kAraNa kartr'tvE hEtu: prakr'ti: uchyatE |

puruSha: sukha du:khAnAm bhOktr'tvE hEturuchyatE || 20 ||

]

[prakr'ti:] The material environment [hEtu: uchyatE] is said to be the cause [kArya kAraNa kartr'tvE] of the transactions in the body, the organs and the mind. [puruSha:] The Self [hEtu: uchyatE] is said to be the space [sukha du:khAnAm bhOktr'tvE] in which happiness and sorrow are experienced.

The sense organs, organs of action and the mind constitute the body. The body is made up of [elements](#five_elements) of the environment. When the Self occupies a body, its organs become active. These activities lead to experiences that keep happening, as long as the Self is in the body.

The role of the Self is to preside over the body and sustain it. In support of that fact, the Brahmasutra says: [kartA shAstrArthavatvAt] - the Self initiates action. That's why the scriptures address the Self when they preach virtues such as humility, honesty and devotion.

The intention to do something and initiate action is left to the Self. Everything else goes according to the Lord's will.

In summary:

The Self presides over the body and sustains it, bringing initiative - that's it. Experiences such as comfort and pain come from its association with the material world. In other words, our body is the field in which comfort and pain are experienced by the Self.

In this way, the division of work between the environment (the body) and the Self was described. It holds as long as the Self and the body are bound together.

Next, the reason for the Self to be bound in material experiences is described. Why we are bound this way, even though the Self is pure joy and experiences itself?

## 13-21, first part

[

puruSha: prakr'tisthO hi bhunktE prakr'tijAn guNAn |

]

[puruSha:] The Self [bhunktE] experiences [guNAn] the peculiarities [prakr'tijAn] born out of the environment, [prakr'tistha: hi] as long as it is bound in the body.

This Shloka talks about 'the qualities born out of the environment'.

These are the effects of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) - *sattva* results in serenity and knowledge, *rajas* leads to the ‘drive’ that comes from desire and hatred, *tamas* leads to lethargy.

The natural state of the Self is to experience itself in the form of perpetual pure joy.

However, when the Self is in the environment, it is bound to the material world. It experiences the effects of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). This leads to comfort, sorrow and so on.

Next, the Lord states the reason for the Self to be bound in the material world:

## 13-21, second part

[

kAraNam guNasangO\_sya sadasat yOni janmasu || 21 ||

]

[kAraNam] This is caused by [guNasanga: asya] its association with the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) [janmasu] in births [yOni] originating from [sat] virtue [asat] and flaws.

In the past, this Self has been in various environments and bodies as a result of different births - being born as a powerful being, as an ordinary human, as an animal or a lower life form.

It has pursued desires, comforts and sorrows according to those births. These pursuits were driven by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). In these endeavors, actions of virtue were committed, along with flaws and mistakes.

To experience the outcomes of those actions, the Self takes on pleasant or unpleasant births again. It takes initiatives in accordance with its birth. Again, it is born to experience the outcomes of those initiatives.

It keeps cycling in the material world, till the time it cultivates [virtues](#virtues_amanitvam) that lead to Self-awareness. [Virtues](#virtues_amanitvam) such as humility lead to Self-awareness (described in Chap.13#7-11).

In this way, the Self is bound to the material world. It happens due to its association with the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) over many births. This association is born out of virtues and flaws committed during those previous births.

## 13-22

[

upadraShTA anumantA cha bhartA bhOktA mahEshvara: |

paramAtmA iti chApyuktO dEhE\_smin puruSha: para: || 22 ||

]

[asmin dEhE] In this body, [para: puruSha:] the Self is distinct. [upadraShTA] It is the witness [anumantA cha] and the enabler. [bhartA] It wears and holds the body. [bhOktA] It is the one that experiences. [mahEshvara:] It is the owner. [paramAtmA iti cha api ukta:] It is also said to be the supreme person.

The Self plays the role of a witness and [enabler](#self_initiates_action) while it’s in a body- with its intentions and initiatives that suit the body it occupies. In this way the Self holds the body together.

It also experiences the feelings of comfort and sorrow that are generated by the tendencies of the body. In this way, the Self is the owner of the body, its organs and the mind. It coordinates activities by sustaining the body and by being its controller.

A similar fact is stated later in Chap.15#8: 'When the lord of the body takes leave of its environment (when it leaves the body at the time of death), it takes the essence of the body along, just as the wind takes the fragrance from a fragrant thing'.

The Self is also said to be the supreme person in relation to the body, its organs and the mind. The Self in relation to the body and the mind is described next in Chap.13#24: 'Some see the Self inside their body through focused thought, using their mind'.

Notice the phrase [cha api] - 'also' in this Shloka ('It is also said to be the supreme person'). It implies that the Self is regarded as the supreme person, in addition to being the controller. The superiority of the Self is described in Chap.13#12: 'The Self expands to infinite knowledge, realizing that the Lord is supreme'.

The Self has been entangled since beginning-less time

The Self has unbroken knowledge and strength. However, it has been bound to the environment from beginning-less time. Due to this, it is attached to the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and is the controller of this body, nothing more. It is said to be supreme only in relation to the body.

## 13-23

[

ya Enam vEtti puruSham prakr'tim cha guNai: saha |

sarvathA vartamAnO\_pi na sa bhUya: abhijAyatE || 23 ||

]

[ya:] The person who [vEtti] knows [Enam puruSham] this Self [cha] and [prakr'tim] the environment [guNai: saha] with its [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) - [sa:] such a person [bhUya: na abhijAyatE] will not be born again, [api] even though [sarvathA vartamAna:] he has been in all kinds of bodies and has committed all kinds of actions.

This Self and its characteristics have been described. Its environment is the body. The characteristics of the body have also been described.

A person who knows both would have the ability to distinguish them in their actual form. He knows their characteristics along with the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Such a person will not be born again.

A person who distinguishes the Self gets disentangled.

Meaning, such a person doesn’t get entangled by attachments in the material world, though he may have been associated with power, greed and uncountable flaws in the past.

Such a person knows the characteristics of the Self. They are described next.

At the time of leaving the body, this person realizes the Self in the form of an unbroken expanse of knowledge, unspoilt by any flaw.

## 13-24

[

dhyAnEnA\_tmani pashyanti kEchit AtmAnam AtmanA |

anyE sAnkhyEna yOgEna karmayOgEna chAparE || 24 ||

]

[kEchit] Some [pashyanti] see [AtmAnam] their Self [Atmani] inside themselves [AtmanA] using their mind, [dhyAnEna] with focused [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). [anyE] Others [sAnkhyEna yOgEna] realize it with dedication to [knowledge](#jnAnayOga_a_defn). [cha aparE] Yet others realize it [karmayOgEna] through [work without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga), purely as worship to the Lord.

Some people are complete in their devotion. Such people see the Self situated in their own bodies, by bringing their mind to focus on [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) to the Lord.

Others, who have not achieved complete devotion, prepare their minds with the technique of [[jnAnayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn)] – They bring the mind to focus on the knowledge of the Self.

Yet others are unable to focus in this manner. Some are capable and yet want an easier method. Such people are famously known to practice [[karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)]. They work without attachment, purely as worship to the Lord. The knowledge of the Self is embedded in such work. Using this knowledge, they prepare their mind to focus on the Self.

## 13-25

[

anyE tvEvam ajAnanta: shrutvA\_nyEbhya upAsatE |

tE\_pi chAtitaranti Eva mr'tyum shruti parAyaNA: || 25 ||

]

[anyE tu] Others [Evam ajAnanta:] do not know this. [shrutvA] They hear about it [anyEbhya:] from various people [upAsatE] and practice. [tE] They [atitaranti Eva] will certainly cross over [mr'tyum] the cycle of death and birth [api cha] as well, [shruti parAyaNA:] with strong belief in the scriptures they’ve heard.

There are others who do not study the scriptures. They don’t know about [working without attachments](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) and other methods to realize the Self.

They listen to people who know and show the way. They work without attachment, purely as worship to the Lord - they achieve the Self by these methods.

These people also realize the Self and overcome the cycle of death and birth. They consider what they have heard and learnt to be superior. By dedicating themselves to the methods they have learnt, they get rid of their flaws.

Then, they gradually start the practice of [working without attachments](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga). They overcome the cycle of death and re-birth as well - in addition to people who know and practice [[bhaktiyOga](#bhakti_a_defn)], [[jnAnayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn)] and [[karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)].

Next, the Lord states that all beings - moving and stationary - are a combination of conscious and non-conscious elements. He states this in order to describe how the Self and its environment can be distinguished.

## 13-26

[

yAvat sanjAyatE kinchit sattvam sthAvara jangamam |

kShEtra kShEtrajna samyOgAt tadviddhi bharatarShabha || 26 ||

]

[bharatarShabha] Arjuna, [yAvat] whenever [kinchit sattvam] anything [jangamam] moving [sthAvara] or stationary [sanjAyatE] comes into being, [tat viddhi] know that [samyOgAt] it is by an association of [kShEtra] a body formed from the environment [kShEtrajna] and the Self.

Whenever something comes into being – for instance a human, a moving animal or a stationary plant – know that they all come into being by an association of the body and the Self. They are all born with this association. Nothing comes into being with a separate Self and a separate body.

(*Of course, a liberated Self is separated from all bonds of the environment. They are eternal, they don’t 'come into being'. This Shloka is only about those who are in the cycle of coming into being*)

## 13-27

[

samam hi sarva bhUtEShu tiShThantam paramEshvaram |

vinashyatsu avinashyantam ya: pashyati sa pashyati || 27 ||

]

[paramEshvaram] The controller of the body [tiShThantam] is situated [sarva bhUtEShu] in all beings [samam] in the same way. [ya: pashyati] The person who sees it [avinashyantam] as permanent [vinashyatsu] among the perishable [sa pashyati] sees and realizes the Self.

In this way, a Self and a body, though distinct, come together to form every thing. A huge variety of things are formed and each being is unique.

In all beings, the Self is situated as the owner of the body, the organs and the mind. It has the same characteristic in all of them - the character of infinite knowledge and unbounded joy.

Though all beings perish, the Self inside them is indestructible by nature.

When we see this Self as equal in everyone, we see it as the one that does not perish – though it’s inside a perishable body. We see the Self in its true form.

On the other hand, a person who sees the Self in different forms inside the different forms of beings, who considers the Self as being subject to birth and death will constantly be trapped in the material world.

## 13-28

[

samam pashyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam Ishvaram |

na hinasti AtmanA AtmAnam tatO yAti parAm gatim || 28 ||

]

[pashyan] Seeing [Ishvaram] the owner of the body, [samavasthitam] situated at the core of [sarvatra] every being [samam] in the same way, [na hinasti] he does not torture [AtmAnam] the Self [AtmanA] with his mind. [tata:] That's why [yAnti hi] he will certainly reach [parAm gatim] the [ultimate goal](#Moksha).

In every being - whether animal, an ordinary human or a powerful person - a Self is present as its owner, forming the basis for the existence of the being.

A person who sees the Self in everyone as equal - having unbounded awareness as its only true form, irrespective of the kind of body it owns - such a person does not torture the Self in himself with the mind. Meaning, he [frees](#Moksha) the Self from this material world, using his mind.

In this way, by seeing the Self as pure awareness, being equal in all, he realizes the true nature of the Self and reaches the [ultimate goal](#Moksha).

On the other hand, a person who sees the Self as being different because it's associated with different beings will throw his Self into the depths of the material world. In this way he tortures himself.

## 13-29

[

prakr'tyaiva cha karmANi kriyamANAni sarvasha: |

ya: pashyati tathA AtmAnam akartAram sa pashyati || 29 ||

]

[cha] Further, [ya: pashyati] the person who sees that [karmANi] activities [kriyamANAni] that are carried out [sarvasha: prakr'tyA Eva] come strictly from the environment [tathA] will infer that [AtmAnam] the Self [akartAram] does not carry out actions. [sa: pashyati] Such a person sees the Self in its true form.

Universally, all activities carried out are a result of [happenings](#actions_and_happenings) in the environment, soaked in its [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). This was said already in Chap.13#20: 'The material environment is said to be the cause of the transactions of the body, the organs and the mind'.

The person who sees that all activities are a result of the body and the environment will see the Self as pure awareness. He doesn’t see it as the one who carries out the work. Such a person is aware of the Self and sees it in true form.

This person knows that his ignorance comes out of past deeds. He also knows this ignorance to be responsible for his bond with the environment, being bound inside a body and in experiences of comfort and sorrow.

(*If the Self does not carry out actions as described here, what does it do? Look back at Chap.13#20 for a description of* [*what the Self does*](#self_initiates_action))

## 13-30

[

yadA bhUta pr'thak bhAvam Ekastham anupashyati |

tata Eva cha vistAram brahma sampadyatE tadA || 30 ||

]

[yadA] When [anupashyati] he recognizes that [bhAvam] the intuition [pr'thak] of separate [bhUta] bodies [Ekastham] is actually part of one environment [cha] and sees that [vistAram] the expanse of variety [tata: Eva] comes from the same, [tadA] then, [sampadyatE] he earns [brahma] the Self.

Each being in this world is a combination of the environment and the Self. This is true of everyone, from the most powerful to the least, human or otherwise. The beings of this world exhibit a wide variety of character such as powerful and ordinary, big and small.

When a person sees all these visible characteristics as part of a single entity - the environment, when he sees his succession of children and grandchildren as an effect of that environment itself, he gains the Self immediately. He sees the Self as an unbroken expanse of pure awareness.

## 13-31

[

anAditvAt nirguNatvAt paramAtmA ayam avyaya: |

sharIrastha: api kauntEya na karOti na lipyatE || 31 ||

]

[anAditvAt] By being without a beginning [nirguNatvAt] and without the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), [ayam paramAtmA] this supreme essence [avyaya:] doesn’t wear out. [kauntEya] Arjuna, [sharIrastha: api] though the Self is situated in the body, [na karOti] it does not make anything [happen](#actions_and_happenings), [na lipyatE] it doesn’t get stuck.

This Self is the supreme owner of the body and mind. It has been described as being separate from the body, with entirely separate characteristics.

Even though the Self is inside the body, it does not wear out and perish. To start with, it has no beginning. It does not have the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) in its nature; hence it does not make anything [happen](#actions_and_happenings) in the environment.

The Self isn’t affected by anything that happens in the body or the rest of the environment – those happenings do not stick to the Self or alter its characteristics.

The question now is- 'This Shloka states that the Self does not make anything happen, since it isn’t made up of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Yet, it is constantly associated with the environment and a body. Still, the characteristics of the body don't stick to it. How come?'

This question is answered next.

## 13-32

[

yathA sarvagatam saukShmyAt AkAsham nOpalipyatE |

sarvatra avasthitO dEhE tathA AtmA nOpalipyatE || 32 ||

]

[yatha] Just as [AkAsham] space [sarvagatam] pervades all matter, [na upalipyatE] yet remains without getting attached to anything [saukShmyAt] by virtue of being subtle - [tathA] so also [AtmA] the Self [sarvatra avasthita:] is constantly present [dEhE] in every body, [na upalipyatE] yet doesn’t get attached to any of their characteristics.

Every single object has space, no matter how small it is. Though space is associated with every object, it doesn’t get attached to the characteristics of any object. Space is subtle.

(*This is easily seen - even when a region of space is occupied by a very dirty object, there no dirt sticking to that space. When the object completely vacates it, that space remains unaffected*)

Though the Self pervades the body, it doesn’t have any characteristics of the body

Similarly, the Self is extremely subtle. It doesn’t get stuck with any characteristics of the body, though it has occupied all kinds of bodies - powerful, ordinary, big and small.

## 13-33

[

yathA prakAshayati Eka: kr'tsnam lOkam imam ravi: |

kShEtram kShEtrI tathA kr'tsnam prakAshayati bhArata || 33 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [yathA] just as [Eka:] a single [sUrya:] sun [prakAshayati] spreads light [kr'tsnam imam lOkam] on this entire earth, [tathA] so also [kShEtrI] the owner of the body [prakAshayati] lights up [kr'tsnam kShEtram] the entire body.

Just as a single Sun lights up this entire solar system with its brightness, the owner of the body - the Self - lights up all external and internal organs of the body with consciousness.

The Self is conscious. It knows - 'I exist in this body; this body is mine'. Its consciousness reaches out everywhere right from the feet to the head.

The bright Sun is distinct from the rest of the solar system, which is lit by the Sun. In the same way, the Self is distinct from the body. The qualities of the Self as the [knower](#field_and_knower_of_field) were described. The body is known and experienced by the Self.

## 13-34

[

kShEtra kShEtrajnayO: Evam antaram jnAna chakShuShA |

bhUtaprakr'ti mOkSham cha yE vidu: yAnti tE param || 34 ||

]

[yE] People [jnAna chakShuShA] with eyes of awareness [vidu:] recognize [Evam antaram] this distinction [kShEtra kShEtrajnayO:] between the [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field) and the [knower](#field_and_knower_of_field). [tE cha yAnti] They attain [parAm mokSham] supreme freedom [bhUta prakr'ti] from the material world.

This chapter described the distinction between the body as the [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field) and the Self as the [knower of this field](#field_and_knower_of_field). Their distinct characteristics are realized by people with eyes of awareness.

In addition, those who learn about freedom from the material world will attain the supreme - they achieve the Self, which is free of all bonds. This freedom is [Moksha](#Moksha).

The virtues described in this chapter, such as [being without a sense of superiority](#virtues_amanitvam), lead to [Moksha](#Moksha).

The awareness about the distinctions between the Self and the body was laid out in this chapter.

In summary, the body is a part of the environment. It is our field of action, a result of the elements.

The knowledge to discriminate between the Self and the body, along with the [virtues required](#virtues_amanitvam) to achieve freedom from the bonds of the environment were laid out in this chapter - starting with [being without a sense of superiority](#virtues_amanitvam).

With this ability to discriminate the body and the Self, people learn and practice the [method](#virtues_amanitvam) to get freedom from the environment. They achieve the Self in its true form - free of all limitations, an unbroken expanse of knowledge.

# Chapter 14

In the 13th chapter, the characteristics of the Self and the environment were described, along with their association. Then, several [virtues](#virtues_amanitvam) were listed, such as being without a sense of superiority. These virtues help in realizing the Self.

With these virtues, [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) and the Lord's compassion, a person is [freed](#Moksha) from material bonds.

The cause of the bond with the material world was also stated - the bond is due to our desires, such as our craving for happiness. The [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) soak the desires of the material world with their influence. This was told in Chap.13#21: 'The Self is bound to the environment due to its association with the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) in births that came from virtue and flaws'.

Next, in this chapter, the Lord describes the way in which these [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) bind us, along with the method to gain freedom from these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

## 14-1

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

param bhUya: pravakShyAmi jnAnAnAm jnAnam uttamam |

yat jnAtvA munaya: sarvE parAm siddhimitO gatA: || 1 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] Lord Krishna said - [bhUya:] Once again, [pravakShyAmi] I will elaborate [jnAnam] the knowledge [jnAnAnAm uttamam] that stands supreme among all there is to know. [param] This description is beyond what I have said before. [yat jnAtvA] Knowing this, [sarvE munaya:] all insightful people [gatA:] have reached [parAm siddhim] the supreme goal [ita:] from this material world.

The Lord says - 'What I am going to say now is beyond what I have said before'. Meaning, it is not a repetition.

He says - 'I will elaborate the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) once again - qualities that are embedded in the environment, in which the Self is bound. This knowledge is the base for everything there is to know about the Self and its association with the environment.

All those who gained insight from this knowledge have reached the supreme goal, crossing over this material world. Here, the supreme goal is the realization of the Self in its true form'.

In the next Shloka, the Lord describes this knowledge and the benefit of knowing it.

## 14-2

[

idam jnAnam upAshritya mama sAdharmyam AgatA: |

sargE\_pi na upajAyantE pralayE na vyathanti cha || 2 ||

]

[upAshritya] Having gained [idam jnAnam] this knowledge, [AgatA:] they achieve [mama sAdharmyam] My characteristics. [na upajAyantE] They are not born again [sargE api] even at the time of creation, [cha] nor [na vyathanti] do they perish [pralayE] when the universe perishes.

By knowing what I’m elaborating next, people achieve My characteristics - they gain equality to Me. They are not born at the time of creation. Meaning, they remain unaffected in the act of creation. Hence, they don't perish either, remaining unaffected when the universe comes to an end.

Each and every being that isn’t free is bound to the environment. Every such being is a combination of the environment with a Self. This was stated already in Chap.13#26: 'Anything moving or stationary comes into being by an association of a Self with a body formed from the environment'.

Beings like us are bound to the environment by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). To explain how, the Lord starts by stating that all beings are created by His will alone.

## 14-3

[

mama yOni: mahat brahma tasmin garbham dadhAmyaham |

sambhava: sarva bhUtAnAm tatO bhavati bhArata || 3 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [brahma] the universe [mama yOni:] it is My womb. [mahat] It is a manifestation of the plasma that resulted from [cosmic inflation](#CosmicInflation_stages). [tasmin] In that, [aham dadhAmi] I bring together [garbham] life that can reproduce. [tata:] Then, [sambhava:] the creation [sarva bhUtAnAm] of all beings [bhavati] happens.

My universe is the origin from which everything came into being. That is My womb. In that, I infuse consciousness and give birth. The Lord described this in Chap.7#4 by explaining His material attribute: 'This universe of mine is divided into eight categories: Solids, liquids, gasses, energy, space, mind, the gross collections and the notion of individuality.'

Before creation, the Lord’s inanimate matter exists as the [subtle singularity](#subtle_singularity). At the time of creation, it changes into plasma, then into the state in which subatomic particles were formed, then the atoms and then the five elements of Solids, liquids, gasses, energy and space*.*

Since it expands into this huge universe, it's called as [mahat brahma], the one which becomes huge.

*It is not common to use the word [brahma] to refer to the universe. The word [brahma] means something that's expansive. Though it is commonly used to describe the principal architect of the universe, it is also used in several places to mean the universe itself. This is illustrated next.*

In the scriptures, the universe has been referred to by the word [brahma], as in [muMDaka, 1-1-9]: ‘This material world gets created, becomes recognizable and gets ready to be experienced. This material world, known as 'brahma' comes from the One who is aware of everything, has full depth of understanding and whose endeavors are full of awareness’.

The inanimate matter in the material world is one attribute of the Lord. The conscious Self is the other.

The Self is described to be beyond the material environment in Chap.7#5: ‘My ultimate nature is distinct from the universe. It is in the form of a conscious being by whom this world is sustained’. This supreme attribute of the Lord has been described as the set of all that’s conscious.

The conscious Self, when infused in the environment, acts as the seed to create all beings. This is how these beings are created in the womb.

The Lord continues - 'In the huge universe, which is My inanimate womb, I give birth – I bring together this environment and the collection of consciousness.

The inanimate environment is experienced; The Self is the one who experiences – this attribute of Mine brings consciousness to the world. I bring the Self and its environment together.

Then, all beings, right from the principal engineer of the universe down to a germ, come into being from My two attributes - the environment and the Self. They are joined by My will'.

Next, the Lord says that even after creating this universe, He continues to bring together His inanimate and conscious attributes in each being that is born.

## 14-4

[

sarva yOniShu kauntEya mUrtaya: sambhavanti yA: |

tAsAm brahma mahat yOni: aham bIjaprada: pitA || 4 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [tAsAm yOni:] the embryos of [mUrtaya:] different forms [yA: sambhavanti] that are born [sarva yOniShu] in all wombs [brahma] are the expanding universe, [mahat] which originated in the cosmic inflation. [aham bIjaprada: pitA] I am the father who infuses life in the embryo.

All beings in this universe have their origin in the material of the cosmic inflation.

That includes all humans - powerful, ordinary, handsome, ugly, cruel, kind, along with all animals, birds, plants and so on. All of their various forms originated from the plasma that formed during creation.

In this Shloka, The Lord says 'I have put together all conscious beings. Their bodies are made from the matter in the environment, which formed from the results of the cosmic inflation. I am the One who infuses life in the embryo, during their birth' - The Lord puts together the Self and the body of all conscious beings in accordance with their deeds.

In this way, the Lord explained that conscious beings get associated with inanimate matter at the start of creation. This association happens due to the influence of various deeds they committed in the past.

Next, He explains the reason why they repeatedly take birth in various wombs in different forms.

## 14-5

[

sattvam rajastama iti guNA: prakr'ti sambhavA: |

nibadhnanti mahAbAhO dEhE dEhinam avyayam || 5 ||

]

[guNA:] The [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), [sattvam rajastama] sattva, rajas and tamas [sambhavA:] come into existence [prakr'ti] in the environment. [mahAbAhO] Arjuna, [nibadhnanti] they bind [avyayam dEhinam] the imperishable Self [dEhE] in a body.

The three qualities bind the Self in a body.

Serenity ([sattva](#sattva)), drive ([rajas](#rajas)) and lethargy ([tamas](#tamas)) are the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) that go with the material environment. In fact, they define the nature of the material environment.

They are not perceived directly. They are perceived only by the effects they bring - The quality of sattva brings learning, [rajas](#rajas) brings desire and hatred, tamas brings reluctance to act.

They don't exist [before creation](#beginningless_time), when the environment is in its subtle state. They come into being during [cosmic inflation](#CosmicInflation_stages), when the [subtle singularity](#subtle_singularity) changes into a state of plasma, becoming sub-atomic particles that evolve into the five elements. Unique combinations of those elements produce human bodies and other forms.

A Self that’s bound to the environment is associated with one of these bodies. It is the owner of that body. While the body changes, the Self never changes or wears out. By its nature, the Self is not associated with the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Yet it’s tied down by them when it is in the body. Its bondage is caused by being inside a body.

Next, the Lord describes the characteristics of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas). He also describes the way in which these qualities bind us.

## 14-6

[

tatra sattvam nirmalatvAt prakAshakam anAmayam |

sukha sangEna badhnAti jnAna sangEna chAnagha || 6 ||

]

[anagha] Arjuna, [tatra] in the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), [sattvam] the quality of serenity [prakAshakam] illuminates and lets us know everything, [nirmalatvAt] by being flawless. [anAmayam] It has no disease associated with it. [badhnAti] It binds [sukha sangEna] due to attachment towards such comfort [jnAna sangEna cha] and due to attachment towards knowledge.

Among the three qualities of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas), the nature of [sattva](#sattva) is to illuminate by being flawless. Its flawlessness is in giving the joy of knowing without obscuring anything. Its nature is to generate the joy of knowledge alone - in this way, it is the source of joy.

The word 'illuminate' means the realization of anything in its true form.

Sattva is the joy of knowledge.

The quality of [sattva](#sattva) does not have any effect that can be called as a disease. It is the source of well-being.

This quality called [sattva](#sattva) binds the Self by attaching it to contentment and knowledge. It is the one that attaches a person to the comfort of being content and knowledgeable. As soon as such attachment is born, a person indulges in the material world to achieve it by his occupation or by rituals.

Then, this person is born in a womb, in a form suited to experience the fruits of his pursuit. In this way, the quality of [sattva](#sattva) binds the person to experience the joy of knowledge. It rewards the joy of knowledge, again binding a person to this experience and craving for more.

This is called [sattva](#sattva).

## 14-7

[

rajO rAgAtmakam viddhi tr'ShNA sanga samudbhavam |

tat nibadhnAti kauntEya karmasangEna dEhinam || 7 ||

]

[viddhi] Know [raja:] [rajas](#rajas) to be a quality that [rAgAtmakam] has passion at its core. [tr'ShNA sanga samudbhavam] It is the space where insatiable desires and bonds are born. [kauntEya] Arjuna, [tat nibadhnAti] it binds [dEhinam] the Self [karma sangEna] by attaching it to actions.

The quality called [rajas](#rajas) gives rise to passion. Here, 'passion' is meant as a bond, like the intimacy between a male and a female.

It is the space where insatiable desires and bonds are born. It brings the thirst to experience material desires, the 'drive' to experience the various things that stimulate our senses. It makes the bond with family and friends.

Rajas is passion.

With this, the quality of [rajas](#rajas) instigates desires and attachments, binding the Self with actions.

The Self initiates some actions, being driven by these desires and attachments. These actions constitute virtue and vice. They cause rebirth in a form that can experience the results of those actions. The Self then takes birth in a womb that can bear this form. It’s driven to action again - the cycle repeats.

In this way, the quality of [rajas](#rajas) binds the Self by using our attachment to actions.

This [rajas](#rajas) is said to be the source of passion, unquenchable desire and bonding. It is said to bind us to actions.

## 14-8

[

tamastu ajnAnajam viddhi mOhanam sarva dEhinAm |

pramAda Alasya nidrAbhi: tat nibadhnAti bhArata || 8 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [viddhi] know [tama: tu] [tamas](#tamas) to be a quality that [ajnAnajam] gives rise to ignorance [mOhanam] and delusion [sarva dEhinAm] in every Self that owns a body. [tat nibadhnAti] It binds the Self [pramAda] with carelessness, [Alasya] lethargy [nidrAbhi:] and drowsiness.

Tamas is ignorance and lethargy.

Ignorance is opposed to awareness. Being ‘aware’ is to know all things as they are. Ignorance tells us otherwise.

The quality called [tamas](#tamas) is a misunderstanding of the true nature of things. It deludes every Self that owns a body. 'Delusion' is knowledge that is opposed to reality. The quality of [tamas](#tamas) causes this flawed knowledge.

By being the source of carelessness, lethargy and drowsiness, [tamas](#tamas) ties down the owner of a body.

'Carelessness' is lack of attention, which causes mistakes in our actions.

'Lethargy' is the characteristic of not starting any activity. It's a state of being rigid and pretentious.

'Drowsiness' happens when our limbs are tired of activity and start retiring to rest. In this state, our organs recede and we sleep. In addition to this, when the mind is also at rest, it is called deep sleep.

Next, the prominent bonds that come from the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas) are summarized.

## 14-9

[

sattvam sukhE sanjayati raja: karmaNi bhArata |

jnAnam Avr'tya tu tama: pramAdE sanjayatyuta || 9 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [sattvam] the quality of [sattva](#sattva) [sanjayati] binds us [sukhE] in comfort. [raja:] The quality of [rajas](#rajas) [karmaNi] binds us in actions. [tama:] The quality of [tamas](#tamas) [jnAnam Avr'tya] conceals knowledge and [pramAdE sanjayati] binds us in mistakes.

The primary effect of [sattva](#sattva) is to bind us in comfort.

The quality of [rajas](#rajas) predominantly addicts us to activity.

On the other hand, the quality of [tamas](#tamas) conceals awareness of the true nature of things. This gives rise to misconceptions. In this way, its main effect is to cause indulgence in work that must not be done, binding us to mistakes and other faults.

The [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) are accumulated in the form of a body we own. By their very nature, they bind us to the material world.

All these [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) exist all the time. They generate effects that are opposite to each other - such as awareness and ignorance. How do they generate contradictory effects on the body? This question is answered next.

## 14-10

[

rajas tamashcha abhibhUya sattvam bhavati bhArata |

raja: sattvam tamashchaiva tama: sattvam rajastathA || 10 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [sattvam] the quality of [sattva](#sattva) [bhavati] takes effect [abhibhUya] by overpowering [rajas tama: cha] [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas). [raja:] The quality of [rajas](#rajas) [sattvam tama: cha Eva] comes forth too, by suppressing [sattva](#sattva) and [tamas](#tamas). [tama:] The quality of [tamas](#tamas) [sattvam raja: tathA] suppresses [sattva](#sattva) and [rajas](#rajas) in the same way.

Even while the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas) bind every Self with the environment, they expand or contract due to past actions and due to various foods that are consumed to nurture the body.

Sometimes, the qualities of [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas) contract. This makes way for [sattva](#sattva) to take precedence. Sometimes, [rajas](#rajas) predominates by suppressing [sattva](#sattva) and [tamas](#tamas). Likewise, sometimes [tamas](#tamas) takes effect by suppressing [sattva](#sattva) and [rajas](#rajas).

At any point in time, one of these qualities dominates the other two.

Next, the Lord says that the predominant one among these qualities is known only by its effect.

## 14-11

[

sarvadvArEShu dEhE\_smin prakAsha upajAyatE |

jnAnam yadA tadA vidyAt vivr'ddham sattvamityuta || 11 ||

]

[yadA] When [sarvadvArEShu] all the sense organs and the mind [dEhE\_smin] in this body [prakAsha] illuminate the true nature of things [jnAnam] and awareness [upajAyatE] arises, [tadA] then, [vidyAt] recognize [sattvam vivr'ddham ityuta] that the quality of [sattva](#sattva) is predominant.

Sense organs such as the eyes are the doors to knowledge. When these sense organs illuminate everything to show their true characteristics, awareness arises. Then, the quality of [sattva](#sattva) is recognized as being predominant in the body.

## 14-12

[

lObha: pravr'tti: Arambha: karmaNAm ashama: spr'hA |

rajasyEtAni jAyantE vivr'ddhE bharatarShabha || 12 ||

]

[bharatarShabha] Arjuna, [lObha:] avarice, [pravr'tti:] restlessness, [karmaNAm Arambha:] initiating action that is driven by desire, [ashama:] uneasiness [spr'hA] and unquenchable attachment - [EtAni] all of them [jAyantE] arise [vivr'ddhE rajasi] in [rajas](#rajas), when this quality dominates the others.

'Avarice' is being unable to part with things that belong to us.

'Restlessness' is the urge to keep doing, even without purpose.

'Actions driven by desire' are those which are done with the purpose of satisfying our desire.

'Uneasiness' is the state in which our organs fidget.

'Unquenchable attachment' is the addiction to things that stimulate our organs.

All these behaviors arise in [rajas](#rajas) when it is dominant. In other words, the predominance of [rajas](#rajas) is recognized by behaviors such as avarice.

## 14-13

[

aprakAsha: apravr'tti: cha pramAdO mOha Eva cha |

tamasyEtAni jAyantE vivr'ddhE kurunandana || 13 ||

]

[kurunandana] Arjuna, [aprakAsha:] being ignorant of the true nature of things, [apravr'tti:] reluctance to do anything, [pramAda:] mistakes, [mOha cha] and delusion - [Etani] these behaviors [jAyantE] arise [vivr'ddhE tamasi] in [tamas](#tamas), when this quality predominates the others.

'Being ignorant of the true nature of things' happens in the absence of awareness.

'Reluctance to do anything' is being pretentious and stiff.

'Mistakes' happen when we do work that must not be done, when we are unmindful of the consequences of such work.

'Delusion' is false knowledge.

Such behavior comes from a dominant [tamas](#tamas). Recognize the predominance of [tamas](#tamas) when they are observed.

## 14-14

[

yadA sattvE pravr'ddhE tu pralayam yAti dEhabhr't |

tadA uttama vidAm lOkAn amalAn pratipadyatE || 14 ||

]

[yadA] When [dEhabhr't] an owner of a body [pralayam yAti] is resorbed [sattvE pravr'ddhE] in a predominance of [sattva](#sattva), [tadA] then [pratipadyatE] he proceeds to [amalAn lokAn] unspoilt communities [uttama vidAm] with supreme knowledge.

When a person encounters death - when the body is resorbed with [sattva](#sattva) being predominant, the Self proceeds to a world where awareness is experienced. Such a world has communities that know the true nature of the Self. They are unspoilt by ignorance.

Having died at a time when [sattva](#sattva) is predominant, this person is re-born in a community of people who realize the Self. He works in accordance with that birth. His actions lead to the realization of the Self.

## 14-15 part 1

[

rajasi pralayam gatvA karmasangiShu jAyatE |

]

[pralayam gatvA] When the body perishes [rajasi] in [rajas](#rajas), [jAyatE] the person is re-born [karmasangiShu] among people who are attached to activity.

If a person dies at a time when [rajas](#rajas) is predominant, he is born in a community that is driven to work by desire. Being born in this way, he spends his life aspiring to achieve goals such as wealth and power.

## 14-15 part 2

[

tathA pralIna: tamasi mUDha yOniShu jAyatE || 15 ||

]

[tathA] Similarly, [pralIna:] a person who dies [tamasi] in [tamas](#tamas) [jAyatE] is born [mUdha yOnishu] in a womb that brings ignorance.

Similarly, a person who dies with [tamas](#tamas) being predominant is born in ignorance - he is born in the womb of a dog or a pig for instance. In such a birth, he is unable to pursue any of the four goals - righteousness, wealth, desire or [liberation](#Moksha).

## 14-16

[

karmaNa: sukr'tasyAhu: sAtvikam nirmalam phalam |

rajasastu phalam du:kham ajnAnam tamasa: phalam || 16 ||

]

[phalam] The outcome [sukr'tasya karmaNa:] of action that’s done well [Ahu:] is said to be [nirmalam sAtvikam] [sattva](#sattva), untainted by other qualities. [tu] On the other hand, [phalam] the outcome [rajasa:] of action driven by desire [du:kham] is sorrow. [phalam] The outcome [tamasa:] of lethargy [ajnAnam] is ignorance.

As described previously, a person who died with a predominance of [sattva](#sattva) is born in a community that realizes the nature of the Self. In this birth, the person works well - without being driven by desire, purely to worship Me. The reward for this is another birth with enhanced knowledge and tranquility, untainted by any sorrow - those who know the effects of [sattva](#sattva) vouch for this.

On the other hand, if [rajas](#rajas) were to be predominant at the time of death, the person is born in a community that’s driven by results and desires. Being driven by desire, the person acts accordingly and is born again to experience the results of such actions. Again, he starts actions that are driven by desire. This loop of accumulation leads to a greater experience of sorrow and disappointment in the material world. This is said by people who know the true characteristics of this quality.

The outcome of lethargy is ignorance. The predominance of [tamas](#tamas) at the time of death results in a chain of births in ignorant forms.

Next, the Lord elaborates on the rewards generated by a predominance of each of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). For example, predominance of [sattva](#sattva) rewards one with flawlessness...

## 14-17

[

sattvat sanjAyatE jnAnam rajasO lObha Eva cha |

pramAda mOhau tamasa: bhavata: ajnAnam Eva cha || 17 ||

]

[jnAnam sanjAyatE] Knowledge arises [sattvat] from [sattva](#sattva). [rajasa:] From [rajas](#rajas), [lObha Eva] it’s only avarice. [tamasa:] From [tamas](#tamas), [pramAda mOhau] mistakes and misconceptions [bhavata:] arise, [ajnAnam Eva cha] certainly followed by ignorance.

Thus, when [sattva](#sattva) gains more and more predominance over a sequence of births, the true nature of the Self is realized.

When [rajas](#rajas) gains predominance in this way, avarice takes over and we are driven by a longing for ‘the good life’.

When [tamas](#tamas) gains predominance, people are careless and indulge in regrettable activities. From this comes misconception. From that, the quality of [tamas](#tamas) gains more predominance, resulting in ignorance and lack of awareness.

## 14-18

[

Urdhvam gachChanti sattvasthA: madhyE tiShThanti rAjasA: |

jaghanya guNavr'ttisthA: adhO gachChanti tAmasA: || 18 ||

]

[sattvasthA:] People who are situated in [sattva](#sattva) [Urdhvam gachChanti] ascend to eminence. [rAjasA:] Those with a high [rajas](#rajas) quotient [madhyE tiShThanti] stay mediocre. [tAmasA:] Those in [tamas](#tamas) [jaghanya guNavr'ttisthA:] stay and behave in undesirable ways. [adhO gachChanti] They attain lower life-forms.

As described, people who are situated in [sattva](#sattva) ascend to eminence. They are progressive and gain freedom from material bonds, achieving [liberty](#Moksha).

The quality of [rajas](#rajas) gives rise to avarice - people who are high on [rajas](#rajas) covet the good life. They yearn for fame, wealth and comforts. They work to achieve those results. They are born again to experience the outcome of their work. Even in the next birth, they work similarly and get stuck in the cycle. That's why they stay mediocre. Due to its tendency to repeat, the quality of [rajas](#rajas) inevitably causes sorrow for the most part.

Those in [tamas](#tamas) stay and work in undesirable ways. From one life to the next, they keep cultivating conduct that grows the quality of [tamas](#tamas). They progress to lower forms - being born into depression, animals, insects, worms, germs, immobile beings, plants and flowers, going on to become a blade of grass, a stone, a stick, a lump of clay and so on.

Next, the Lord describes the way in which people enrich [sattva](#sattva) over several births. They overcome the influence of all [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and achieve the [supreme goal](#Moksha). They enrich [sattva](#sattva) with the distinction of working without attachment, by the merit of being disciplined in consumption.

## 14-19

[

nAnyam guNEbhya: kartAram yadA dr'ShTA\_nupaShyati |

guNEbhya: cha param vEtti madbhAvam sO\_dhigachChati || 19 ||

]

[dr'ShTA] An intelligent person [na anupaShyati] doesn’t see [kartAram] any cause of outcomes, [guNEbhya: anyam] Other than the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). [yadA cha] And when [vetti] he knows [guNEbhya: param] beyond these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), [madbhAvam adhigachChati] he gains My state of being.

*In the Gita, it is said that the Self* [*takes initiative*](#self_initiates_action) *in every action (Chap.13#20). It also says that the Self does not make outcomes happen, as in Chap.13#29: ‘definitely, actions are due to the environment’ and in Chap.3#27-28: ‘An ignorant person thinks of his body as himself and does not realize that actions are a result of the qualities of nature’.*

*Though the first one seems to contradict the other two, it doesn’t. The Self takes initiative - it has an intent and initiates action. What follows is the ‘*[*happening*](#actions_and_happenings)*’ – the action may happen or not; the outcome may be perceived as favorable or unfavorable; he may feel elated or disappointed – all of these are a result of the* [*qualities of nature*](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects)*.*

*These qualities attach to the Self as a result of actions committed in the past. Actions are ‘committed’ when we believe that what ‘happens’ is under our control and get attached to it, instead of recognizing that outcomes happen as a result of the qualities of nature.*

The Self initiates action. Outcomes [*happen*](#actions_and_happenings) as a result of the qualities that bind the person.

A person suppresses the qualities of [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas) comprehensively and cultivates [sattva](#sattva). He does this by consuming food and nourishing the body in-line with the quality of [sattva](#sattva). With work that’s done without attachments, only for the Lord's worship, he cultivates [sattva](#sattva). It then gains predominance in him. This person has seen and uncovered the true nature of things.

This Shloka says - ' Other than the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), an intelligent person doesn’t see a cause of outcomes in anything else’. When such a person doesn’t see anything other than the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) in making things happen, he knows beyond these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas)'

Meaning, such a person sees that the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) make outcomes happen in accordance with their respective qualities. Having seen this, he realizes that the Self does not make things happen. He realizes that the Self is distinct from the [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) that make things happen. Such a person shall attain My state of being; he becomes equivalent to Me.

In summary, what the Lord said is - The Self is pure and free by nature. It is limited by attachment to actions, due to various deeds committed in the past. This causes its 'doership' in various actions. By nature, the Self does not make things happen. It has the form of pure and limitless knowledge. When a person realizes this true nature of the Self, he attains equivalence to Me.

Having seen that the Self does not make anything happen, that it is different from the [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), a person attains equivalence to the Lord - this has been said. What does it mean to attain equivalence to the Lord? That is explained next.

## 14-20

[

guNAn EtAnatItya trIn dEhI dEhasamudbhavAn |

janma mr'tyu jarA du:khai: vimuktO\_mr'tam ashnutE || 20 ||

]

[atItya] Having crossed over [EtAni trIn guNAn] [these three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) [dEhasamudbhavAn] that come from the body, [dEhI] the owner of the body [ashnutE] enjoys [amr'tam] the ever-lasting. [vimukta:] He is free from [du:khai:] the sorrow of [janma] birth, [mr'tyu] death [jarA] and old age.

The three qualities of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas) come from the environment. They have accumulated in the form of a body. When the owner of the body crosses over these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and sees the Self, he is free from the sorrow of birth, death and old age. The Self is in the form of pure knowledge, entirely distinct from the [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) of nature. He experiences the ever-lasting expanse of the Self - this is equivalence to the Lord.

Now, Arjuna asks about the behaviors that distinguish a person who has crossed over the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). He also enquires about the way to cross over these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

## 14-21

[

arjuna uvAcha -

kairlingai: trIn guNAn EtAn atItO bhavati prabhO |

kim AchAra: katham chaitAn trIn guNAn ativartatE || 21 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said: [atItO] A person who has crossed over [trIn guNAn EtAn] these [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) - [kai: lingai:] with what characteristics [bhavati] is he present?

[prabhO] Lord, [kim AchAra:] what is his behavior [cha katham] and how does he [ativartatE] cross over [EtAn trIn guNAn] these [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas)?

When a person crosses over these three qualities of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas), what are the characteristics that distinguish him? What are his behaviors? What actions give him this characteristic to realize his Self? What is the method to cross over these [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas)?

## 14-22

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

prakAsham cha pravr'ttim cha mOham Eva cha pAnDava |

na dvEShTI sampravr'ttAni na nivr'ttAni kAMkShati || 22 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord said –

[pAnDava] Arjuna, [prakAsham] in knowledge, [pravr'tti] activity [mOham cha] and misconception, [na dvEShTI] this person doesn’t loathe [sampravr'ttAni] their presence. [nivr'ttAni] In their absence, [na kAMkShati] he does not yearn for them either.

The three qualities have their effects - the effect of [sattva](#sattva) is to illuminate and discover; [rajas](#rajas) drives us to run behind our desires; the effect of [tamas](#tamas) is misunderstanding and mistakes.

A person who has crossed over the three qualities isn’t agitated when undesirable effects happen (*for instance, when he experiences a mistake due to the effect of* [*tamas*](#tamas)) - these effects are not his Self.

This person doesn’t yearn for their effects either, when they are denied to him (*for instance, when he is unsuccessful in learning something- the yearning for which comes from* [*sattva*](#sattva)) - those desires are not the Self either.

Step-over with Awareness and Devotion

## 14-23

[

udAsInavat AsInO guNairyO na vichAlyatE |

guNA vartanta ityEva yO\_vatiShThati nEMgatE || 23 ||

]

[ya: na vichAlyatE] The person who is not thrown around [guNai:] by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas), [yO avatiShThati] who stays his course [nEMgatE] isn’t shaken. [AsIna:] He remains [udAsInavat] as if inert, [iti] considering that [guNA: vartanta Eva] these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) would keep manifesting as their effects.

Self-awareness is an enabler to step over the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects).

This person is content, being aware of his Self - the Self is distinct from the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). That's how he remains as inert, unmoved by those qualities. Such a person isn’t thrown around by feelings of agitation or longing towards their effects. Considering that these qualities keep making their [effects](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) happen, he remains quiet. This person is not shaken - he does not dance to their effects.

## 14-24 to 14-25

[

sama du:kha sukha: svastha: sama lOShTAshma kAnchana: |

tulya priyApriyO dhIra: tulya nindAtma samstuti: || 24 ||

mAnApamAnayO: tulya: tulya mitrAri pakShayO: |

sarvArambha parityAgI guNAtIta: sa uchyatE || 25 ||

]

[svastha:] Being himself - [sama du:kha sukha:] same in comfort and sorrow, [sama lOShTa ashma kAnchana:] having the same outlook towards a lump of clay, a stone and gold, [tulya priya apriya:] weighing the favorable and the unfavorable equally, [tulya ninda Atma samstuti:] same with insults and praises - [dhIra:] he knows the Self from the body.

[mAna apamAnayO: tulya:] Weighing honor and shame equally, [tulya mitra ari pakShayO:] considering friendly and unfriendly people equally, [sa:] this person [sarva Arambha parityAgI] leaves attachment to material pursuits [uchyatE] and is said [guNAtIta:] to have crossed over the [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

*Arjuna asked three questions about the one who has crossed over the qualities - his characteristics, behavior and method of crossing over the* [*qualities*](#satva_rajas_tamas)*. The characteristics were covered in the previous Shlokas. This Shloka is about behavior and the next two are about the method.*

This person considers comfort and sorrow equally by standing in his Self. Being content with his Self, he considers everything else - joys and sorrows, births and deaths - with equanimity. In the same way, he has the same outlook towards a lump of clay, a stone or gold, weighing the favorable and the unfavorable equally.

This person knows the Self from the body, hence he weighs praise and insults equally - praise and insults relate to some advantages and shortcomings, which are limitations of the body.

They aren’t related to the Self. If we care for them, it is due to the misconception that the human form is the Self. This misconception gives rise to fame, infamy, friendly and unfriendly perceptions. Actually, none of them relate to the Self.

In this way, the person relates equally to all of them, being able to leave attachment to any pursuit that comes from owning a body. This person is said to have crossed over the [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

Next, the Lord states the greatest enabler in crossing over these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

## 14-26

[

mAm cha yO\_vyabhichArENa bhaktiyOgEna sEvatE |

sa guNAn samatItyEtAn brahmabhUyAya kalpatE || 26 ||

]

[ya: cha] And the person who [mAm sEvatE] serves and experiences Me [avyabhichArENa] with constant [bhaktiyOgEna] [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) [sa: samatItya EtAni] will completely overcome these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). [kalpatE] He is cut out [brahmabhUyAya] to experience the Self in its true form.

The method of distinguishing the body from the Self was described starting with Chap.14#19, 'When the person realizes that the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) make things happen, not the Self, nothing else...'.

The [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) can only be overcome by surrendering to the Lord with [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn).

Just by knowing the distinction and thinking about the Self and the body, a person doesn't earn the right to cross over the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). He is still checked by the undesirable influence of past deeds – an influence that has lingered from beginning-less time.

In this Shloka, the Lord says - 'I am the One whose every intent is realized. I am the One with unsurpassed compassion, an ocean of affection to those who [surrender](#Sharanagati) to Me. The [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) are difficult to overcome. A person crosses over them when he serves and experiences Me with [constant devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) – a devotion that’s distinguished by its unwavering focus on one goal. This person is cut out to experience the Self - he becomes fit to realize the Self.

Meaning, he achieves the Self in its true form, indestructible and inexhaustible.

## 14-27

[

brahmaNO hi pratiShThA\_ham amr'tasya avyayasya cha |

shAshvatasya cha dharmasya sukhasya EkAntikasya cha || 27 ||

]

[aham pratiShThA hi] I am the basis [brahmaNa:] of the Self, [amr'tasya] which is without death [avyayasya cha] and decay. [shAshvatasya dharmasya] I am the basis of the ever-lasting practice of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) [EkAntikasya sukhasya cha] and of complete joy.

The phrase 'I am the basis' is used here to mean that the Lord is 'the cause of existence'.

The Lord says 'I am the One served and experienced with unwavering [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). I am the basis of the Self that has neither death nor decay. In the same way, I am the cause of unending [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), as well as the constant, infinite, absolute joy of [being free](#Moksha)'.

This was described in Chap.7#19: 'Lord Krishna is everything' - The Lord is the cause of joy achieved by the [one who knows](#jnAnI).

Though the ever-lasting practice of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) is a 'method' to achieve the Lord, it is described before and after this Shloka as an achievement in itself.

It is both a 'method' and the 'achievement', due to the fact that [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) and the Lord always go together. This has been said before, starting in Chap.7#14 - 'These divine creations of Mine are pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). They are indeed impossible to cross over. The people who [surrender](#Sharanagati) exclusively to Me will cross over this material world'.

The Lord said that surrendering to Him is the only way to cross over [material qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Before crossing over, we pursue goals of self-realization, wealth and the Lord Himself. Surrendering to Him is the way to achieve them as well.

Only by surrendering exclusively to the Lord can we cross-over [material qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and gain equivalence to Him.

# Chapter 15

The 13th chapter clarified the environment as the [field of action](#field_and_knower_of_field) and the Self as [one who knows the field](#field_and_knower_of_field). Then, it explained that the bond between the Self and the environment has no beginning. Though the natural form of the Self is pure and unbounded knowledge, it is bound in a body made from the environment. The Self is limited in this way, due to the continuous flow of attachment to the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) in the environment. This attachment has no beginning, it has always been there.

The 14th chapter explained the state of the Self, bound in the environment, both before creation and after. It stated that the bond with the environment originates in the attachment to the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). It also stated that the bond is made by the Lord himself. It laid out the nature of our attachment to the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) in detail. Finally, it asserted that we cast away the attachment to [material qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) by [devotion to the Lord](#bhakti_a_defn). This [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) achieves the true nature of the Self.

In this chapter, the Lord begins to explain that He, as the object of worship, is the Supreme Person. He is the owner of all that's perishable and imperishable, along with all beings that are made from them. He is also the owner of all [free](#Moksha) beings.

By being the owner, by repelling all that's undesirable, by being pure prosperity, He is totally supreme and distinct from anything else. The Self is The Lord's possession, known as The Eternal. It is [free from all bondage](#Moksha) after its bonds with the material environment are cut off.

Attachment to things that [happen](#happenings) in the material environment become the bonds that bind the Self. The sword of detachment is used to cut these bonds. To describe this magnificent possession of the Lord, He illustrates this attachment as a pepal tree with its roots at the top - the attachment must be cut.

## 15-1

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

Urdhva mUlam adha: shAkham ashvattham prAhuravyayam |

ChandAmsi yasya parNAni yastam vEda sa vEdavit || 1 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord says:

[prAhu:] It is said that [ashvattham] the material world is like a pepal tree [avyayam] that does not wear out, [Urdhva mUlam] with its roots at the top [adha: shAkham] and branches at the bottom. [ChandAmsi yasya parNAni] Its leaves are the Vedas. [ya: tam vEda] The person who knows this tree [sa: vEdavit] is the one who knows the Vedas.

*The word [ashvattha] has been translated as 'pepal tree'. This word can also be broken up as [shva:], which means tomorrow, [ashva:] meaning 'not tomorrow'. So [ashvattha:] means 'that which is not present tomorrow'. When this is used to describe the material world, it illustrates the temporary nature of this world. Yet, this Shloka says it does not wear out. How come? Read on...*

Several scriptures refer to the material environment as a pepal tree that doesn't wear out, with its roots on top and branches below. The [kaThA upanishat], 6-1 says 'With its roots at the top and branches below, this pepal tree is ancient'. [yajur vEda], 1-11-5 says 'The person who knows the pepal tree well - with the roots above and branches below - is the one who knows'.

Its roots are said to be at the top, since the universe started with Brahma at the top. Brahma is the principal architect who made the universe happen. The various beings of the universe - plants, microbes, birds, animals and so on - are of different types, classified as branches in the tree down below. We can't cut away the flow of material experiences as long as we ignore reality and remain attached. In this way, the tree, representing the material world, does not wear out.

The leaves of this pepal tree are said to represent the Vedas. The Vedas specify the methods to achieve material goals like wealth and family. The world grows with these activities - hence the Vedas are like the leaves of this tree. The growth of a tree is due to the nourishment supplied by the leaves.

The Vedas themselves specify the method to cut ourselves free from the tree that’s the material world. The person who knows such a pepal tree is the one who knows the Vedas. This person knows the nature of this tree, which must be cut. He also knows the method to cut his attachment to it. Hence, he is called 'the one who knows the Vedas'.

## 15-2

[

adha: cha Urdhvam prasr'tA: tasya shAkhA:

guNa pravr'ddhA vishaya pravAlA: |

adha: cha mUlani anusantatAni

karmAnubandhIni manuShya lOkE || 2 ||

]

[tasya shAkhA:] Its branches [pravr'ddhA:] have expanded [guNa] with the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). [pravAlA:] Its shoots and sprouts [vishaya] are the stimuli in the environment. [prasr'tA:] They have spread wide, [adha: cha Urdhvam] both above and below.

[adha: cha] The branches below [manuShya lOkE] in the world of humans [karmabandhIni] bind them with actions. [mUlAni anusantatAni] The root has progressively become dense.

Humans and others are the branches of the tree. This tree spreads its branches with the deeds of humans. It sprouts more branches below, in the form of more humans and other beings. It spreads branches above, in the form of more powerful beings.

These branches expand with the three qualities of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas). Those shoots and sprouts are the stimuli present in the environment - sounds, touch, form, taste and smell. How do the shoots and sprouts figure over here? That is explained next -

This tree has Brahma, the principal engineer of the universe, at its root at the top. It has humans down below in its branches. These branches form the 'source' or the basis for activities driven by desire. This is the base for us to get entangled in our actions.

In this way the branches sprout and get progressively denser in the world of humans, with little influence from the Brahma at the root. Human beings progress to higher and more powerful lives, or get degraded to lower life forms, depending on their actions.

## 15-3, first part

[

na rUpam asyEha tathOpalabhyatE

nAntO na chA\_di: na cha sampratiShThA |

]

[iha] Over here, [asya rUpam] the form of this tree [na upalabhyatE] is not apparent [tathA] in the manner described before. [na anta:] We cannot see its end, [na cha Adi:] its beginning, [na cha sampratiShThA] or the basis for its continued existence.

In the previous Shloka, the material world was described as a tree. Its roots represent Brahma, the principal engineer, at the top. Its branches below represent various generations of the human world.

Its branches have further spread upwards and downwards based on the activities of humans. This form of the material world is not apparent to people who are bound in it. Mere facts are apparent to us, such as 'I am a human', 'I am born to my parents', 'I am the parent of my children' and 'I transact and experience the world accordingly'.

We cannot see its end either - it's not apparent that this tree is cut off by the absence of attachment towards material experiences. Attachments are full of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). It is not apparent that ignorance is the basis of its continued existence. Ignorance is the consideration that our body is the Self.

## 15-3, second part and 15-4 first part

[

ashvattham Enam savirUDhamUlam

asanga shastrENa dr'DhEna ChitvA || 3 ||

tata: padam tat parimArgitavyam

yasmin gatA na nivartanti bhUya: |

]

[ChitvA] Having cut off [Enam ashvattham] this pepal tree [savirUDhamUlam] with its overgrown roots [asanga shastrENa] using the weapon of decoupling [dr'DhEna] and strength, [tata: tat padam] that goal [parimArgitavyam] is to be sought - [yasmin gatA:] the state from which [na nivartanti bhUya:] people do not return anymore.

This [pepal tree](#pepal_tree), which was described before, is famous for its numerous well-grown roots and shoots. By knowing it, a person uses the ‘weapon of decoupling’ to cut free of their grip. ‘Decoupling’ is to leave attachment to experiences that are loaded with material [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

He well and truly cuts free with firm perseverance.

Then, with the Self being free from the stimuli of the environment, he must seek that permanent goal, entering which people don't return anymore.

How can we get away from our in-built attachment to experience materials and their [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas)? These attachments have been with us since [beginning-less time](#beginningless_time). The misconception that the body is the Self gives rise to such attachments. How do we rid ourselves of this misconception? The Lord explains next -

## 15-4 second part

[

tam Eva chAdyam puruSham prapadyEt

yata: pravr'tti: prasr'tA purANI || 4 ||

]

[prapadyEt] You must [surrender](#Sharanagati) [tam Eva] to that very [puruSham] Person [yata:] from whom [pravr'tti:] all existence [prasr'tA] came forth [purANI] long ago.

The extent of your entanglement doesn’t matter. Surrender to the source and get free.

To get rid of ignorance, we must [surrender](#Sharanagati) to that very Person who is the origin of everything - 'that very Person' is the Lord - He described Himself in Chap.9#10: ‘The material environment guides this world according to My will, I being the supreme controller’, in Chap.10#8: ‘I am the origin of everything; Each and every entity gets stimulated with the initiative given by Me’ and in Chap.7#7: ‘There is absolutely nothing else that is superior to Me’.

In the entire created universe, ‘binding activities’ spring forth from the Lord. These binding activities are full of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) and attachment to experiences.

The fact that the Lord is the origin and that we must surrender to Him was described by the Lord Himself previously, in Chap.7#14: ‘'These divine creations of Mine are pervaded by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). They are indeed impossible to cross over. The people who [surrender](#Sharanagati) to Me alone - they will cross over this material world’.

There is an alternate way to read this Shloka - the syllables in [prapadyEt yata: pravr'tti:] can also be read as [prapadya iyata: pravr'tti:], which means 'By [surrender](#Sharanagati), the full extent of achievements are possible'. With this reading, the meaning of the Shloka is:

By surrendering to that very Person who is the origin of everything, all achievements - including the freedom from ignorance - come forth in their full extent. This way of [surrender](#Sharanagati) is ancient and has been practiced by people who desire [moksha](#Moksha). It is in practice since [beginning-less time](#beginningless_time). The Lord says here - 'Since ancient times, those who desire [moksha](#Moksha) have surrendered to Me and are free from all bonds'.

## 15-5

[

nirmAnamOhA jita saMgadOShA:

adhyAtmanityA vinivr'tta kAmA: |

dvandvai: vimuktA: sukha du:kha saMjnai:

gachChanti amUDhA: padam avyayam tat || 5 ||

]

[amUDhA:] Those who are free of ignorance, [nirmAnamOhA:] those who are free of the illusion that the body is the Self, [jita saMgadOShA:] those who have won over the flaw of attachments, [adhyAtmanityA:] those who are constantly situated in the knowledge of the Self, [vinivr'tta kAmA:] those who have rid themselves of desire, [dvandvai: vimuktA:] those who are free from dualities [sukha du:kha saMjnai:] that people call comfort and sorrow - [tat avyayam padam gachChanti] they go to the place that never withers.

In this way, those who surrender to Me are free of the illusion that the body is the Self.

They overcome the flaw of attachment to material experiences, which are full of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). They are situated in the knowledge of the Self constantly. They are free of all desires, other than the desire to achieve the Lord. They are free from the pulls of opposing-pairs, which people call comfort and sorrow.

They distinguish the Self and the environment in their individual forms. They reach the place that never withers - they attain the Self in its true form, as the limitless expanse of knowledge.

All these behaviors are easily achieved by My grace alone. Those who [surrender](#Sharanagati) to Me achieve this in their journey to reach the [supreme goal](#Moksha).

## 15-6

[

na tat bhAsayatE sUryO na shashAMkO na pAvaka: |

yat gatvA na nivartantE tat dhAma paramam mama || 6 ||

]

[sUrya:] The sun [na bhAsayatE] cannot throw light [tat] to reveal it, [na shashAMkO] nor can the moon, [na pAvaka:] nor can any source of light such as fire. [yat gatvA] After reaching this, [na nivartantE] they do not return. [tat dhAma] That abode [paramam mama] is My supreme attribute.

The Self is a part of the Lord, the source of awareness.

The sun and moon cannot illuminate and reveal the Self, nor can fire or any other source of light. Knowledge itself is the one that illuminates everything!

Light merely helps us by removing darkness. Darkness blocks contact between our sense organs and the environment. When it is removed, we perceive the illuminated environment.

The Self, on the other hand, is illuminated by [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being). All deeds we committed stand opposed to that illumination. [Freedom](#Moksha) from attachment, which comes from [surrendering](#Sharanagati) to the Lord, removes the effects of past deeds. This was described [before](#_15-4_second_part).

In this Shloka, the Lord has said: 'After reaching this goal, they do not return. That abode is My supreme attribute'. That abode is supreme knowledge - the Self. It belongs to the Lord and is a part of Him.

This Self is 'supreme' by virtue of illuminating the Sun itself. The sun and other sources of light do not illuminate knowledge. Indeed, it is knowledge that lets us recognize the sun and everything else!

## 15-7

[

mamaivAmshO jIvalOkE jIvabhUta: sanAtana: |

mana: ShaShThAni indriyANi prakr'tisthAni karShati || 7 ||

]

[jIvalOkE] In this material world, where every Self is bound in the environment, [sanAtana:] the ever-existing [jIvabhUta:] Self [mama amsha: Eva] is definitely a part of Me. [karShati] It pulls together [ShaShThAni indriyANi] the six sense-organs [mana:] along with the mind [prakr'tisthAni] – all of them come from the environment.

In this manner, even though each ever-present Self is always a part of Me, it is enveloped by ignorance. This ignorance is in the form of all the deeds it has [committed](#happenings) in the past. It is bound to the environment in various forms: being present in an ordinary human, a powerful one, or any suitable form that's made from the environment. Inside such a body, it pulls the six sense-organs together - the organs of sight, sound, smell, touch, taste and the mind.

Occasionally, one Self [frees](#Moksha) itself of ignorance in the manner described before. It then manifests in its true form.

Before this, the Self is bound in a body and has access to an extremely limited amount of knowledge. In this state, it is the owner of the five organs of sense and the mind - inside a body made from the environment, obtained according to past deeds. It attracts various experiences in-line with those deeds.

## 15-8

[

sharIram yadavApnOti yachchApi utkrAmatIshvara: |

gr'hItva EtAni samyAti vAyurgandhAn ivAshayAt || 8 ||

]

[Ishvara:] The owner [gr'hItva EtAni] carries the essence [yat sharIram] of the body [avApnOti] it gets to own, [yat cha] and the one that it [utkrAmati] leaves. [samyAti] It departs [iva] like [vAyu:] the wind [gandhAn] that takes the fragrance [AshayAt] from its source.

*In this Shloka, a difference is made in the body we enter at birth and the one that we leave at death, since those are not the same. Consider this - We are a single cell at conception. This is followed by many cycles of new cells till we die.*

The Self is the owner of its organs, made from solids, liquids, gasses, energy and space. It gets to own them in a body at the time of birth and leaves a body when it dies. It carries the essence of its organs and departs.

This is compared to the wind, which takes the fragrance from its source. Fragrant things such as a garland, sandal and musk contain fragrance. The wind carries that subtle smell from the source to another place. The Self carries the essence of the organs in the same way.

*The 'essence of the organ' is the sense of experience that it gives. For example, an organ such as the ear gives experiences like pleasure and irritation that come from listening to sound.*

The organs involved are listed again by the Lord in the next Shloka -

## 15-9

[

shrOtram chakShu: sparshanam cha rasanam ghrANam Eva cha |

adhiShThAya mana: chAyam viShayAn upasEvatE || 9 ||

]

[ayam] This Self [adhiShThAya] employs [shrOtram] the ears, [chakShu:] eyes, [sparshanam] skin, [rasanam] tongue, [ghrANam] nose [mana: cha] and the mind [upasEvatE] to experience [viShayAn] the stimuli in the material world.

The Self employs the six sense organs including the mind. Each organ is suited to sense a stimulus in the environment, like the ear senses sound. The Self works each organ to experience the appropriate stimulus. In this way it experiences sound and other stimuli in the environment.

## 15-10

[

utkrAmantam sthitam vA\_pi bhunjAnam vA guNAnvitam |

vimUDhA nAnupashyanti pashyanti jnAna chakShuShA: || 10 ||

]

[vimUDhA] The ignorant [na anupashyanti] do not recognize [utkrAmantam] the Self when it departs from the body, [sthitam vA] or when it is situated in their own body, [bhunjAnam cha] or even when it's experiencing the material world, [guNAnvitam vA] when it is bound in the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). [jnAna chakShuShA:] Those endowed with the eyes of knowledge [pashyanti] do see it.

People who are ignorant do not recognize the Self in the form of pure knowledge, distinct from the flesh that constitutes a human form. They do not notice it in any circumstance - They don’t recognize the Self when it is born in flesh - in human form or any another form. These forms are made out of the material world, full of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects).

They do not notice it when it has departed from a specific body or even when it is situated inside a body. They don’t even recognize it when it’s experiencing the stimuli in the environment, which are again full of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). Ignorant people are conceit in the opinion that the flesh, in the form of their body, is their 'Self'.

People with the eyes of knowledge definitely discern the flesh from the Self. They recognize the Self as being distinct from the body, in every state.

## 15-11

[

yatantO yOgina: chainam pashyanti Atmani avasthitam |

yatantO\_pi akr'tAtmAnO nainam pashyanti achEtasa: || 11 ||

]

[yOgina:] Those who realize their relationship with the Lord [yatanta:] and persevere in its practice [Enam pashyanti] shall see the Self [Atmani avasthitam] present in themselves. [cha] On the other hand, [akr'tAtmAna:] those who haven’t [surrendered](#Sharanagati) to the Lord [na Enam pashyanti] do not see the Self [yatanta: api] even with perseverance - [achEtasa:] They remain without recognizing the Self.

Having [surrendered](#Sharanagati) to Me, those who pursue techniques such as [karmayoga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) purify themselves from the inside. Then, through the eyes of [yoga](#yoga_state_of_being), they see the Self in themselves - even while being situated inside the body, they see the Self in its true form, being separate from the body.

Others who haven’t [surrendered](#Sharanagati) their Self to the Lord do not see the Self. Since they do not follow the path of [surrender](#Sharanagati), their mind is unprepared and so their consciousness doesn’t have the ability to recognize their Self.

Up until now, it was explained that light removes darkness. Darkness prevents material stimuli from coming into contact with our sense organs. The sun, the moon and sources of light such as fire get rid of darkness, enabling us to perceive the material world. In this way, light enables the eye to sense the material world.

On the other hand, the Self illuminates everything, even the sources of light. Being the light of awareness, it knows and experiences everything.

Previously, it was said that the Self is an attribute of the Lord, both in its free form as well as in its bound form: Chap.15#6 said 'After reaching this free state of being, they do not return. That abode is My supreme attribute'. Chap15#7 said 'In this material world, where every Self is bound in the environment, the ever-existing Self is definitely a part of Me'.

Whatever the Self is aware of, that is also the Lord.

Next, the Lord states that the light given by luminous sources such as the sun, which is a special outcome of material creation, is also His attribute.

## 15-12

[

yat Adityagatam tEjO jagat bhAsayatE\_khilam |

yat chandramasi yat chAgnau tat tEjO viddhi mAmakam || 12 ||

]

[viddhi] Know that [tEja:] the brilliance [Aditya gatam] that comes from the Sun, [yat bhAsayatE] which illuminates [akhilam jagat] the entire universe, [yat] the luster [chandramasi] that comes from the moon, [yat cha] even the light [agnau] that comes from fire - [tat tEja:] that light [mAmakam] is mine.

The Lord states: 'The brilliance of the stars, which illuminate the entire universe, as also the brilliance of other sources of light is My brilliance. I gave them their brilliance based on their worship and intent'.

Next, the Lord talks about the earth, which supports the existence of all its beings. He states 'This ability of the earth to sustain is My ability'.

## 15-13

[

gAmAvishya cha bhUtAni dhArayAmi aham OjasA |

puShNAmi chauShadhI: sarvA: sOmO bhUtvA rasAtmaka: || 13 ||

]

[Avishya] Pervading [gAm] the earth, [aham] I [dhArayAmi] sustain [bhUtAni] all the beings here [OjasA] by My strength. [puShNAmi] I nurture [sarvA: auShadhI:] all plants. [rasAtmaka:] I am the essence of taste, [sOmO bhUtvA] I am the nectar.

Pervading the earth, I sustain all beings by My strength - My power has no bounds. I am also the nectar and the essence of taste. I nurture all plants.

## 15-14

[

aham vaishvAnarO bhUtvA prANinAm dEham Ashrita: |

prANApAna samAyukta: pachAmyannam chaturvidham || 14 ||

]

[aham Ashrita:] I embed Myself in [prANinAm dEham] the bodies of animals [bhUtvA] in the form of [vaishvAnara:] the chemistry of digestion. [samAyukta:] Together with [prANa] inhalation [apAna] and exhalation, [pachAmi] I digest [chaturvidham annam] the four types of food.

I am the chemistry of digestion - the mechanism of digestion in the stomach. I embed Myself in all animals in this form too. Animals eat four types of food - solid food that's chewed, food that's swallowed, food that's licked and liquids that they drink. I digest the four types of foods by combining with the different functions of inhalation and exhalation.

The essence of taste and the chemistry of digestion, which are under the control of the Lord, were mentioned by Him as 'I am the essence of taste' and 'I am the chemistry of digestion' in the previous two Shlokas. They were described as being the Lord Himself, even though the Lord controls them. In fact, they describe the [equivalence](#equivalence_to_the_Lord) of everything in the universe to the Lord. The basis of this equivalence is stated next.

## 15-15

[

sarvasya chAham hr'di sanniviShTO

matta: smr'tirjnAnam apOhanam cha |

vEdaishcha sarvairahamEva vEdyO

vEdAntakr't vEda vidEva chAham || 15 ||

]

[aham sanniviShTa:] I am [sarvasya hr'di] at the heart of everything. [jnAnam] Awareness, [smr'ti] memory [apOhanam cha] and the ability to reason [matta:] come from Me. [aham Eva] I alone [vEdya:] am to be known [sarvai: vEdai:] from all the Vedas. [vEdAntakr't] I make the end of the Vedas [cha] and [aham Eva] I am the One [vEdavit] who knows the Vedas.

The Lord says- I am present at the heart of all beings, the place where the awareness called 'consciousness' comes from. This 'consciousness' is the awareness that brings the experience of pleasantness, initiates the process of digestion and governs all activities that are performed or stopped in all beings. In this way, I am at the core of all beings, regulating everything by My will. The scriptures say the same:

[ya.aa], 3-11-2 says - 'He is the core of the Self in everyone, ruling them and pervading them from the inside'.

[br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-3 says - 'He who is situated in the earth...'

[br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-22 says - 'He is present in the Self while being distinct from the Self. He rules the Self from the inside'

[mahA nArAyaNa] says - 'The heart is like a lotus flower facing downwards. Everything is present within, in a subtle form'.

[ChAndOgya], 8-1-1 says - 'In this body, which is the Lord's place of residence, there is a small lotus, with a small space. That space is the Lord in subtle form', after which it goes on to describe the qualities of that space - its intent is always fulfilled, it has infinite joy, it has no thirst and so on - these are the qualities of the Lord.

In the [viShNu purANa], 1-17-20 Prahlada tells his father - 'Vishnu is the ruler of everything in the world, without exception, He pervades everything'.

[manu smr'ti], 12-122 says - 'He controls everything, being smaller and subtle beyond anything else'.

[manu smr'ti], 8-92 says - 'The Lord, who is the controller and the regulator, is present at your heart'

Hence, everyone's memory comes from Me. This 'memory' is the awareness that comes from merely re-living a past experience. Awareness is to infer and recognize things based on experiences from various organs.

Forgetfulness and the inability to reason is from Me. The power to reason comes from Me, as well as the ability to anticipate, says the Lord. This comes to us in the form of 'I have learnt this fact (a fact like gravity); I see the situation (like a stone being tossed); I can reason what's next (the stone will fall)'. The chain of events that happens after this (the stone hurting someone) adds to our learning. In this Shloka, The Lord said 'All this comes from Me'.

'I alone am to be known from all the Vedas' - The Vedas describe natural phenomena like fire, wind, the Sun, the Moon, acts of nature and so on. I am inside all of them, at the core of their Self. Hence, I am the One to be known from all the Vedas. The words 'human', 'god' and all others refer to the Self in them. The Vedas describe the methods of worshipping the gods, along with the results of such worship.

It is the Lord who is being worshipped by all methods, being at the core of every Self.

'I make the end of the Vedas' - the Vedas end in the fruits of the actions they prescribed. 'Making the end' here means that the Lord makes the fruits - He is the One who gives the result stated in the Vedas.

This was stated previously, starting with Chap.7#21 and Chap.7#22: 'Which ever devotee likes to please what ever form with dedication, I give stability to the same faith in each of them. With that dedication, the person wishes to worship accordingly. By this he attains his desires. These desires are given by Me alone' and in Chap.9#24: 'I am indeed the enjoyer and the single Master of all services rendered to anyone or anything. Those who crave for material wealth do not know Me as I am. Hence, they fall back'.

'I am the One who knows the Vedas': All the Vedas describe and address the Lord. The Lord says 'I know this fact'. Those who speak other meanings of the Vedas do not know the Vedas - that is the opinion expressed here.

'Hence, listen to the one summary of all the Vedas from Me' - continues the Lord.

## 15-16

[

dvAvimau puruShau lOkE kShara: akShara Eva cha |

kShara: sarvANi bhUtAni kUTastha: akShara uchyatE || 16 ||

]

[imau puruShau] The people [lOkE] in My Universe [dvau] are of two types - [kShara:] perishable [cha] and [akShara] imperishable. [sarvANi bhUtAni] All beings you see here [kShara:] are perishable. [kUTastha:] The ones who stay without deforming [uchyatE] are said to be [akShara] the imperishable.

In My Universe, the perishable and imperishable beings are well-known. The person termed 'perishable' here is what we call 'living beings', starting with Brahma, the principal engineer of the material world, right up to even single-celled organisms. It's in their nature to wither and perish, being created in combination with materials. In this Shloka, they are all bundled together as one person, since they all have a common characteristic - they are bound in the material world.

The one who does not change, called as the 'imperishable' is free from the attachment to the inanimate material world. He is [free](#Moksha) by nature and stays in his natural form.

Without attachments to anything inanimate, he does not have any characteristics to differentiate him. The rest of us are differentiated by the body we are bound to. That includes Brahma too.

Since the [free](#Moksha) Self does not vary, he is also called as 'invariant'. Just as an anvil stays invariant while forging, every Self remains without changing. Since all of them are common in their characteristic of being [free](#Moksha) from the material world, this Shloka groups them together as 'the imperishable'.

This group is not restricted to those who have been [free](#Moksha) forever - it also includes those who are [free](#Moksha) now, who were bound previously - as said in Chap.4#10: 'Many people have taken refuge in Me, discarding desire, fear and anger. They fill Me in their minds. They have been purified by pursuing My knowledge in a single-minded way and have attained My qualities' and in Chap.14#2: 'Having gained this knowledge, they achieve My characteristics. They are not born again even at the time of creation, nor do they perish when the universe perishes'

## 15-17

[

uttama: puruShastu anya: paramAtmEti udAhr'ta: |

yO lOkatrayam Avishya bibharti avyaya: Ishvara: || 17 ||

]

[tu] However, [uttama: puruSha:] the Supreme Person [anya:] is another one. [udAhr'ta:] He is known [paramAtmA iti] as the Ultimate Self. [yO] He [Avishya] pervades [lOkatrayam] the three domains [bibharti] and supports them. [avyaya:] He never wears out. [Ishvara:] He is the Supreme Lord.

The Lord is superior to all of this.

In the previous Shlokas, it was mentioned that those who are bound in the material world are perishable, while those who are [free](#Moksha) from the material world are imperishable.

However, the supreme person is neither of them. He has distinct characteristics and is called the Ultimate Self in all the scriptures. The reference [paramAtmA] - 'The Ultimate Self' implies that the Supreme Person is distinct from both the bound and [free](#Moksha) beings.

How is He distinct? This Shloka states: 'He pervades the three domains and supports them'.

The Lord looks over them, hence they are called as domains (the Sanskrit word [lOka], also used to mean the world and its people, comes from [lOkyatE], which means 'they are looked over'. The English word ‘domain’ also comes from the Latin word *dominus*, meaning ‘the lord who looks over’).

The three domains are known from the scriptures. They are: Inanimate matter, Conscious beings who are bound with it, Conscious beings who are [free](#Moksha) from it.

The Lord pervades all three of them as the core of their Self and supports them. In this way, He is distinct from those who are pervaded and supported by Him. This person, who has been described as being distinct, is the Lord.

He does not wear out. In this way, He is unlike the material world, which does wear out. Since He is not bound by matter, He is distinct from all beings that are attached to matter. By being the Lord and controller of everything, He is unlike the other beings that are free of the material world as well.

## 15-18

[

yasmAt kSharam atItO\_ham akSharAt api chOttama: |

atO\_smi lOkE vEdE cha prathita: puruShOttama: || 18 ||

]

[yasmAt aham] As I am [kSharam atIta:] beyond the perishable [api cha] and also [akSharAt uttama:] superior to the imperishable, [prathita: asmi] I am well-known [lOkE] in the world [vEdE cha] and in the Vedas [puruShOttama:] as the Supreme Person.

I am beyond the perishable, whose nature was described previously. I am superior to the imperishable in its bound and in its [free](#Moksha) state. The basis of this superiority was explained in the previous Shloka. By this, I am well-known as the Supreme Person in the world and in the scriptures.

The ‘world’ beholds traditions and the knowledge in them. Here, this word is used to mean the [smr’ti] - epics, traditions and knowledge that are handed down from generation to generation.

The Lord is famous as the Supreme Person both in scriptures that are written down, as well as in the tradition and knowledge handed down over generations.

The [shruti] scripture [ChAndOgya], 8-12-3 says - 'This Self vacates the body and gains the supreme light of the Lord. The Self shines on his own, in his own form. The goal he reaches is the Supreme Person'

A [smr’ti] story in [viShNu purANa], 5-17-33 says - 'Akrura tells Kamsa that Krishna is definitely a portion of Vishnu, having come to the Earth as an incarnation. He is without a beginning, middle or end'.

## 15-19

[

yO mAm Evam asammUDha: jAnAti puruShOttamam |

sa sarvavit bhajati mAm sarvabhAvEna bhArata || 19 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [yO] the person who [jAnAti] knows [mAm] Me [puruShOttamam] as the Supreme Person [Evam] in this way [asammUDha:] without any doubts in mind - [sa:] such a person [sarvavit] knows everything [mAm bhajati] and worships Me [sarvabhAvEna] with all emotions.

The Lord says in this Shloka - 'The person who knows Me as the *Supreme Person*, without any doubts or suspicion'. What’s the Supreme Person like?

The Supreme Person was described as being distinct from all that's perishable and imperishable. This distinction comes from the characteristics of never wearing out, pervading everything, supporting everything and controlling everything.

So, the Lord says – 'The Person who knows Me as the Supreme Person knows everything - he knows all about the means to achieve Me'.

In this Shloka, The Lord also says - 'This person worships Me with all emotions'.

To achieve me, this person worships Me by all known means of worship. The affection I get by knowing everything about Me and the affection I get by chanting everything about Me – both these affections are born to Me, by worshipping Me as the Supreme Person.

Next, the Lord praises His realization as the Supreme Person.

## 15-20

[

iti guhyatamam shAstram idam uktam mayA anagha |

Etat buddhvA buddhimAn syAt kr'ta kr'tya: cha bhArata || 20 ||

]

[anagha bhArata] Flawless Arjuna, [iti] in this way, [idam shAstram] this knowledge, [guhyatamam] which is supremely concealed, [uktam] has been spelt out [mayA] by Me. [Etat buddhvA] Knowing this, [buddhimAn] you are endowed with intellect [cha kr'ta kr'tya: syAt] and shall have done everything there is to do.

This knowledge, which brings forth My superiority, is concealed even among everything that's concealed. I consider you to be flawless and most deserving; hence I revealed it to you.

The Lord goes on to state - 'Knowing this, you are endowed with intellect and shall have done everything there is to do’. Meaning - By knowing My superiority, you have acquired all the intellect that's required by anyone to achieve Me. You have already done everything that must be done for this purpose.

The knowledge of the Supreme Person told in this Shloka is present in the scriptures and brings everything that was told - though it’s not a realization of the Lord.

# Chapter 16

The preceding three chapters illustrated many facts.

They gave the distinction between the environment and the Self;

They described their true characteristics when they are separate and when they are combined - The fact that their combination comes from attachment to the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) and that their separation is given by detachment from these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects);

They stated that the environment and the Self belong to the Lord in all states of existence;

They also stated that the Lord is distinct. His power and possessions are distinct from the non-conscious environment; also distinct from all conscious beings, both bound and free - He is distinct by virtue of having the Self and the environment as His attributes, by never wearing out, by pervading, supporting and controlling everything;

The Lord was illustrated in His true form - as the Supreme Being.

Next, The Lord says that it's important to comply with His instructions, which are described in the scriptures. He says this to establish the facts that were listed above. He describes the classification of His creations as ‘deva’ and ‘asura’ - those who comply with His instructions and those who don't.

*Though the terms deva and asura translate to gods and demons in mythology, here they are used to refer to the adherence to rules. Devas aim to comply with the Lord's instructions in the scriptures, while asuras don't have regard for those instructions.*

## 16-1 to 16-3

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

abhayam sattva samshuddhi: jnAnayOga vyavasthiti: |

dAnam dama: cha yajna: cha svAdhyAya: tapa Arjavam || 1 ||

ahiMsA satyam akrOdha: tyAga: shAnti: apaishunam |

dayA bhUtEShu alOluptvam mArdavam hrI: AchApalam || 2 ||

tEja: kShamA dhr'ti: shaucham adrOhO nAtimAnitA |

bhavanti sampadam daivIm abhijAtasya bhArata || 3 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord said - [bhArata] Arjuna, [sampadam] the characteristics [abhijAtasya] of a person who is born [daivIm] into the Lord's principles [bhavanti] are:

[abhayam] Freedom from fear;

[sattva samshuddhi:] A clear mind;

[jnAnayOga vyavasthita:] Settled in the knowledge of the Self;

[dAnam] Generosity;

[dama:] Control over the organs;

[yajna:] Worship of the Lord;

[svAdhyAya:] Recitation of the scriptures;

[tapa:] Dedication of thought into performance;

[Arjava] Consistency in thought, speech and action;

[ahiMsA] Intolerance towards violence;

[satyam] Saying it 'as it is', in a way that's beneficial;

[akrOdha:] Freedom from anger;

[tyAga:] Leaving things that don’t benefit the Self;

[shAnti:] Being content with the Self;

[apaishunam] Not speaking ill of others;

[bhUtEShu dayA] Compassion towards all beings;

[alOluptvam] Without attachments in material subjects;

[mArdavam] Without being harsh;

[hrI:] Modesty;

[achApalam] Unwavering;

[tEja:] The brilliance of leadership;

[kShamA] Forgiveness;

[dhr'ti:] Resolve;

[shoucham] Cleanliness;

[adrOha:] Being without putting another at a disadvantage;

[nAtimAnitA] Being without inappropriate pride.

*This commentary explains each of the above characteristics*.

Freedom from fear. Fear is a discomfort that’s experienced when we imagine the sadness of undesirable happenings- being separated from what we love and being associated with what we hate. The absence of this fear is the characteristic of being 'free from fear'.

'A clear mind' comes from focusing the mind inwards, losing attachment to the qualities of [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) and [tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects).

This person 'Settles in the knowledge of the Self' by dedicating to realize the Self and distinguish it from the environment.

'Generosity' is to give away our earnings to those who deserve it.

'Control over our organs' comes from the regular practice of bringing the mind away from its pre-occupation with material subjects.

'Worship of the Lord' is about doing our duties without attachment to results, purely as worship to please the Lord.

The characteristic of 'reciting the scriptures' comes from the awareness that they describe the Lord with all His wealth and power, along with the methods to worship Him.

'Dedicating thought into performance' is about performing tough tasks and gaining the ability to please the Lord.

'Consistency in thought, speech and action' is to commit the same in thought, speech and action towards others.

Being 'intolerant towards violence' is to abandon hurting others.

'Satya' is about saying it 'as it is', in a way that's beneficial. This comes from saying what we have come to infer, saying it in a way that's beneficial to all beings.

'Freedom from anger' is to free the mind of the deformity that makes a goal out of hurting others.

Leaving things that don’t benefit the Self – is the character of giving up distractions that don't benefit our Self.

'Being content with the Self' comes from the practice of restraining our organs from their tendency to go behind material things.

The virtue of 'not speaking ill of others' is about restraining statements that cause harm to others.

'Compassion towards all beings' comes from not tolerating sorrow in anyone.

We are 'without attachments in material subjects' when we don't crave for material experiences, nor do we cling on to them.

'Not being harsh' gives eligibility to connect with virtuous people.

'Prudence' is about being embarrassed to do things that are not to be done.

'Unwavering' is when we don't lose focus even in the presence of distracting attractions.

The 'the brilliance of leadership' is to be without subjugation in the face of opposition.

'Forgiveness' is to be free of agitation, even when we perceive others inflicting discomfort upon us - without being vindictive towards them.

'Resolve' is to affirm with determination – we do things that are to be done and reject those that are not, even in the face of great obstacles.

‘Cleanliness' is to tune our external and internal organs to be devoted to the Lord, as instructed by Him in the scriptures.

We 'do not work to put another at a disadvantage' when we don't become obstacles to others - when we don't obstruct the expression of their free will.

Arrogance is inappropriate pride. Freedom from arrogance is to be without pride when it's not deserved.

A person born with the qualities associated with a ‘deva’ would have the above properties. A ‘deva’ is one who [intends](#intention_initiation) to work according to the Lord's principles. Such a person’s character is to follow the instructions of the Lord. A person 'born into' these characteristics is determined to dedicate his life to these principles. The purpose of such a person's life is to accomplish the above principles as the Lord's command.

Isn’t it tough to follow the Lord’s instructions?

## 16-4

[

DambhO darpa: atimAna: cha krOdha: pAruShyamEva cha |

ajnAnam chAbhijAtasya pArtha sampadam AsurIm || 4 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [AsurIm abhijAtasya] a person with an attitude of [non-compliance of the Lord's instructions](#deva_asura) [sampadam] has the following characteristics:

[Dambha:] Being righteous just to show-off;

[darpa:] Intoxicated by the experience of material attractions;

[atimAna:] Stuck in self-esteem;

[krOdha:] Anger;

[pAruShyam] Harshness;

[ajnAnam cha] and Ignorance.

'Being righteous just to show-off' is done to become famous as a righteous person.

Getting 'intoxicated by the experience of material attractions' comes from the happiness that's bounded by our material experiences, being unaware of activities that are recommended and those that aren’t.

We get 'stuck in self-esteem' when we admire ourselves beyond what we know, going by our position or race.

'Anger' is a deformity that makes an achievement out of another person’s discomfort.

'Harshness' is to cause agitation in innocent people.

'Ignorance' is being unaware of what is superior (*The Lord*) and what is ordinary (*The material world*). It’s also about being unaware of the distinction between activities that are mandatory and those that are forbidden.

These are the characteristics of a person in whom the [intent to break the Lord's instructions](#deva_asura) is born.

## 16-5 first part

[

daivI sampat vimOkShAya nabandhanAyAsurI matA |

]

[daivI] [Compliance to the Lord's instructions](#deva_asura) [sampat] is an asset [vimOkShAya] for [liberation](#Moksha). [matA] The path of [AsurI] [disregarding for these instructions](#deva_asura) [nibandhanAya] is to bind a person in the material world.

The Lord's instructions were illustrated [before in this chapter](#_16-1_to_16-3). They are to be complied with. Such compliance is an asset that causes a person to work and to worship the Lord through his work. It [liberates](#Moksha) us to gradually achieve the Lord.

On the other hand, when we go against those instructions, we gather baggage that drives us to lower and lower depths. Its purpose is to bind us to the material world.

Having listened to this, Arjuna got apprehensive about his own character. In response to that, the Lord says -

## 16-5 second part

[

mA shucha: sampadam daivIm abhijAtO\_si pAnDava || 5 ||

]

[pAnDava] Arjuna, [mA shucha:] don't worry. [abhijAta: asi] You are born with [sampadam] the property of [daivIm] [complying to My instructions](#deva_asura).

The Lord says- 'Don't worry, you are born with the asset of compliance to My instructions'

Arjuna is called [pAnDava] in this Shloka. That means 'Son of Pandu', a noble king.

## 16-6

[

dvA bhUtasargau lOkE\_smin daiva asura Eva cha |

daivO vistarasha: prOkta: Asuram pArtha mE shr'Nu || 6 ||

]

[asmin lOkE] In this world, [dvA bhUtasargau] two types of beings take form - [daiva] those who [intend to comply to My instructions](#deva_asura) [asura] and those who [don't](#deva_asura). [daivO] The property of compliance [prokta:] was described [vistarasha:] in an elaborate manner. [pArtha] Arjuna, [shr'Nu] listen [Asuram] to the [property of non-compliance](#deva_asura) [mE] from Me.

This world is a world of action - all beings here are involved in activities. They commit virtue and vice over many lives. At the time of creation, they come into being in two attitudes - the attitude of compliance to the Lord's instructions and the attitude of non-compliance.

Under the influence of virtue and vice committed over the ages, they are individually prone to follow the Lord's instructions, or to break them.

Our attitudes are an effect of deeds we committed in the past.

The asset of compliance to the Lord’s instruction was elaborated before. The Lord continues- Those with this asset are born to a certain behavior and conduct, according to [My principles](#_16-1_to_16-3). Such conduct has been elaborated in the form of [karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga), [jnAnayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) and [bhaktiyOga](#bhakti_a_defn).

Those with the intent to break the Lord's instructions are born into different behavior and conduct. Be with Me and listen to that.

## 16-7

[

pravr'ttim cha nivr'ttim cha janA na vidurAsurA: |

na shaucham nApi cha AchArO na satyam tEShu vidyatE || 7 ||

]

[AsurA: janA:] Those [who disregard My instructions](#deva_asura) [na vidu:] do not know [pravr'ttim] exertion and achievement [nivr'ttim cha] from actions that [done in liberty](#Moksha). [api tEShu vidyatE na] They don't have [shaucham cha] a sense of cleanliness either, [na AchAra:] nor a sense of conduct [na satyam] nor do they say it 'as it is' with the aim to benefit another.

Those who disregard the [Lord's instructions](#deva_asura) do not know exertion from liberation - they don't know the achievement of prosperity from the achievement of [liberty](#Moksha), described in the scriptures.

They don't have a sense of cleanliness - Here, 'cleanliness' is the qualification to perform as per the scriptures, both in appearance as well as in essence.

They don't have a sense of conduct either - the conduct required to maintain this cleanliness in both appearance and essence. An example of this conduct is the practice of [sandhyAvandana], which involves bathing, acknowledging nature and regulating breath. It is said in [manusmr'ti], 2.22: 'The man who does not practice [sandhyAvandana] and has no cleanliness and isn’t qualified to perform'.

The word [satya] is about 'saying it as it is' - saying what we have known and inferred, saying it with an intention to benefit our listeners. People who disregard the Lord's instructions are incapable of this.

Further -

## 16-8

[

asatyam apratiShTham tE jagadAhu: anIshvaram |

aparaspara sambhUtam kimanyat kAma hEtukam || 8 ||

]

[tE] They [Ahu:] say that [jagat] this world [asatyam] does not have any truth, that it's not a manifestation of the Lord; [apratiShTham] that the world is not situated in the Supreme Lord; [anIshvaram] that it is not controlled by the Lord. [aparaspara sambhUtam] They claim that the creation of offspring by the association between a male and a female is the only form of creation. There is no creation apart from this - [kim anyat] What else? [kAma hEtukam] Everything in this world is driven by desire.

People who disregard the Lord's instruction do not say that there is an ultimate truth in the form of the Lord, with the world as His work. They do not consider the Lord as the ultimate Self of everything. They do not say that the world is situated in the Lord either.

In reality, the earth and everything else is supported and sustained by the limitless Lord. This is stated in [vishNu purANa], 2-5-27: 'Adisesha, the best among snakes, dons the earth, which supports all [compliant and non-compliant](#deva_asura) beings'. Adisesha is a part of the Lord.

Those who disregard the Lord's instructions say that the world is not controlled by the Lord - They do not agree that the Lord's will is always accomplished, nor do they acknowledge that He controls everything. That goes against Chap.10#8, where the Lord reveals his real nature: 'I am the origin of everything; Each and every entity gets stimulated with the initiative given by Me'.

They claim - 'Life is created by the association between a man and a woman; how else does it happen? We see that humans and animals are born out of the association between a male and a female, don’t we? Is there a different kind of birth? We don't see it anywhere. So, this whole world is driven by desire'.

## 16-9

[

EtAm dr'ShTim avaShTabhya naShTAtmAna: alpa buddhaya: |

prabhavani ugrakarmANa: kShayAya jagatO\_hitA: || 9 ||

]

[avaShTabhya] Staying [EtAm dr'ShTim] with these opinions, [naShTAtmAna:] they lose the Self [alpa buddhaya:] and diminish in intellect. [ahitA:] They are a nuisance, [ugrakarmANa:] doing things that hurt others. [prabhavanti] They become [kShayAya] the decay [jagata:] of the world.

People who disregard the Lord's instructions stay in their opinion - they do not recognize their Self, which is separate from their body and is not perceived.

Their intellect is diminished - they are unable to distinguish the Self from the body. They don’t perceive the body as we perceive a pot or other inanimate materials. They do not realize that the Self is the power to know.

They do things that hurt others - they trouble everyone and become the decay in everything.

## 16-10

[

kAmam Ashritya duShpUram dambha mAna madAnvitA: |

mOhAt gr'hItvA\_sadgrAhAn pravartantE\_shuchivratA: || 10 ||

]

[kAmam Ashritya] They place their purpose in their desire, [duShpUram] which is impossible to satisfy. [AnvitA:] They are endowed with [dambha] hypocrisy, [mAna] self-conceit [mada] and arrogance. [pravartantE] They spend their lives [mOhAt] in ignorance, [gr'hItva] acquiring [asadgrAhAn] things that don’t stand by themselves. [ashuchivratA:] They don't come clean in their behavior.

It is impossible to satisfy desire, since it keeps yearning for more. The more difficult something is, the greater is the desire.

This desire combined with ignorance makes them acquire things using inappropriate means. Their conduct goes against the Lord's instructions. In this way, they don't come clean in their behavior. They live their lives in hypocrisy, self-conceit and arrogance.

## 16-11

[

chintAm aparimEyAm cha pralayAntAm upAshritA: |

kAmOpabhOga paramA: EtAvat iti nishchitA: || 11 ||

]

[cha] Further, [upAshritA:] they take refuge [aparimEyAm chintAm] in immeasurable worry, [pralayAntAm] which extends till the world is destroyed. [kAmOpabhOga] They consider the experience that comes from desire [paramA:] as the ultimate. [nishchitA:] They conclude, [iti] saying [EtAvat] 'this is it'.

They are impatient with life. Though they may die today or tomorrow, they worry without limit. The things they worry about may probably remain unresolved till the end of the world. They have decided - 'this is it' - that the fulfilment of desire and its experience is the ultimate goal. This attitude brings conviction that there’s nothing to be achieved beyond this.

## 16-12

[

AshA pAsha shatai: baddhA: kAma krOdha parAyaNA: |

IhantE kAma bhOgArtham anyAyEnArtha sanchayAn || 12 ||

]

[baddhA:] Bound by [shatai:] hundreds [AshA pAsha] of desire-bonds, [parAyaNA:] they pursue [kAma] their desires, [krOdha] their fears and the rage that comes from it. [IhantE] They crave [kAma bhOgArtham] the experience of desires [artha sanchayAn] and the accumulation of wealth [anyAyEna] through unjust means.

This Shloka uses the phrase 'hundreds of desire-bonds' to show desire as bondage - whatever we call as 'desire' actually binds and limits us. Those who [disregard the Lord's instructions](#deva_asura) get bound by hundreds of these desires. They stay focused on this desire and the rage that comes from it. They pursue life according to their fears and the accompanying anger.

In order to experience the fulfilment of their desires, they yearn for wealth - even if it’s earned unjustly.

## 16-13

[

idam adya mayA labdham imam prApsyE manOratham |

idam astIdamapi mE bhaviShyati punardhanam || 13 ||

]

[adya] 'Today, [idam] all this [labdham] is attained [mayA] by me'; [prApsyE] 'I will get [imam manOratham] whatever I desire'; [idam dhanam] 'All this wealth [asti] exists [idam api puna: bhaviShyati] and will continue to be acquired [mE] for me'.

People who disregard the Lord's instructions believe that all their possessions - a piece of land, a family or a son - are acquired by their own capability. Their belief is - 'Everything that I achieve is by my ability, not by anything that I can't perceive. Desires are fulfilled by me, not with anything imperceptible. Wealth is got by my capability - it exists for me. Also, I acquire wealth in future by my capability alone'.

## 16-14, first part

[

asau mayA hata: shatru: haniShyE chAparAnapi |

]

[asau shatru:] 'This enemy [mayA hata:] is killed by me. [haniShyE] I will kill [aparAn] others [api] too'.

They say 'These enemies have been killed by me, using my strength. I will kill other enemies too, I am a daring hero. What is this imperceptible, imagined by foolish weaklings who seek its help?'

Further -

## 16-14; second part

[

IshvarO\_ham aham bhOgI siddhOham balavAn sukhI || 14 ||

]

[Ishvara: aham] 'I am the boss. [aham bhOgI] I enjoy all this. [siddha: aham] Single-handed, I accomplish. [balavAn] I am powerful. [sukhI] I am happy'.

'I am the boss' - I am answerable to myself, I'm the one who controls others too. 'I enjoy all this' - I accumulate and enjoy all this by myself, not with something that's not perceptible.

'Single-handed, I accomplish' - I accomplish my goals on my own, without any imperceptible factors. Further, I am powerful by myself. I am happy by myself.

## 16-15

[

ADhyO\_bhijanavAn asmi kO\_nyO\_sti sadr'shO mayA |

yakShyE dAsyAmi mOdiShyE iti ajnAna vimOhitA: || 15 ||

]

[asmi] 'I am [ADhya:] rich, [abhijanavAn] born in a superior race. [ka: anya: asti] Who else [sadr'sha:] compares to [mayA] me? [yakShyE] I work hard [dAsyAmi] and donate wealth, [mOdiShyE] I enjoy it. [anjAna vimOhitA:] These people are deluded by ignorance' [iti] - so they believe.

'I am rich on my own. I am born to a superior family by my good fortune. Who in this world is equal to me, with all this self-made wealth? I work hard and donate my wealth. I enjoy it myself' - they get deluded by such ignorance.

Without acknowledging the Lord's support, they believe that they persevere, enjoy and donate on their own. This belief comes from ignorance.

## 16-16

[

anEka chitta vibhrAntA mOha jAla samAvr'tA: |

prasaktA: kAma bhOgEShu patanti narakE\_shuchau || 16 ||

]

[vibhrAntA:] They are bewildered [anEka chitta] by different minds, [samAvr'tA:] overwhelmed [mOha jAla] by the trap of lust. [prasaktA:] Indulging [kAma bhOgEShu] in their desires and experiences, [patanti] they fall [ashuchAu narakE] into foul torment.

They are detached from the Lord’s grace and all unseen factors that work with us. They determine that everything can be done by them alone. They are driven helter-skelter with thoughts like 'I will do it this way', 'I must do that or the other one'.

Bewildered by many diverse thoughts and illusions, they are overwhelmed by the trap of lust - they are forcibly drawn to pursue the enjoyment of material desires. In-between all this, they keep dying and experience dreadful torment.

## 16-17

[

Atma sambhAvitA: stabdhA dhana mAna madAnvitA: |

yajantE nAmayajnai: tE dambhEna avidhipUrvakam || 17 ||

]

[Atma sambhAvitA:] Thinking highly of themselves, [stabdhA:] stubborn [madAnvitA:] with arrogance that comes with [dhana] wealth [mAna] and pride, [yajantE] they sacrifice [nAma yajnai:] just to have their name on their endeavors, [dambha] and to show off - [avidhipUrvakam] not according to the recommended procedure.

They think highly of themselves and sing their own praise. They are stubborn with the belief that they are right.

How does that happen? They feel that they don't really need do anything, due to the arrogance that comes from wealth, education and race.

They sacrifice only to have their name on it - adoring the fame that comes with achievement, they pursue only such tasks that earn them a name. Even those tasks are done just to show off that 'I have done this work' - they are not done according to the recommended procedure.

Further, they pursue their work in this way -

## 16-18

[

ahaMkAram balam darpam kAmam krOdham cha saMshritA: |

mAm Atma paradEhEShu pradviShantO\_ bhyasUyakA: || 18 ||

]

[saMshritA:] They stay in [kAmam] desire [krOdham cha] and anger, [ahaMkAram] believing that they make everything happen [balam] by the strength of their own capability, [darpam] which they believe has no equal. [pradviShanta:] They hate [mAm] Me [Atma] in themselves [paradEhEShu] and in others. [abhyasUyakA:] They keep finding faults.

They continue to stay in the arrogance that says 'I accomplish everything without needing any help or support'. They take refuge in the belief that their strength alone is sufficient, to complete every activity they initiate. Hence, they feel there is no equal to them.

Given all this, they think their desire entitles them to their achievements. They set out to destroy everything that causes their dislike - that's their anger.

With such arrogance, these people cultivate hatred for Me - even though I am present in their own body and inside the bodies of others, even though I am the supreme person, who causes anything to be done.

They find faults - They invent faults in Me with misleading arguments, pursuing everything they want without tolerating My presence.

## 16-19

[

tAnaham dviShata: krUrAn saMsArEShu narAdhamAn |

kShipAmi ajasram ashubhAn AsurEShvEva yOniShu || 19 ||

]

[dviShata:] Those who hate, [krUrAn] who are harsh, [ashubhAn] who are unpleasant - [narAdhamAn] they are the lowest [saMsArEShu] among all material beings. [aham] I [kShipAmi] cast [tAn] them [ajasram] repeatedly [yOniShu] into the wombs [AsurEShu Eva] of people who disregard My instruction.

Those who have hatred for me in this way are the lowest among all beings of this world. They turn out to be harsh and unpleasant. I repeatedly throw them in this world - full of change in the form of birth, old age and death in sequels. Even within this world, I cast them into births that are hostile to anything that's favorable to Me.

In summary, the Lord says - 'I Myself associate them with harsh people, whose intellect causes them to exist that way, in line with their past deeds and limited knowledge'.

## 16-20

[

AsurIm yOnimApannA mUDhA janmani janmani |

mAm aprApyaiva kauntEya tatO yAnti adhamAm gatim || 20 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [ApannA:] obtaining [AsurIm yOnim] a birth in disregard to My instruction, [mUDhA:] their awareness diminishes [janmani janmani] from one birth to the next. [mAm aprApya] Without achieving Me, [tata: yAnti] they progress towards [adhamAm gatim] lower goals in life.

Born with the tendency to be hostile towards anything that's favorable to Me, they progressively lose their awareness. Birth after birth, they miss My awareness – they miss the fact that 'There is Lord Krishna, who is the Lord of everything'.

Without this awareness, they accumulate knowledge that goes against achieving me. They are pushed towards lower and lower goals in their subsequent lives.

An attitude of disregard is a way to torture ourselves.

Such people who disregard the Lord's instructions destroy themselves. How come? The Lord elaborates -

## 16-21

[

trividham narakasyEdam dvAram nAshanam Atmana: |

kAma: krOdha: tathA lObha: tasmAt Etat trayam tyajEt || 21 ||

]

[idam trividham] These are the three types of [dvAram] doors [Atmana:] to your own [narakasya] torment [nAshanam] and destruction - [kAma] lust, [krOdha:] anger [tathA] and [lObha:] greed. [tasmAt] That's why [tyajEt] you must leave [Etat trayam] these three.

The tendency to disregard the Lord is torture. This torture has three doors of entry - lust, anger and greed. The nature of these three has already been elaborated. Entering them leads to self-destruction, preventing the Self from achieving its true form.

We can choose to stop torturing ourselves.

These 'doors' represent the paths we choose. That's why we must leave these three paths of torment. Keep lust, anger and greed at good distance, don't let them close.

## 16-22

[

Etairvimukta: kauntEya tamOdvArai: tribhirnara: |

Acharati Atmana: shrEya: tatO yAti parAm gatim || 22 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [nara:] a person [vimukta:] frees himself [Etai:] from these [tribhi:] three [tamOdvArai:] doors of darkness [Acharati] and works [Atmana:] for his own [shrEya:] well-being. [tata:] Then, [yAnti] he obtains [parAm] the ultimate [gatim] goal.

Lust, anger and greed are the three doors to darkness - they give rise to unfavorable opinions about Me. A person works for his own well-being when he doesn’t need them. This person gets to know Me and engages in My favor. Then he will certainly achieve Me, the ultimate goal.

Next, the Lord describes that the disregard for His instruction is the main cause of such torment.

## 16-23

[

ya: shAstra vidhim utsr'jya vartatE kAmakArata: |

na sa siddhim avApnOti na sukham na parAm gatim || 23 ||

]

[ya:] The person who [utsr'jya] ignores [shAstra vidhim] the imperatives in the scriptures [vartatE] and exists [kAmakArata:] to run behind his desires [sa: siddhim na avApnOti] does not accomplish fulfilment, [na sukham] nor is he happy, [na parAm gatim] nor does he reach the [ultimate goal](#Moksha).

The imperatives in the scriptures are My instructions, written in the Vedas. The person who ignores them and goes behind his desires will stay by his own rules. In such a state, a person does not accomplish fulfilment, even in the material world. This person does not gain any comfort, nor does he attain the [ultimate goal](#Moksha).

## 16-24

[

tasmAt shAstram pramANam tE kAryAkArya vyavasthitau |

jnAtvA shAstra vidhAnOktam karma kartum ihArhasi || 24 ||

]

[tasmAt] Hence, [shAstram] the scriptures [tE pramANam] are your authority [vyavasthitau] in distinguishing [kArya akArya] actions that must and must not be done. [jnAtvA] Knowing [vidhAna] the rules [uktam] as told [shAstra] in the scriptures, [arhasi] you qualify [karma kartum] to work [iha] here.

The scriptures are the authority in calling out actions that must and must not be done - actions that help in achieving your excellence and those that do not.

These scriptures are elaborated in epics like The Ramayana, The Mahabharata and the stories of The Puranas that explain the Vedas. These scriptures describe the Lord as the Supreme Person, the ultimate entity. They teach actions that please this Supreme Person and aid in achieving Him.

Know the concepts in these scriptures and the actions they prescribe. Know them as they are, not more, not less. Knowing them in this way, you qualify to work accordingly.

# Chapter 17

The previous chapter made the distinction between people who comply with the Lord's instructions and those who don't. It said that the Lord's instructions in the Vedas alone are the basis of what is to be achieved and how to achieve it.

This chapter elaborates that work done without regard to the Lord's instructions is work done in vain. It explains that the imperatives in the scriptures are of three types, as appropriate to the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). This chapter also illustrates the characteristics of the Lord's instructions and what they state.

Arjuna doesn't know this fact – that work that’s not recommended by the Lord's instructions is in vain. He wants to know the effect of work done with focus and belief in its benefits. He wants to know the result of association with qualities such as [sattva](#sattva) - even though the corresponding work may not be specified in the Lord's instructions.

## 17-1

[

arjuna uvAcha -

yE shAstra vidhim utsr'jya yajantE shraddhayA\_nvitA: |

tEShAm niShThA tu kA kr'ShNa sattvamAhO rajas tama: || 1 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said - [kA] ‘What is [niShThA] the final state of achievement [tEShAm] of people [yE yajantE] who persevere with faith [shraddhayA\_nvitA:] and focus, [utsr'jya] disregarding [shAstra vidhim] the imperatives laid down in the scriptures? [sattvam] Is it in [sattva](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), the state of serenity? [AhO] or [rajas] Or in [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), being resourceful? [tama:] Or in [tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), the state of laziness?’

What is the achievement of someone who discards the methods in the scriptures and yet perseveres with faith and focus? Is it the [sattva](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) state-of-being, in which a person is serene? Is it, [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), being resourceful? Or is its [tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), the state of laziness?

This Shloka uses the word [niShThA] in the sense of 'achievement', which refers to a stable state-of-being achieved by a person. 'Achievement' here is to settle in one of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Arjuna asks if this person achieves the state of [sattva](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) or [tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects)?

In response to this question, the Lord describes that the methods and forms of worship described in the scriptures are according to the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). To describe this, the Lord shows that there are three areas of focus in the scriptures.

## 17-2

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

trividhA bhavati shraddhA dEhinAm sA svabhAvajA |

sAttvikI rAjasI chaiva tAmasI chEti tAm shr'Nu || 2 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord said - [dEhinAm shraddhA] Those who own a body have focus [trividhA bhavati] of three types: [sAttvikI] serene, [rAjasI] resourceful [cha] and [tAmasI] lazy. [sA svabhAvajA] It comes from their own state of being. [iti tAm shr'Nu] Listen to them.

Where does difficulty come from?

Everyone who owns a body has three types of focus. It comes from their own state of being. This 'state of being' is unique to them. It is shaped by the influence of actions committed since ancient times. It is specialized by their likes and dislikes, so their focus is directed by their tastes in life.

This 'focus' - [shraddhA] - is the eagerness in their endeavor, filled with the conviction that it will achieve their belief. The influence of past deeds, the consequent tastes and this focus make up the 'conduct' of the Self. This conduct comes from contact with the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects).

It's possible to describe the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) only by their effects. The three qualities come from experiencing things around us - things like our body - which is composed out of these [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

We perceive the world by using our body, our sense organs and our mind. This perception is a product of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) and gives rise to the conduct of the Self - in the form of motivation, tastes and focus.

Hence, this focus - [shraddhA] - is of three types - serene, resourceful and lazy, going by the [three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). Listen to this focus and its characteristics.

## 17-3

[

satvAnurUpA sarvasya shraddhA bhavati bhArata |

shraddhAmayO ayam puruShO yO yat shraddha: sa Eva sa: || 3 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [sarvasya] each person's [shraddhA] focus [satvAnurUpA bhavati] is according to the essence of his character. [ayam puruSha:] This person is [shraddhAmaya:] defined by his focus. [ya:] Whoever [yat shraddha:] has a focus, [sa Eva sa:] he is that itself.

The 'essence of character' is the core of the body - the reason for the body's existence. This core of our body shapes our focus. The core of our body is made from the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). In this way, focus is born on a subject based on the qualities that make up the core of our body.

Here, the phrase 'essence of character' is used to represent our body along with its organs and the mind, as told [before](#_13-29). We are 'defined by our focus' - our personality is a product of our focus.

We end up as a product of whatever our focus is. When we get focused on actions of virtue, their outcomes latch on to us. In this way, the 'outcome of action' - our experience after committing an action - comes primarily from our [focus](#shraddha_focus).

The Lord elaborates this very fact next:

## 17-4

[

yajaMtE sAttvikA dEvAn yakSha rakShAMsi rAjasA: |

prEtAn bhUtagaNAn chAnyE yajantE tAmasA: janA: || 4 ||

]

[sAttvikA:] People in whom [sattva](#sattva) is predominant [yajaMtE] devote themselves to [dEvAn] those who follow the Lord's instructions. [rAjasA:] People who have a predominance of [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas) go behind [yakSha rakShAMsi] illusive powers, which they believe will guard and protect them. [anyE janA:] Other people [tAmasA:] with [tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas) [yajantE] get devoted to [prEtAn] the deceased [bhUtagaNAn cha] spirits and other superstitions.

Our past gives the qualities of our body and our outlook to life.

People with a predominance of [sattva](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) have the serene type of [focus](#shraddha_focus). With this, they devote themselves to those who follow the Lord's instructions. This focus is free from sorrow. It provides superior joy. This type of focus is 'serene' focus and it goes with sattva.

People with a predominance of [rajas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) go behind power that appears to guard and protect them from the undesirable. This is the resourceful type of [focus](#shraddha_focus), which has some joy mixed with difficulties.

Those with a predominance of [tamas](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) get devoted to spirits and other forms of superstitions. This lazy type of [focus](#shraddha_focus) is high on sorrow with very little joy.

The scriptures specify rules and activities for people having a predominance of any of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). Performing accordingly with [focus](#shraddha_focus) brings outcomes, which are according to their [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) as described above - when the activities don't go against the scriptures.

On the other hand, even activities such as charity, penance and rituals do not yield any well-being when they are performed in disregard of the scriptures - they go against The Lord's instructions. Next, the Lord clarifies His opinion, firm at heart - that such activities are disastrous.

Given an outlook, we can choose to live in reality or live in vain.

## 17-5 to 17-6

[

ashAstravihitam ghOram tapyantE yE tapO janA: |

dambhAhaMkAra samyuktA: kAma rAga balAnvitA: || 5 ||

karshayanta: sharIrastham bhUtagrAmam achEtasa: |

mAm chaivAnta: sharIrastham tAn vidyAsura nishchayAn || 6 ||

]

[yE janA:] People who [samyuktA:] are associated with [dambha] hypocrisy [ahaMkAra] and arrogance [balAnvitA:] find their strength [rAga] in desire [kAma] and pleasure. [tapyantE] They torment themselves [ghOram tapa:] with awful struggle, [ashAstravihitam] going against My instructions in the scriptures.

[karshayanta:] They attenuate [bhUtagrAmam] the [colony of elements](#five_elements) [sharIrastham] present as the body [chaiva] along with [mAm] Me, [anta: sharIrastham] present as the core of the body. [achEtasa:] They are lifeless. [tAn viddhi] Know them [Asura nishchayAn] as people who have resolved to disregard My instructions.

The statement 'People torment themselves with awful struggle, going against my instructions in the scriptures' is illustrative - any struggle that goes against My instruction is awful, even when it involves impressive rituals such as charity and sacrifice. Such an activity has hypocrisy and arrogance built-in, finding strength in desire and pleasure.

These activities attenuate the specialty of the body - they diminish the body, not recognizing that it's a wonderful [colony of the five elements](#five_elements) - solids, liquids, energy, gasses and space. They also diminish the Self, a part of Me present as the core of the body.

Know that people who struggle this way have resolved to disregard My instructions. They are the very people who go against My instructions. By doing so, they don't get to touch even a little joy. Instead, they fall into the company of the vain and wasted, as said before in Chap.16#16: 'Indulging in their desires and experiences, they fall into foul torment'

In addition to activities to achieve The Lord, the scriptures describe activities related to our environment. Next, The Lord goes on to distinguish activities that relate to our environment. These activities are characterized by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

Food is the source of these activities - hence, He first describes the three types of food that nourish the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). As said in [ChAMdOgya, 6-5, 4] - 'Son, the mind is defined by the food we eat' and in [ChAMdOgya, 7-26-2] - 'The quality of [sattva](#sattva) gets pure when our food is free of impurities'.

## 17-7

[

AhArastvapi sarvasya trividhO bhavati priya: |

yajna: tapa: tathA dAnam tEShAm bhEdam imam shr'Nu || 7 ||

]

[sarvasya priya:] Everyone’s favorite [AhAra:] food [tu api] also [trividha: bhavati] falls into three categories. [tathA] Same is the case with [yajna] worship, [tapa:] discipline [tathA] and [dAnam] charity. [shr'Nu] Listen [imam bhEdam] to the distinctions [tEShAm] between them.

The favorite food of every type of being goes according to its association with the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). In this way, eating habits are of three types too. In the same way, worship is of three types, so also discipline and charity. Listen to the distinctions between them. Listen to the distinct qualities of food, thought and charity - in terms of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas), the qualities that cause these distinctions.

## 17-8

[

Ayu: satva balArOgya sukha prIti vivardhana: |

rasyA: snigdhA: sthirA hr'dyA AhArA: sAttvika priyA: || 8 ||

]

[priyA: AhArA:] The favorite food [sAttvika] of people in the [sattva](#sattva) quality [vivardhana:] enhances [Ayu:] longevity; [satva] it enhances the mind, [bala] its strength, [ArOgya] health, [sukha] well-being [prIti] and love. [rasyA:] They are tasty, [snigdhA:] being mild and smooth, [sthirA:] preserving [hr'dyA:] and provide comfort to the mind.

Food builds our body and the qualities in it.

Those who have chosen to be in [sattva](#sattva) prefer food that is made in the quality of [sattva](#sattva). Any food made in [sattva](#sattva) contributes to longevity, further enhancing the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

[Sattva](#sattva) is the seat of thought and experience. The knowledge that contributes to the realization of our Self is called [sattva](#sattva) here. It was said in Chap.14#17: ‘From [sattva](#sattva), knowledge arises’. Since [sattva](#sattva) causes knowledge to be enriched, food that is made in [sattva](#sattva) also contributes to enriching our knowledge.

Further, it enhances strength and keeps us healthy. It brings love and well-being as well - When it is digested in the body, it automatically contributes to our well-being. Then, by initiating work that brings love, it enhances love too.

Such food is tasty - having fluids that are pleasant to taste. They are mild and smooth - buttery for example. They are preserving - their effect on us is stable. They provide comfort to the mind - they are pleasing to the eyes. A person in [sattva](#sattva) prefers these foods, which are made in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

## 17-9

[

kaTvamla lavaNa atyuShNa tIkShNa rUkSha vidAhina: |

AhArA rAjasasya iShTA du:kha shOkAmaya pradA: || 9 ||

]

[iShTA AhArA:] The favorite foods [rAjasasya] of a person in [rajas](#rajas) [du:kha] are those that are difficult, [shOka pradA:] giving distress [Amaya] and indigestion. [kaTu] They are pungent, [amla] sour, [lavaNa] salty, [ati uShNa] full of heat, [tIkShNa] sharp [rUkSha] and rough to the taste, [vidAhina:] having scorching effects.

Pungent and sour juices mixed with a lot of salt, made very hot, sharp and rough to the taste, have a scorching effect. The sharpness comes from excessive cold or excess of heat, making the food difficult to consume. They parch and hence are rough to the taste. Their heat has scorching effects.

People in [rajas](#rajas) like these foods. Since they are made in the quality of [rajas](#rajas), they are difficult to consume and cause distress. They cause the quality of [rajas](#rajas) to grow.

## 17-10

[

yAtayAmam gatarasam pUti paryuShitam cha yat |

uchChiShTam api chAmEdhyam bhOjanam tAmasa priyam || 10 ||

]

[tAmasa priyam] Creatures that are in [tamas](#tamas) [yat bhOjanam] like to eat food that is [yAtayAmam] aged, [gatarasam] having lost its natural flavor, [pUti] foul-smelling, [paryuShitam] stale, [uchChiShTam api] even left-over fragments [amEdhyam cha] and other dirty things.

Food gets aged when it is left for a long time. It loses its natural flavor and becomes foul-smelling.

It is said to be ‘stale’ when it acquires a different taste due to the passage of time. Left-over fragments are the remains after other creatures have consumed their food. Other 'dirty things' are foods we consider so dirty that we can't consider them for worship.

This food is full with [tamas](#tamas). It is liked and consumed by creatures who are in [tamas](#tamas). Their [tamas](#tamas) is further enhanced.

Hence, those who wish for well-being must consume food made in the quality of [sattva](#sattva) alone to enhance the [sattva](#sattva) in their body.

## 17-11

[

aphalAkAMkShibhi: yajnO vidhi dr'ShTO ya ijyatE |

yaShTavyam EvEti mana: samAdhAya sa sAtvika: || 11 ||

]

[ya: yajna:] The worship [ijyatE] that is offered in [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) [aphalAkAMkShibhi:] devoid of expectations, [vidhi dr'ShTa:] done with consideration to the methods in the scriptures, [mana: samAdhAya] with the mind being content [yaShTavyam Eva iti] that 'I just need to worship' - [sa: sAtvika:] This worship is in [sattva](#sattva).

A purpose of devotion brings knowledge and well-being.

In the quality of [sattva](#sattva), worship is done without binding it to expectations. It is done with the hymns, material and activities shown in the scriptures. The purpose of this worship is worship itself. The worship that is offered in [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) to the Lord, with the mind content with the thought 'I just need to worship' - this is worship done in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

## 17-12

[

abhisaMdhAya tu phalam dambhArtham api chaiva yat |

ijyatE bharata shrEShTha tam yajnam viddhi rAjasam || 12 ||

]

[bharata shrEShTha] Arjuna, [yat yajnam] worship that is [ijyatE] performed [abhisaMdhAya] with attachment towards [phalam] expectations [api cha] or even just [dambhArtham] to show-off - [tam viddhi] know that to be [rAjasam] in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

Any other purpose brings restlessness.

Know that worship performed by people with expectations and attachments, to show-off, with the sole purpose of gaining fame is done in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

## 17-13

[

vidhihInam asr'ShTAnnam mantrahInam adakShiNam |

shraddhA virahitam yajnam tAmasam parichakShatE || 13 ||

]

[yajnam] A ritual [vidhi hInam] that disregards all methods [asr'ShTAnnam] with inappropriate materials, [mantrahIna] devoid of prayer [adakShiNam] and offering [shraddhA virahitam] done without focus [parichakShatE] is condemned [tAmasam] to be in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

Purposelessness brings ignorance.

A ritual that disregards all method is done without the instruction of Brahmins. A Brahmin is one who leads a virtuous life, having learnt the methods of worship. This worship is done with inappropriate materials, which are not recommended in the scriptures. It is not done with the Protector in mind. It has no offerings and is devoid of focus. This kind of worship is condemned to be in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

Next, to describe the three forms of discipline that go by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), The Lord explains the characteristics of our body, our speech and our mind - they are the ones that make up our discipline.

The [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) give behavior. Our behavior enhances them further.

## 17-14

[

dEva dvija guru prAjna pUjanam shaucham Arjavam |

brahmacharyam ahiMsA cha shArIram tapa uchyatE || 14 ||

]

[pUjanam] Respecting [dEva] the divine, [dvija] the student, [guru] the teacher [prajna] and those who know; [shaucham] being clean; [Arjavam] being true to yourself; [brahmacharyam] being immaculate; [ahiMsA] without the intention of causing harm [uchyatE] - these are called [sharIram tapa:] the discipline of the body.

The discipline of the body is about respecting the divine, the student, the teacher and those who know.

It is about being physically clean - washing with water, for example.

It is about being true to yourself - when the actions of our body match our thoughts and belief. Being ‘immaculate’ is about being without the intention to cause harm. For example, an immaculate man would stay away from thoughts of enjoying women.

## 17-15

[

anudvEgakaram vAkyam satyam priya hitam cha yat |

svAdhyAyAbhyasanam chaiva vAk mayam tapa uchyate || 15 ||

]

[yat vAkyam] A sentence that [anudvEgakaram] doesn't cause agitation, [satyam] is authentic, [priya] liked [cha] and [hitam] comforting, [svAdhyAyAbhyasanam chaiva] with a study of the Self built into it [uchyatE] - this is known as [tapa] discipline [vAk mayam] of speech.

A sentence that doesn't cause agitation to another, which is authentic, liked and comforting, constructed in pursuit of the Self - this is the discipline of speech.

## 17-16

[

mana: prasAda: saumyatvam maunam Atma vinigraha: |

bhAva saMshuddhi: iti Etat tapO mAnasam uchyatE || 16 ||

]

[mana: prasAda:] A pleasant mind, [saumyatvam] pleased with the good fortune of others, [maunam] keeping the organ of speech under control, [Atma vinigraha:] stationing the mind in the object of concentration, [bhAva saMshuddhi:] a clean state of being [iti Etat] - this [uchyatE] is called as [mAnasam tapa:] the discipline of the mind.

A pleasant mind is free of anger. It is pleased with the good fortune of others. It controls the activity of speech. Such a mind concentrates on the subject that must be focused upon. A clean state of being is about letting go of thoughts that don't concern the Self. This is the discipline of the mind.

## 17-17

[

shraddhayA parayA taptam tapa: tat trividham narai: |

aphalAkAMkShibhi: yuktai: sAtvikam parichakShatE || 17 ||

]

[tat trividham tapa:] When these three disciplines [taptam] are implemented [yuktai:] as The Lord's worship, [narai:] by people [parayA shraddhayA] with supreme focus, [aphlalAkAMkAhibhi:] without being bogged down by expectations, [parichakShatE] - this is seen as [sAtvikam] being in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

People who aren't bogged down by expectations are always with the thought that everything is for the Lord’s worship. They practice the three disciplines of the mind, body and speech with supreme focus. Such discipline is said to be in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

## 17-18

[

satkAra mAna pUjArtham tapO dambhEna chaiva yat |

kriyatE tat iha prOktam rAjasam chalam adhruvam || 18 ||

]

[yat tapa:] Discipline that's [kriyatE] practiced [pUjArtham] to be revered, [dambhEna] to gain fame, [satkAra] respect, [mAna] pride [dambhEna Eva cha] and with the only aim of showing-off [tat] - such discipline [iha prOktam] here is said to be [rAjasam] in the quality of [rajas](#rajas). [chalam] It is perishable [adhruvam] and unstable.

'Respect' is the regard in people's minds. 'Pride' comes from spoken praise. 'Being revered' is when people show respect, by bowing down for instance.

When discipline is practiced to show-off, expecting enhanced respect, praise and reverence, it is said to be in the quality of [rajas](#rajas). Such discipline is practiced to accomplish goals like prosperity and comfort, so it's perishable - The fact that it's associated with the fear of losing whatever is gained makes it perishable. It is unstable, since it wears out over time.

## 17-19

[

mUDha grAhENa AtmanO yat pIDayA kriyatE tapa: |

parasyOtsAdanArtham vA tat tAmasam udAhr'tam || 19 ||

]

[yat tapa: kriyatE] Discipline that's practiced [mUDha grAhENa] with confused perceptions [Atmana: pIDayA] to torment oneself, [vA] or [parasya utsAdanArtham] practiced in order to put aside others [tat udAhr'tam] - such discipline is said to be [tAmasam] in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

People with confused perceptions do not make the right judgement. In this confusion, they apply themselves without considering the limits of their abilities. Such discipline is done for self-torment. This, along with any discipline that's meant to put aside others is said to be in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

Next, the Lord goes ahead to describe the three ways in which things can be given - the three forms of charity.

## 17-20

[

dAtavyam iti yat dAnam dIyatE anupakAriNE |

dEshE kAlE cha pAtrE cha tat dAnam sAtvikam smr'tam || 20 ||

]

[yat dAnam dIyatE] Possessions that are given [pAtrE] to the deserving [anupakAriNE] who have not been of favor or assistance, [dEshE kAlE cha] at the appropriate place and time, [dAtavyam iti] with conviction [tat dAnam] - This charity [smr'tam] is known [sAtvikam] to be in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

When we give to those who deserve, even though they have not been of favor or assistance, we aren’t bogged down by expectations. When we give at the appropriate time and place, with the conviction that the charity is suitable, it is known to be in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

## 17-21

[

yattu pratyupakArArtham phalam uddishya vA puna: |

dIyatE cha parikliShTam tat dAnam rAjasam smr'tam || 21 ||

]

[tu] On the other hand, [yat dIyatE] when it is given [prati upakArArtham] as return for past favors or in anticipation of future favors, [vA puna:] or again, [phalam uddishya] targeting expectations, [parikliShTam] it is done unwillingly, with trouble and exhaustion. [tat dAnam] This act of giving [smr'tam] is known to be [rAjasam] in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

When an act of giving comes with an eye on returning a favor and targeting expectations, it comes with trouble and exhaustion. It isn't auspicious as it doesn't contribute to our well-being. This type of charity is said to be in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

## 17-22

[

adEshakAlE yat dAnam apAtrEbhya: cha dIyatE |

asatkr'tam avajnAtam tat tAmasam udAhr'tam || 22 ||

]

[yat dAnam dIyatE] That which is given [apAtrEbhya:] to the undeserving, [adEshakAlE] without an appropriate place and time [asatkr'tam] without respect, [avajnAtam] with contempt, [tat udAhr'tam] it is said to be [tAmasam] in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

When things are given in contempt to the undeserving at an inappropriate place and time, when there is no respectful action (like washing the others feet), when there is no touch of reverence, the act of giving is said to be in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

In this way, the different forms of worship, discipline and charity were told. The different forms in them come from the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). The Lord’s directives for those activities are in the scriptures.

What are the Lord’s instructions?

Next, the Lord describes their characteristics, when they are aligned with the sound of ‘Om’ and qualified by the sounds of 'tat' and 'sat'.

## 17-23

[

Om tat sat iti nirdEshO brahmaNa: trividha: smr'ta: |

brAhmaNA: tEna vEdAshcha yajnA: cha vihitA: purA || 23 ||

]

[Om tat sat iti] 'Om', 'tat', 'sat' are [trividha: nirdEsha:] three specific directives, [brahmaNa: smr'ta:] prescribed for all activities in the Lord's scriptures. [vEdA:] The Vedas, [brAhmaNA:] people in the quest for the Lord [yajnA: cha] and the way of worship [vihitA:] were specified [purA] long ago [tEna] with these sounds.

The word [brahma] here refers to the activities specified by the Lord. 'Om', 'tat' and 'sat' are three sounds that give direction when they are applied to worship, discipline and charity in the scriptures.

The sound of ‘Om’ points to a higher purpose

The sound 'Om' is a component of every work prescribed by the Lord in the Vedas. It is chanted at the start of an endeavor. The other two words 'tat' and 'sat' come from an expression of admiration.

In this shloka, the Lord stated that the Vedas, the people who practice them and the forms of worship were established long ago by Him - along with the application of ‘Om’, ‘tat’ and ‘sat’ directives. Next, The Lord illustrates the way in which the sounds of 'Om', 'tat' and 'sat' associate. First, He states the way in which the sound of 'Om' applies.

## 17-24

[

tasmAt Om iti udAhr'tya yajna dAna tapa: kriyA: |

pravartantE vidhAnOktA: satatam brahmavAdinAm || 24 ||

]

[tasmAt] That's why [kriyA:] the activities of [yajna dAna tapa:] worship, charity and discipline [satatam pravartantE] are always started [udAhr'tya] by saying [Om iti] the sound of Om, [vidhAnOkta:] as specified [brahmavAdinAm] for people who follow the Vedas.

Those who go by the Lord’s instructions begin their work with the sound of ‘Om’. That's the method specified for people who follow the Vedas. The Vedas themselves begin with the sound of 'Om'.

In this Shloka, The Lord illustrates the application of 'Om' in the Vedas and its application to worship, charity and discipline. Everyone in the quest for the Lord is associated with this sound. They carry the Lord’s instruction with the sound of Om. *The Lord is the highest purpose.*

Next in the sequence of 'Om tat sat', the Lord illustrates the application of the word 'tat' with these activities.

## 17-25

[

taditi anabhisandhAya phalam yajna tapa: kriyA: |

dAnakriyA: cha vividhA: kriyantE mOkSha kAMkShibhi: || 25 ||

]

[kriyA:] Activities in the form of [yajna] worship, [tapa:] discipline [cha] and [vividhA:] various kinds of [dAnakriyA:] charitable deeds [kriyantE] are done [phalam anabhisandhAya] without being bogged down by expectations [mOkSha kAMkShibhi:] by those who desire [moksha](#Moksha), [tat iti] saying the word 'tat'.

Worship, discipline, charity and the study of the Vedas are activities to achieve the Lord. People who desire [moksha](#Moksha) follow them. They aren’t bogged down by expectations.

These activities are distinguished by the sound of 'tat', which points to Brahma.

‘Brahma’ indicates an expanse. The expanse of the universe, the expanse of knowledge – they are all part of the Lord.

The Lord, as the highest purpose, has great expanse.

The word 'tat' is famously used in the Vishnu Sahasranama to name the Lord - it mentions the names of the Lord as - [sa: va: ka: kim yat tat padam anuttamam].

The word 'tat' is present in the Gayatri Mantra as well – [tat savitu: varENyam]. It signifies the expanse of knowledge.

In this way, the sound of ‘tat’ points to the study of Vedas, as well as activities such as worship, which accomplish the goal of [moksha](#Moksha). The word 'tat' is applied to all those activities. Those who are in the quest for the Lord will do these activities to achieve [moksha](#Moksha). Those people are also associated with the sound of 'tat'.

Next, the Lord describes the origin of the word 'sat', before explaining the way in which the sound of 'sat' applies to these activities.

## 17-26

[

sadbhAvE sAdhu bhAvE cha saditi Etat prayujyatE |

prashastE karmaNi tathA sat shabda: pArtha yujyatE || 26 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [Etat] this [sat iti] sound of 'sat' [prayujyatE] fits [sadbhAvE] in the belief of existence [cha] and [sAdhubhAvE] in the opinion that something is favorable. [tathA] Further, [sat shabda:] the 'sat' sound [yujyatE] is linked [prashastE karmaNi] in praiseworthy actions.

That purpose exists and it always brings excellence.

The 'belief of existence' happens when we sense or foresee the existence of something. The 'opinion that something is favorable' comes from the belief that it would bring benefit.

This usage of the word 'sat' fits all situations of this world. The Vedas use it in this way as well. It is used to express excellence in the favorable actions prescribed by the Lord.

## 17-27

[

yajnE tapasi dAnE cha sthiti: sat iti chOchyatE |

karma chaiva tadarthIyam sat ityEvAbhidhIyatE || 27 ||

]

[sthiti:] Standing [yajnE tapasi dAnE cha] in worship, discipline and charity [cha] is also [uchyatE] called [sat iti] as 'sat'. [karma] The actions [tadarthIyam cha] and people who perform them [abhidhIyatE cha] are also referred to [sat Eva] by the word 'sat' itself.

Hence, the actions of worship, discipline and charity are called 'sat', by virtue of having excellence in them. These actions are specified by the Lord and done by people who follow the Vedas. These people are also called 'sat'.

The Vedas and their activities are denoted by the word [brAhmaNa] - meaning they are related to the Lord. Those who follow the Vedas are characterized by their association with the sounds of 'Om', 'tat' and 'sat'. That's how they are distinct from things that aren't specified in the Vedas and from those who disregard the Vedas.

## 17-28

[

ashraddhayA hutam dattam tapa: taptam kr'tam cha yat |

asat ityuchyatE pArtha na cha tat prEtya nO iha || 28 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [yat hutam kr'tam] the offering that's done in worship, [dattam] given in charity [tapa: taptam cha] and discipline that's practiced [ashraddhayA] without [focus](#shraddha_focus) [iti uchyatE] are said to be [asat] useless. [na iha] Neither do they have benefit here, [na prEtya] nor are they useful after we have passed away.

Actions done without belief in purpose have no [focus](#shraddha_focus). They are said to be useless - even when they are activities like worship, prescribed in the scriptures. Why is that? They do not lead to [moksha](#Moksha), nor do they yield any material benefit in this world.

# Chapter 18

The previous two chapters spoke about activities like worship, discipline and charity - as specified in the Vedas. They explained that the achievements in this world, as well as supreme joy ([Moksha](#Moksha)) come from such activities, not from other sources.

All these activities are associated with the sound of 'Om', which is about a higher purpose. It is the common characteristic of all activities in the Vedas.

The words 'tat' and 'sat' give the distinction between the achievement of Moksha and the achievements in this world. Activities like worship lead to Moksha, when they are not bogged down by expectations. Such activities commence in an abundance of [sattva](#sattva). This quality is enhanced by nurturing the body with food that’s made in the quality of sattva.

Next, this chapter explains that [tyAga] - 'letting go' and [saMnyAsa] - 'renunciation' are synonymous. Their purpose is to achieve Moksha. It goes on to describe the characteristics of 'letting go', which is the scheme of placing all [transactions](#kartrtva_transaction) in the Supreme Lord.

This chapter also describes the effects of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas) and the inevitable excellence of [sattva](#sattva). It illustrates the way to achieve of the Lord with activities that are natural to us. We worship the Lord with our normal activity.

These Shlokas state that [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) to the Lord is the summary of the entire text of the Gita.

While going into this summary, Arjuna first wants to determine if 'letting go' is same as 'renunciation', or if they're something different. Here, the phrase 'letting go' is to lose possessiveness towards our actions and their outcomes; 'renunciation' is about giving up actions themselves. He asks to know their characteristics.

## 18-1

[

arjuna uvAcha -

saMnyAsasya mahAbAhO tattvam ichChAmi vEditum |

tyAgasya cha hr'ShIkEsha pr'thak kEshi niShUdana || 1 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said - [ichChAmi] I would like [vEditum] to know [tattvam] the true nature [saMnyAsasya] of renunciation, [cha] as well as [tyAgasya] the true nature of 'letting go' [pr'thak] distinctly. [hr'ShIkEsha] O Lord, you are the Self in everything, controlling all, [mahAbAhO] you have mighty arms, [kEshi niShUdana] you have destroyed Keshi.

Keshi is the name of a demon. This word represents everything that goes against virtue and things that stand in the way of virtuous people. The Lord destroys such things.

Renunciation and the practice of 'letting it go' are specified as means to achieve [Moksha](#Moksha).

It is said in the [mahAnArAyaNa] - 'Freedom from death comes by letting go. It does not come with deeds, wealth or by having followers. Those who practice the art of ‘letting go’ know the essence of the Upanishads. They get purified by being with renunciation. At the end of life, they are in the Lord's abode. They attain the Lord, who is supreme. The Lord is beyond those who have gained freedom from death'.

In this way, the scriptures seem to use the phrases 'letting go' and 'renunciation' interchangeably. Hence, the question if they are same or different.

In this quest of purpose, what do we let go of?

Arjuna asks - I would like to know the true nature of this 'renunciation' and how it's different from 'letting go'. To elaborate: Do the phrases 'renunciation' and 'letting go' mean the same, or are they different? If they are different, I'd like to know their characteristics and their distinctions. On the other hand, if they mean the same thing, let me know its nature.

The Lord now starts acknowledging the discussions where they appear distinct. He later clarifies that their characteristics are the same and describes those characteristics.

## 18-2

[

shrI bhagavAn uvAcha -

kAmyAnAm karmaNAm nyAsam saMnyAsam kavayO vidu: |

sarva karma phala tyAgam prAhu: tyAgam vichakShaNA: || 2 ||

]

[shrI bhagavAn uvAcha] The Lord said - [kavaya:] The wise [vidu:] know that [saMnyAsam] renunciation [nyAsam] is to leave [kAmyAnAm karmaNAm] actions that come from desire. [vichakShaNA:] Those who are experienced [prAhu:] say that [tyAgam] 'letting go' [phala tyAgam] is about giving up expectation [sarva karma] in all actions.

Some learned people believe that all actions are driven by desire, so they believe in leaving actions themselves - not doing them at all. This is 'renunciation'.

Others with experience believe in letting go of expectation in all actions. This is called 'letting go' in all scriptures that deal with Moksha. The phrase 'all actions' here includes routine actions, prescribed actions and other activities having various outcomes.

Here, the Lord illustrates the contention between two phrases - 'renunciation' and 'letting go', both of which have been used in the scriptures.

Does 'letting go' mean that we must leave expectations in our actions or leave the actions themselves? Does renunciation mean ceasing all actions? The Lord has used the phrase 'renunciation' in some places and 'letting go' in others interchangeably, affirming that they mean the same.

As He says in the next few Shlokas- Chap.18#4: 'Arjuna, listen to My firm conclusion about letting-go' – with this, He conveys His conclusion using the phrase 'letting go' itself. In Chap.18#7, He says - 'It is not appropriate to renounce activities that are prescribed. Getting confused and letting go of them is said to be in laziness, a quality of tamas'.

In Chap.18#12, He says - 'Actions have three types of results - desirable, undesirable and mixed. They follow a person who hasn't let-go, even after he departs from this world. In the next life, he is born again in one of these three situations. None of this happens to someone who has renounced'.

In this way, the Lord has mutually substituted the phrases 'renunciation' and 'letting go'. Hence, it is accepted that they have the same meaning.

## 18-3

[

tyAjyam dOShavat ityEkE karma prAhu: manIShNa: |

yajna dAna tapa: karma na tyAjyam iti chAparE || 3 ||

]

[EkE manIShiNa:] Some people [prAhu:] say that [tyAjyam] we need to leave [karma] actions, [dOShavat] since flaws are inherent in them. [aparE cha] Others [iti] say that [karma] actions of [yajna] worship, [dAna] charity [tapa:] and discipline [na tyAjyam] are not to be given up.

Some people, such as the followers of the Sage Kapila say that those who aim for [Moksha](#Moksha) must let go of all activities, including the rituals that worship the Lord - That's because actions are associated with flaws that bind us, in the form of desires and expectations. Other learned people say that we must not give up these activities.

## 18-4

[

nishchayam shr'Nu mE tatra tyAgE bharatasattama |

tyAgO hi puruSha vyAghra trividha: saMprakIrtita: || 4 ||

]

[bharatasattama] Arjuna, [shr'Nu] listen [mE nishchayam] to My resolution [tatra tyAgE] in the meaning of 'letting go'. [hi] Indeed, [tyAga:] 'letting go' [saMprakIrtita:] is mentioned [trividha:] in three ways, [puruSha vyAghra] O man of courage!

Listen to My resolution in this matter of perplexing declarations of 'letting go'. In work that complies to the scriptures, I have explained the concept of 'letting go' in three ways - let go the outcome of action, let go of possessiveness in actions and let go of the belief that you have made it happen.

I explained this before in Chap.3#30: Fight without grief, dedicating all actions in Me, keeping your mind in the Self and the Lord, being uninterested in the fruits of action, without feeling 'it is mine'.

Let go of outcomes and possessiveness. Don’t be the reason.

The first way is to let-go the outcome of our actions - outcomes such as comfort and enjoyment - with the conviction that 'they are not mine'. This is called [phala tyAga].

In terms of doing the action, it's to let-go of the belief that 'Actions are mine because their outcome is for me'. It's about letting go of possessiveness in actions. This is [mamatA tyAga].

Leaving the belief that we make things happen is to let-go of the belief that the Self is the agent of actions. This is done by placing the Lord as the One who makes all actions happen. This is [kartr'tva tyAga].

## 18-5, first part

[

yajna dAna tapa: karma na tyAjyam kAryam Eva tat |

]

[karma] Actions of [yajna] worship, [dAna] charity, [tapa:] and discipline [na tyAjyam] are not to be given up. [tat] Such action [kAryam Eva] must certainly be done.

A person who desires [Moksha](#Moksha) must not abandon worship, charity, discipline and other activities prescribed in the scriptures. Instead they must be performed daily, till the time a person departs from the body.

Why do these activities need to be done?

## 18-5, second part

[

yajnO dAnam tapa: chaiva pAvanAni manIShiNAm || 5 ||

]

[yajna:] Worship, [dAna] charity [cha] and [tapa:] discipline [pAvanAni Eva] are definitely purifying [manIShiNAm] for intelligent, devout people.

Actions such as worship, charity and discipline are duties that are 'purifying' for intelligent, devout people. These are the people who adore the Lord. They desire [Moksha](#Moksha) and worship the Lord as long as they are alive. These actions 'purify' by destroying the effects of past deeds - effects that could hinder our complete adoration for the Lord.

## 18-6

[

EtAnyapi tu karmANi saMgam tyaktvA phalAni cha |

kartavyAnIti mE pArtha nishchitam matam uttamam || 6 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [EtAni api tu] even these [karmANi] activities [kartavyAni] are to be done [tyaktvA] by leaving [saMgam] attachment [cha] and [phalAni] expected outcomes. [iti] This is [mE] my [nishchitam] definite [uttamam matam] and supreme opinion.

While activities such as worship, charity and discipline are purifying for devout and intelligent people, do them as a way to adore Me. Leave attachment and keep expected outcomes aside. Give up possessiveness towards those actions.

Those who desire [Moksha](#Moksha) work in this manner. Till they depart from the body, they consider their activities as My worship. This is My definite, ultimate opinion.

This Shloka said that when activities such as worship, charity and discipline are carried out, they are to be done without attachment. Next, the Lord says that routine and prescribed activities are mandatory.

## 18-7

[

niyatasya tu saMnyAsa: karmaNa: nOpapadyatE |

mOhAt tasya parityAga: tAmasa: parikIrtita: || 7 ||

]

[tu] On the other hand, [saMnyAsa:] the renunciation [nityasya karmaNa:] of routine, prescribed activities [na upapadyatE] is not appropriate. [parityAga:] Giving them up [mOhAt] in confusion [parikIrtita:] is said to be [tAmasa:] in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

Don’t give up activity.

It isn’t appropriate to renounce or give up routine and prescribed activities. These are activities such as eating, breathing and worshipping.

As said in Chap.3#8: 'Even the journey through your body wouldn't be achieved when you are inactive' - Don't give up activities in this journey through your body. This journey itself works to gain the knowledge that [liberates](#Moksha) us, by consuming the balance that remains from worship. Otherwise, as said in Chap.3#13: 'The kleptomaniacs who enjoy the results for their own sake will only experience misfortune'.

In this way, when the body is built from food other than the food that is derived from worship, it acts as a contaminant and forms the base of false knowledge.

Food nourishes the mind, as said in [chAndOgya], 6-5-4: 'Son, the mind is constituted from the food we eat’. Again, as said in [chandogya], 7-26-2: 'When the food is pure, the mind is not contaminated. A clean mind is capable of strong awareness. All knowledge can be released with the strength of this awareness'.

Thus, it is learnt that knowledge to realize the Self rests on the sanctity of the food we consume.

That's why it's not appropriate to give up routine, prescribed activities in this journey through the body. Routine activities such as eating and prescribed activities such as worship are meant for knowing the Self.

The quality of [tamas](#tamas) gives rise to the misconception that these actions are binding in nature - though in reality, such actions actually lead to knowledge that liberates us. When we give up these activities due to such misconceptions, we remain in the quality of [tamas](#tamas). Indeed, the quality of [tamas](#tamas) is the source of ignorance. As said in Chap.14#17: 'Mistakes, misconceptions and ignorance come from the quality of [tamas](#tamas)'.

Ignorance is made from misconceptions that repel knowledge. Further in this chapter, it is said in Chap.18#32: 'People are overwhelmed by the quality of [tamas](#tamas) when they understand their duty to be contrary to prescribed actions. Their intentions are born in the quality of [tamas](#tamas) and go against any kind of achievement'.

In this way, misconceptions result in giving up routine and prescribed activities.

## 18-8

[

du:kham ityEva yat karma kAya klEsha bhayAt tyajEt |

sa kr'tvA rAjasam tyAgam naiva tyAga phalam labhEt || 8 ||

]

[yat karma] Work that's [tyajEt] given up [du:kham iti Eva] just because it's difficult, [bhayAt] due to fear [kAya klEsha] that it would strain the body - [tyAgam kr'tvA] abandoning work in this way [rAjasam] is done in the quality of rajas. [sa:] The person who abandons work in this way [naiva] will certainly not [labhEt] gain [tyAga phalam] any benefit from such 'sacrifice'.

Even in the belief that these actions are liberating in nature, people abandon duties such as worship due to apprehensions - They are apprehensive that those activities need material, time and a lot of effort, causing strain on the body.

In the apprehension that they wouldn't be able to sustain these activities, they give up actions while being in the quality of [rajas](#rajas). They try to achieve their goals by contemplating through meditation.

They misunderstand the scriptures and miss the awareness that naturally comes from [letting go](#letting_go). It is said in Chap.18#31: 'Forcing an understanding that was never meant is in the quality of [rajas](#rajas)'. The actions that we do and experience are never a cause of delight. Actually, the delight we experience comes from the delight of the Lord.

## 18-9

[

kAryam ityEva yat karma niyatam kriyatE arjuna |

saNgam tyaktvA phalam chaiva sa tyAga: sAtvikO mata: || 9 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [yat karma niyatam] work that's prescribed, [kriyatE] done [kAryam iti Eva] with an attitude that 'It must be done', [tyaktvA] letting go of [saNgam] attachment [phalam chaiva] and outcomes - [sa tyAga:] Such an act of '[letting go](#letting_go)' [mata:] is regarded as [sAtvika:] being in the quality of sattva.

Activities like the various rituals are 'prescribed' to a person according to his role in society and the stage of his life. They are to be performed as My worship. '[Letting go](#letting_go)' is about performing these activities with My worship itself as the purpose, without attachments - without being possessive towards those actions and their outcomes.

'[Letting go](#letting_go)' in this way is regarded as being in the quality of [sattva](#sattva). This is the first step to [sattva](#sattva) - the first step to gain clear knowledge of the Lord's words in the scriptures.

It is said that the quality of [sattva](#sattva) alone gives clarity of knowledge, letting us see things in their true form - as said in Chap.14#17: 'From the quality of [sattva](#sattva), knowledge arises'

Further in this chapter, it is said in Chap.18#30: 'The person who knows the distinction between doing things for himself and doing it for the Lord, who knows what's to be done and what not, who knows the fear of consequences and being free of such fear, who knows activities that bind us from activities that free us - the intentions of such a person are in the quality of [sattva](#sattva)'.

## 18-10

[

na dvEShTi akushalam karma kushalE na anuShajjatE |

tyAgI sattva samAviShTO mEdhAvI Chinna samshaya: || 10 ||

]

[tyAgI] A person who [lets go](#letting_go) in this way [sattva samAviShTa:] enters the quality of [sattva](#sattva), [mEdhAvI] gains intelligence [Chinna samshaya:] and loses all doubt. [na dvEShTi] He does not loath [akushalam karma] work that makes him unhappy, [na anuShajjatE] neither does he cling [kushalE] to happiness.

In this way, being in the quality of [sattva](#sattva), a person gains intelligence - the knowledge of things in their true form. With this, he loses all doubt. This person lets all attachment go, along with their outcomes and the misconception of making things happen.

He doesn't loathe the idea of doing work that makes him unhappy - work that has undesired effects. He also doesn't cling to work that makes him happy - work that has desirable outcomes such as comfort, progeny and prosperity.

He isn't possessive about his actions in any way. In this manner, he has let go of all outcomes - other than the outcome of achieving the Lord. Hence, he doesn't have likes and dislikes towards his work. The misfortune of encountering an undesirable effect comes from our flaws - it's unintentional and comes from ignorance.

It is said in [kaThOpanishat], 1-2-23: 'This knowledge is not achieved by people who are restless, not by those who conduct misdeeds, not by those who are not at peace, who do not apply themselves, even though they may try by learning a great deal'.

The statement here, is that misdeeds and instability are opposed to the growth of knowledge.

In this way, 'letting go' is about giving up attachment to actions, their outcomes and giving up the sense of 'I made it happen'. This is meant by the word [tyAga] in the scriptures - it's not about giving up all forms of actions. The Lord elaborates this next:

## 18-11

[

na hi dEhabhr'tA shakyam tyaktum karmANi ashEShata: |

yastu karma phala tyAgI sa tyAgI ityabhidhIyatE || 11 ||

]

[hi] Indeed, [na shakyam] it's not possible [dEhabhr'tA] for a person having a body [tyaktum] to give up [karmANi ashEShata:] all actions without exception. [tu] On the other hand, [ya:] a person who [tyAgi] leaves [karma phala] the outcome of his action [abhidhIyatE iti] is known as [sa tyAgI] the one who has let-go.

A person having a body is held and sustained in that body. Indeed, it's impossible for this person to give up all actions and do nothing. Actions such as eating and drinking are unavoidable in sustaining the body - along with other actions associated with them.

Great activities such as worship are inevitable for sustenance. In the midst of all this, a person who leaves the outcome of these actions is known as the one who has let-go. As stated in the scriptures such as [mahAnArAyaNa], 10-5: 'Only by letting go, a person gains freedom from the cycle of death'.

In this way, the word [tyAgI] in the scriptures refers to the person who has let-go of outcomes. This 'letting go' is about letting outcomes go, along with the attachment towards the action itself and the misconception of making things happen. Those are the three ways mentioned in Chap.18#4, which started with: 'Letting-go is mentioned in three ways...'

Isn’t activity designed to give outcomes, which we are bound to?

However, the scriptures also mention outcomes for routine and prescribed actions. For example, many forms of worship are said to yield a superior life. In the [mahAnArAyaNa] 1-6-39, it is said - 'A family man will enter the abode of Brahma, the prime engineer of the universe'.

Such actions are described in terms of their links to specific outcomes. These statements seem to indicate that actions are conceived to achieve certain outcomes by their very nature. Just as a seed causes a tree to come into being, these actions bring desired and undesired outcomes, inevitably causing attachments.

Attachments go against the achievement of [liberty](#Moksha). Hence, shouldn't a person who desires only [Moksha](#Moksha) desist from these prescribed actions? The Lord answers that question next -

## 18-12

[

aniShTam iShTam mishram cha trividham karmaNa: phalam |

bhavati atyAginAm prEtya na Tu saMnyAsinAm kvachit || 12 ||

]

[karmaNa: phalam] The outcome of actions [prEtya bhavati] will happen [trividham] in three ways [atyAginAm] to those who haven't [let-go](#letting_go): [aniShTam] undesirable, [iShTam] desirable [cha mishram] and a mix of both. [tu] However, [na kvachit] none of these happen [saMnyAsinAm] to those who have [let-go](#letting_go).

Undesirable outcomes torture us. Desirable outcomes reward us. Other outcomes such as wealth, food or a family come with a mix of both desirable and undesirable moments.

These three types of outcomes happen to people who haven't let-go of possessiveness towards their actions, to people who haven't let-go of outcomes and the misconception that they make things happen. These outcomes happen to them after they have committed the action - in this life or in succeeding ones.

However, none of these happen to those who have let-go: There is indeed no outcome that stands in the way of achieving [Moksha](#Moksha) for those who have let the three types of outcomes go.

Just as worship can be done every day to deserve things needed for our livelihood and our desires, it can be done to deserve [Moksha](#Moksha) as well. This is the distinction asserted over here.

Working to earn [Moksha](#Moksha) is illustrated in [br’hadArAnyaka upanishat], 4-4-22: 'People who pursue the Lord wish to know Him through the statements in the Vedas, through worship, charity, discipline and by controlling their hunger'.

This practice of 'letting go' of the outcome of the actions we do, 'letting go' of possessiveness towards them and the misconception that we're the ones who make things happen - this 'letting go' is the same as the term 'renunciation' mentioned in the scriptures.

Next, the Lord describes the method to stay free of the misconception that we're the ones who make things happen - By placing doer-ship in the Lord, who is supreme and is present as the Self inside. In this way a person lets possessiveness go, even in actions that are associated with clear outcomes.

When we do something, it's the Lord Himself initiating activities with the Self that belongs to Him, with a body and organs that belong to Him, with His breath, for the purpose of His amusement.

For example, the experience of satisfying our hunger is an outcome of actions like earning and eating. The outcomes that are experienced by the Self, along with the actions that achieve it, belong to the Lord Himself.

## 18-13

[

panchaitAni mahAbAhO kAraNAni nibOdha mE |

sAMkhyE kr'tAntE prOktAni siddhayE sarvakarmaNAm || 13 ||

]

[mahAbAhO] Arjuna, [nibOdha] hear and know [EtAni] these [pancha] five [kAraNAni] causes [siddhayE] for the achievement [sarvakarmaNAm] of all actions [mE] from Me. [prOktAni] They are specified [sAMkhyE kr'tAntE] in the reflections of the Upanishads.

'Reflections' come from intelligence and understanding. The 'reflections of the Upanishads' refer to the intelligence built by understanding the concepts in the Upanishads in their true form.

If we aren’t the reason for outcomes, what causes things to happen?

In this Shloka, The Lord says – Hear and know the five causes of achievement from Me. 'Achieving an action' is about initiating it. The five causes come from the understanding put together by the intelligence derived from the Upanishads. Put them into place in My presence.

The intelligence derived from the Upanishads says that the body, its organs, its breath and the Self are instruments of the Lord - The Lord uses them to make things happen, as stated in scriptures such as [br’hadArAnyaka], 3-7-22: 'The One who sits inside the Self, is distinct from the Self, whom the Self doesn't know, to whom the Self is the body, who controls the Self from the inside - He regulates you and is the Self in yourself. He is ever-lasting'. Also said in [yajurAraNyaka], 3-11-2: 'The One who is the Self to every Self, ruling by entering inside'.

Next, the Lord enumerates the five causes:

## 18-14 to 18-15

[

adhiShThAnam tathA kartA karaNam cha pr'thak vidham |

vividhA: cha pr'thak chEShTA daivam chaivAtra panchamam || 14 ||

sharIra vAk manObhi: yat karma prArabhatE nara: |

nyAyyam vA viparItam vA panchaitE tasya hEtava: || 15 ||

]

[adhiShThAnam] The base, [tathA kartA] along with the doer, [cha] together with [pr'thak vidham] the different [karaNam] organs [cha] and [vividhA pr'thak] the various [chEShTA] activities - [atra] in this field, [panchamam] the fifth one [daivam] is The Divine.

[panchaitE hEtava: tasya] They are the five causes of [yat karma] any action [nara: prArabhtE] that a human can initiate [sharIra] with the body, [vAk] speech, [manObhi:] or the mind - [vA nyayyam] whether just [vA viparItam] or unjust.

There are five causes of just or unjust actions. Actions are 'just' when they are recommended in the scriptures and 'unjust' when they are forbidden. These actions are done by the body, done in speech or in the mind. The five causes of action are:

**The base**: The body is the base from which activities are carried out. It's a combination of the elements of nature. It is the abode of the Self.

**The doer**: The Self is the doer, whose 'knower-ship' and 'doer-ship' are mentioned in the scriptures: [vEdAnta sutra], 2-3-19 says 'It is the one that knows'; [vEdAnta sutra], 2-3-33 says 'It is to be considered as the doer for the scriptures to have meaning'

**The different organs**: These are the organs of action. The organ of speech, the arms, legs, the excretory organs along the organ of thought form the five organs of action. They perform different functions whenever we do something.

**The various activities**: The word 'activity' here refers to the gases in our body and the activities that happen inside, such as respiration.

**The Divine**: In the field where things are combined into actions, the fifth one is The Divine - It is the Lord who is inside everything, the main cause in bringing actions to effect. As said in Chap.15#15: ‘I am at the heart of everything’ and in Chap.18#61: 'Arjuna, the Supreme Lord sits at the heart of every being, spinning all beings, mounting them in the mechanism of the environment’.

The 'doer-ship' of the Self is completely dependent on the Lord, as said in [vEdAnta sutra], 2-3-40: ‘…as said in the scriptures, the doer-ship is given by the Supreme Lord'.

Whatever the Self does is completely dependent on the Lord. Given this fact, all instructions in the scriptures and everything they forbid would be meaningless if we consider that the Self is not accountable for any action. Vyasa has resolved this dilemma as well, in [vEdAnta sutra], 2-3-41: 'The Lord expects the Self to begin the attempt, so that His instructions in the scriptures retain their use'.

In summary: Actions are carried out with organs given by the Lord, having the Lord as the basis, with the strength that's deposited in them by the Lord. The Self has the Lord as the basis of existence as well, with its strength given by the Lord Himself.

The Self initiates its attempt to carry out an action according to its will, as per the configuration of its body and associated organs. After that, The Lord inside grants permission to commence the action and sets the Self in motion. In this way, the Self becomes the cause of action as well - by its intent alone.

This is similar to activities that require many people and equipment - for example, activities that result in moving a huge boulder or building a bridge. In such activities, many people and machines are considered to be the cause, with each of them having their do's and don'ts. In the same way, this Shloka described the activity brought about by the Self and the Lord.

## 18-16

[

tatraivam sati kartAram AtmAnam kEvalam tu ya: |

pashyati akr'tabuddhitvAt na sa pashyati durmati: || 16 ||

]

[Evam sati] This being the case, [ya:] the one who [tu pashyati] still considers [AtmAnam] himself [kartAram kEvalam] as the sole doer [tatra] here [durmati:] is ignorant. [na sa pashyati] This person does not see things in their true form [akr'ta buddhitvAt] due to an immature intellect.

As explained in the previous Shloka, the Self has ‘doer-ship’ with the Lord’s permission. Despite this, a person who believes that he alone makes things happen is ignorant - his understanding goes against reality. This comes from an incomplete understanding of the world. He doesn't see things in their true form - he doesn't see the 'doer' as it is.

## 18-17

[

yasya nAhaMkr'tO bhAvO buddhi: yasya na lipyatE |

hatvA\_pi sa imAn lOkAn na hanti na nibadhyatE || 17 ||

]

[yasya] The person whose [bhAva:] belief [nAhaMkr'tO] is that he's not the one who makes things happen, [yasya] the one whose [buddhi:] intellect [na lipyatE] stays free of the burden of attachments [na nibadhyatE] and doesn't get trapped - [sa: hatvApi] Even when he kills [imAn lOkAn] all these people, [na hanti] he doesn't kill.

Any performance has The Lord as its basis. With such conviction, this person has resolved - 'I am not the one who makes it happen'. He is distinguished by this resolution, not giving himself any self-importance - he doesn't have the belief that he makes things happen.

His intellect stays free - his conviction is: 'In these actions, I don't make things happen, that's how these outcomes don't relate to me'. The idea that says 'This work is mine' is not born in his thoughts.

Even when he kills all these people in war - including Bhishma and Drona - he doesn't kill them. The action called war doesn't stick to him. Meaning, he doesn't suffer its consequences.

Only a predominance of [sattva](#sattva) brings the conviction that you don’t make things happen. It keeps you away from possessiveness towards the action and its outcome.

Next, to remind us about the admirable nature of the quality of [sattva](#sattva), The Lord describes the differences in various actions brought about by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), starting with the way in which actions are instigated.

## 18-18

[

jnAnam jnEyam parijnAtA trividhA karma chOdanA |

karaNam karma kartEti trividha: karma saMgraha: || 18 ||

]

[jnAnam] Knowledge, [jnEyam] that which has to be perceived [parijnAtA] and the one who recognizes [trividhA] are the three [karma chOdana] sources of initiative for any action. [karaNam] The instruments, [karma] the activity itself [kartA] and the one who performs the activity [iti trvidha:] are the three types of [karma saMgraha:] things that put together the action.

This Shloka describes the three sources of action: 'knowledge' is to be aware of the work that needs to be done. 'That which has to be perceived' is the goal of the action – what we experience from the action. 'The one who recognizes' is the one who perceives.

In any action, these three sources come together - The performance of every action is associated with the knowledge required to do it, the perception to be gained from it and the one who perceives.

In this world, the activities and the resulting perceptions happen in the trio of the means, the activity and the doer: The ‘means of an activity’ are the instruments required for the activity. The activity is the sequence of what is done. The doer is the one who accomplishes the action.

## 18-19

[

jnAnam karma cha kartA cha tridhaiva guNabhEdata: |

prOchyatE guNa saMkhyAnE yathAvat shr'Nu tAnyapi || 19 ||

]

[prOchyatE] It is said that [jnAnam] knowledge, [karma] action [cha kartA] and the doer [tridhA Eva] are of three types each. [guNa saMkhyAnE] They are enumerated in the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas). [guNabhEdata:] They go by the distinctions of [those qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). [shruNu] Listen [yathAvat] to the genuine nature [tAni api] of that knowledge, action and the doer [api] as well.

It is said that knowledge, the action and its doer are of three types each, going by the distinctions brought about by the three qualities of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas). Listen to the distinctions among knowledge, actions and doers in terms of the effects brought about by these three qualities.

## 18-20

[

sarva bhUtEShu yEnaikam bhAvam avyayam IkShatE |

avibhaktam vibhaktEShu tat jnAnam viddhi sAtvikam || 20 ||

]

[yEna] The awareness by which [Ekam bhAvam] the same attitude [IkShatE] is expressed [sarva bhUtEShu] towards all beings, [avyayam] considering them unchanging [avibhaktam] and uniform [vibhaktEShu] even in their variety - [viddhi] know [tat jnAnam] such knowledge [sAtvikam] to be in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

The action we conceive depends on our awareness.

The variety of beings is many - being a teacher or a soldier, being married or single, tall or short and so on. All of them are entitled to perform their activities.

Even in this huge variety, there is something called The Self inside each being. It is not subject to any of this variety.

Whether someone is a teacher, tall, short or categorized in any other way, the Self in them is pure knowledge, not subject to any such variety. It is unchanging - characteristics such as being a teacher are temporary and will wear out in time, along with our body.

The Self isn't subject to change and thus isn't attached to any outcomes. When you realize this at the time of authoring an action, your knowledge is in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

## 18-21

[

pr'thaktvEna tu yat jnAnam nAnAbhAvAn pr'thak vidhAn |

vEtti sarvEShu bhUtEShu tat jnAnam viddhi rAjasam || 21 ||

]

[tu] On the other hand, [jnAnam yat] there's knowledge, which [vEtti] recognizes [nAnAbhAvAn] different attitudes [pr'thak vidhAn sarvEShu] among all the different types [bhUtEShu] of beings, [pr'thaktvEna] due to their variety. [viddhi] Know that [tat jnAnam] such knowledge [rAjasam] is in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

There is great variety in all beings - distinguished by profession, like being a teacher; or by color; by being tall or short and so on. There is a certain understanding that considers the Self as being subject to this variety - distinguished by characteristics built out of association with outcomes.

Such knowledge considers the Self to be defined by association with the outcome of its actions. When you realize this at the time of authoring an action, your knowledge is in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

## 18-22

[

yat tu kr'tsnavat Ekasmin kAryE saktam ahEtukam |

atatvArthavat alpam cha tat tAmasam udAhr'tam || 22 ||

]

[yat tu] There is yet another category [saktam] that gets preoccupied [Ekasmin kAryE] in some isolated work [kr'tsnavat] as though it was everything, [ahEtukam] without any basis. [atatvArthavat] It is not based on any concept, [alpam] having very little value. [tat] That [udAhr'tam] is said to be [tAmasam] in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

Yet another type of awareness leads to preoccupation in some isolated work, believing in various processes and rituals to deliver results that have very poor value - thinking that it will yield whatever is required.

Since the result is insignificant, there is no basis for this attachment. It's not based on any concept - as in the previous case, it doesn't recognize the concept of the Self being distinct from the body. Instead, it's based on myths.

Such knowledge yields little value, based on inconsistent myths and superstition. It is in the quality of tamas.

In this way, three forms of knowledge can manifest in a doer – as ‘awareness’ at the time of initiating an activity. They were described according to the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

Next, The Lord describes the distinction in the [qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) of activity.

## 18-23

[

niyatam saMgarahitam arAga dvEShata: kr'tam |

aphala prEpsunA karma yat tat sAtvikam uchyatE || 23 ||

]

[karma] Activity [yat kr'tam] that's carried out [niyatam] with self-governance, [saMga rahitam] free from attachment, [arAga dvEShata:] without desire or hatred [aphala prEpsunA] by a person who is not driven by the outcome - [tat] such action [uchyatE] is said to be [sAtvikam] in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

Our intention leads to activity.

'Self-governance' is about performing according to our role in society and our stage in life.

Being 'free from attachment' is to let go of possessiveness towards our activity, along with their outcomes and the misconception of making things happen.

Performing without desire or hatred – This is about performing without being driven by the craving for credit, or the aversion towards discredit. It's about performance without hypocrisy.

'Not being driven by the outcome' is to avoid keeping the outcome as our purpose. It's about avoiding attachment to the outcome.

Activity that's performed in this manner, with just the simple attitude that 'It needs to be done' is said to be in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

## 18-24

[

yat tu kAmEpsunA karma sAhaMkArENa vA puna: |

kriyatE bahulAyAsam tat rAjasam udAhr'tam || 24 ||

]

[tu] On the other hand, [karma] work [yat kriyatE] that’s done [kAmEsunA] with expectation to fulfil desires, [vA puna:] or again, [sa ahaMkArENa] with the misconception of making things happen, [bahulAyAsam] performed with great strain - [tat] such action [udAhr'tam] is said to be [rAjasam] in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

Again, an activity is in the quality of [rajas](#rajas) when it's loaded with expectations, driven by desire, with great strain and the misconception of making things happen. It is done with the self-conceit that says - 'This difficult work is accomplished by me alone'.

## 18-25

[

anubandham kShayam hiMsAm anavEkShya cha pauruSham |

mOhAt ArabhyatE karma yat tat tAmasam uchyatE || 25 ||

]

[yat karma] Work that is [ArabhyatE] started [mOhAt] out of misconception, [anavEkShya] without considering [anubandham] the bondage it brings, [kShayam] the associated expense, [hiMsAm] the distress [cha] and [pauruSham] our capability [tat] - that work [uchyatE] is said [tAmasam] to be in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

When work is driven by expectation, the consequence sticks - that is the bondage it brings. The associated expense is the material destruction that happens when the work is done. Distress is the hardship caused to other beings while doing this work. Our capability is our ability to complete the work.

When activities are started without consideration to any of these, they are done out of misconception - without knowing that the Lord is the One who makes things happen. Such activities are said to be in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

## 18-26

[

mukta saMga: anahamvAdI dhr'ti utsAha samanvita: |

siddhyasiddhyO: nirvikAra: kartA sAtvika uchyatE || 26 ||

]

[mukta saMga:] A person who is free of attachment, [anahamvAdI] who doesn't claim to make things happen [dhr'ti utsAha samanvita:] is endowed with resolve and enthusiasm. [nirvikAra:] Unmoved [siddhyasiddhyO:] among achievements and failures, [kartA] such a doer [uchyatE] is said to be [sAtvika] in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

During the activity, we achieve the state-of-being as a doer.

A person who is free of attachment is not bogged down by outcomes. He doesn't claim to make things happen - he doesn't have that arrogance.

Resolve and Enthusiasm are our state-of-being when we let-go of outcomes.

This person is endowed with resolve. Difficulties are inevitable in the journey to complete any work we’ve begun. Enduring those difficulties is called 'resolve'.

The person is endowed with enthusiasm - it's the strong will that comes from eagerness and devotion. He is unmoved among achievements and failures - in activities such as war and in acquiring materials in the form of tools that contribute towards it.

Such a doer is said to be in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

## 18-27

[

rAgI karmaphala prEpsu: lubdhO hiMsAtmaka: ashuchi |

harSha shOkAnvita: kartA rAjasa: parikIrtita: || 27 ||

]

[rAgI] A passionate person [prEpsu:] is anxious to secure [karma phala] the outcome of activity. [lubdha:] He is stingy [hiMsAtmaka:] and troubles others [ashuchi:] with his foul nature. [kartA] He is a doer [anvita:] defined by [harSha] happiness [shOka] and sorrow. [parikIrtita:] Such a person is said to be [rAjasa:] in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

A passionate person yearns to become famous, always anxious to secure the outcome of activity. He is stingy - he isn't willing to incur the expenditure needed for his work. He gets his work done from others by troubling them.

He is bogged down by expectations and doesn’t have the purity of working without attachment. This gives him a foul nature.

He is defined by happiness and sorrow - in activities such as war, he is a doer who goes by achievements like victory and failures like defeat. This person is said to be in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

## 18-28

[

ayukta: prAkr'ta: stabdha: shaThO naikr'tikO\_lasa: |

viShAdI dIrgha sUtrI cha kartA tAmasa uchyatE || 28 ||

]

[ayukta:] A person who doesn't apply himself [prAkr'ta:] is ordinary, [stabdha:] stiff and pretentious. [shaTha:] He is offensive, [naikr'tika:] vile, [Alasa:] lazy, [viShAdI] dejected [cha] and [dIrgha sUtrI] spins a long yarn. [kartA] Such a doer [uchyatE] is said to be [tAmasa] in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

A person who doesn't apply himself is unfit to do the work prescribed in the scriptures. Instead, he keeps committing misdeeds. This person turns out to be ordinary, being ignorant of the Self and the Lord.

Without the inclination to begin an activity, he is stiff and pretentious. He tends towards dubious activities, making him offensive. This person is vile, making him untrustworthy. Even in activities that he has started, he idles - he is lazy.

Due to excessive fatigue and apathy, he gets dejected. Such a person tends to spin a long yarn, plotting the downfall of others for an extended period of time. This type of a doer is in the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

In this way, the distinct forms of awareness, activity and its doers were described. Awareness initiates activity, in which we become the doers. All of them go by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects).

Next, the distinctions in intellect and resolve are described, going by the same [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). Our principles come from intellect and resolve. They concern all our goals.

## 18-29

[

buddhE: bhEdam dhr'thE: chaiva guNata: trividham shr'Nu |

prOchyamAnam ashEShENa pr'thaktvEna dhananjaya || 29 ||

]

[dhananjaya] Arjuna, [shr'Nu] listen [trividham] to the three types [buddhE:] of intellect [chaiva] and [dhr'tE:] the three types of resolve. [guNata: bhEdam] They are distinguished by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). [pr'thaktvEna] Each of them [prOchyamAnam] will now be described [ashEShENa] in completeness.

*Let's examine intellect and resolve, before going ahead.*

*We 'perceive' by putting together stimuli that are sensed by our organs. For instance, when something is sharp and looks shiny, we are convinced that it’s a metal knife. Our intellect gives that conviction.*

*Irrespective of what our intellect says, we can still choose our path. That choice is our Resolve.*

'Intellect' is the intelligence that enables us to discern - to perceive clearly. It reflects as the conviction that happens prior to perception.

'Resolve' is about being steadfast and maintaining our course, even in the face of adversity.

Intellect and Resolve have three distinct forms each, going by the three qualities of [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas). Their distinctions will now be described individually. Listen to them.

## 18-30

[

pravr'ttim cha nivr'ttim cha kAryAkAryE bhayAbhayE |

bandham mOkSham cha yA vetti buddhi: sA pArtha sAtvikI || 30 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [yA buddhi:] the [intellect](#intellect_and_resolve), which [sAtvikI] is in [sattva](#sattva) [sA vetti] knows [pravr'ttim] the activities of this world [cha nivr'ttim] and the tranquility of liberation. [kArya akaryE] It knows what's to be done, what's not to be done. [bhaya cha abhayE] It knows about being afraid and being free from fear. [bandham] It knows bondage [cha mOkSham] and liberty.

We discern with our intellect.

The endeavors of this world are for achieving prosperity. There are other endeavors to achieve the tranquility of liberation. When the [intellect](#intellect_and_resolve) is in the quality of [sattva](#sattva), it knows them as they are.

A person's profession, along with the time, place and stage of his life determine his activities to achieve prosperity and liberation. This intellect knows the activities that are prescribed and forbidden.

Being in [sattva](#sattva), this intellect knows the fear that comes from going against the scriptures and the freedom from fear that comes from complying with them.

It knows the character of this world and the cycle of bondage it brings. It also knows ‘liberty’ as the exit from this cycle.

## 18-31

[

yayA dharmam adharmam cha kAryam cha akAryam Eva cha |

ayathAvat prajAnAti buddhi: sA pArtha rAjasI || 31 ||

]

[dharmam] There is conduct that elevates us [cha adharmam] and conduct that depresses. [pArtha] Arjuna, [yayA] the [intellect](#intellect_and_resolve) by which [ayathAvat prajAnAti] a person gets a distorted understanding in this matter, [Eva] even distorting [kAryam] activities that must be done [akAryam] and those that are forbidden [sA rAjasI] - such intellect is in [rajas](#rajas).

With the [intellect](#intellect_and_resolve) in the quality of [rajas](#rajas), a person gets a distorted understanding of the two types of activities mentioned before - activities that lead to prosperity and those that achieve liberty.

Even while focusing on prosperity or liberty, such [intellect](#intellect_and_resolve) is misleading in terms of what must be done and what's forbidden. This brings disregard for the appropriate place and time to do those activities.

## 18-32

[

adharmam dharmam iti yA manyatE tamasAvr'tA |

sarvArthAni viparItAn cha buddhi: sA pArtha tAmasI || 32 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [yA tamasAvr'tA] the [intellect](#intellect_and_resolve) that's overwhelmed by ignorance [tAmasI] is in the quality of [tamas](#tamas). [sA buddhi:] Such intellect [manyatE] considers [adharmam] depressing conduct [iti] as [dharmam] upliftment. [viparItAn sarvArthAni] It brings a contrary understanding to everything.

[Intellect](#intellect_and_resolve) that's in the quality of [tamas](#tamas) is overcome by ignorance.

It brings a contrary understanding to everything - expecting activities that depress to elevate and those that elevate to cause depression.

It considers reality as myth and believes myths to be real.

It fosters inferior understanding and doesn't recognize anything beyond the ordinary. It considers supreme knowledge to be inferior. In this way, it has a contrary understanding of everything.

## 18-33

[

dhr'tyA yayA dhArayatE mana: prANEndriya kriyA: |

yOgEna avyabhichAriNyA dhr'ti: sA pArtha sAtvikI || 33 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [dhr'tyA] the [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) [yayA] by which [kriyA:] activities [mana:] of the mind, [prANa] breath [indriya] and the organs [dhArayatE] are sustained [avyabhichAriNyA yOgEna] with unflinching devotion [sA dhr'ti:] - such [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) [sAtvikI] is in [sattva](#sattva).

We sustain with our resolve.

A person sustains his activities with devotion, by the [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) that's in [sattva](#sattva). This includes the activities of his mind, activities such as breathing and activities of his organs. This 'devotion' is the worship of The Lord with the purpose of achieving [moksha](#Moksha).

Devotion is unwavering when we practice it without straying. In this, we have the worship of The Lord as the sole purpose of all our activities. Our activities that accomplish this purpose are sustained by resolve that's in [sattva](#sattva).

## 18-34

[

yayA tu dharma kAmArthAn dhr'tyA dhArayatE arjuna |

prasaMgEna phalAkAMkShI dhr'ti: sA pArtha rAjasI || 34 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [tu] on the other hand, [yayA dhr'tyA] the [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) by which [phalAkAMkShI] an outcome-driven person [dhArayatE] sustains [dharma kAma arthAn] righteousness, desires and wealth, [prasaMgEna] and does so with great attachment [sA dhr'ti:] - such [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) [rAjasI] is in [rajas](#rajas).

Activities related to righteousness, desires and wealth need to be sustained with great expectations. These expectations come with attachment to outcomes. A person sustains such activities with a [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) that’s in [rajas](#rajas).

The outcomes of these activities are in [rajas](#rajas) as well. They are also in the form of righteousness, desires or wealth.

In this way, activities of the mind and body done in anticipation of wealth, desires or righteousness are sustained by a resolve that's in the quality of [rajas](#rajas).

## 18-35

[

yayA svapnam bhayam shOkam viShAdam madam Eva cha |

na vimunchati durmEdhA dhr'ti: sA pArtha tAmasI || 35 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [yayA] the [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) by which [durmEdhA] an ignorant person [na vimunchati] doesn't give up [svapnam] drowsiness, [bhayam] fear, [shOkam] misery, [viShAdam] dejection [cha] and [madam] intoxication [sA dhr'ti:] - such resolve is [tAmasI] in [tamas](#tamas).

An ignorant person doesn't give up activities that intentionally engage in being drowsy and intoxicated. The mind, body and the organs indulge in the experience of material things to end up in this state.

With a [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) that's in [tamas](#tamas), such people keep getting sluggish and intoxicated. They don’t let-go, tending towards subjects that give fear, misery and dejection.

Such [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) is in [tamas](#tamas)- it sustains activities that enhance fear, misery and dejection - be they activities of the mind, activities done using our organs or activities such as breathing.

## 18-36 first part

[

sukham tu idAnIm trividham shr'Nu mE bharatarShabha |

]

[bharatarShabha] Arjuna, [sukham] the happiness that comes from them [tu trividham] is also of three types. [shr'Nu] Hear it [mE] from Me [IdAnIm] now.

Activities are done in the pursuit of happiness.

Next, listen to the distinctions made by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects) in 'happiness', which is the purpose of all the knowledge, actions, doers, intellect and resolve described up until now.

## 18-36 second part

[

abhyAsAt ramatE yatra du:khAntam cha nigachChati || 36 ||

]

[yatra] There is happiness in which [nigachChati] a person attains [du:khAntam] the end of sorrow [cha] and [ramatE] enjoys [abhyAsAt] repeatedly.

There is happiness, in which a person gradually obtains unsurpassed enjoyment. That experience repeats over a long period of time. In this happiness, a person attains the end of all the sorrows and difficulties of this world.

The Lord specifies this happiness further -

## 18-37

[

yattat agrE viSham iva pariNAmE amr'tOpamam |

tat sukham sAtvikam prOktam Atmabuddhi prasAdajam || 37 ||

]

[yat tat] The happiness that [iva viSham] seems like poison [agrE] at first, [pariNAmE] then ripens [amr'tOpamam] into bliss [tat sukham] - such happiness [prOktam] is said to be [sAtvikam] in [sattva](#sattva). [prasAdajam] It generates the serenity of [Atma buddhi] the intellect that pursues the Self.

At the beginning, while initiating focus, the activity is intense and is very strenuous.

Without the exclusive experience of the Self, it seems as painful as poison. It then ripens into bliss - with the power of repetition, it ripens to manifest as the unique and blissful experience of the Self.

That bliss generates the serenity of the intellect that pursues the Self. This intellect works to comprehend the Self. Serenity is about the intellect being free of all other subjects.

When intentions are free from all other subjects, happiness is born. This happiness comes from the exclusive experience of the Self in all its characteristics. Such happiness is like the ultimate bliss. It is said to be in [sattva](#sattva).

## 18-38

[

viShayEndriya saMyOgAt yattat agrE amr'tOpamam |

pariNAmE viSham iva tat sukham rAjasam smr'tam || 38 ||

]

[yattat] The happiness that [amr'tOpamam] seems like bliss [agrE] at first, [saMyOgAt] bringing together [viShaya indriya] our organs and their subjects, [pariNAmE] ripens to become [viSham iva] like poison [tat sukham] - such happiness [smr'tam] is known to be [rAjasam] in [rajas](#rajas).

At first, when we begin to experience with our senses, contact with desirable subjects feels like bliss.

It ripens to become like poison. There needs to be a motive for our organs to enjoy. For example, to enjoy food there must be hunger. When the motivation is gone, the experience will saturate and seem poisonous.

Such happiness is known to be in [rajas](#rajas).

## 18-39

[

yat agrE chAnubaMdhE cha sukham mOhanam Atmana: |

nidrA Alasya pramAdOttham tat tAmasam udAhr'tam || 39 ||

]

[yat sukham] Then there’s happiness that [Atmana:] makes one [mOhanam] confounded [agrE] at the start [cha] and [anubandhE] when it yields the outcome [cha] too. [uttham] It brings forth [nidrA] drowsiness, [Alasya] laziness [pramAda] and negligence. [tat] Such happiness [udAhr'tam] is said to be [tAmasam] in [tamas](#tamas).

Happiness that's in [tamas](#tamas) infatuates and ends up confounding us. It does this while experiencing the action, and also at the time of yielding outcomes.

Here, the word 'confounded' is used to refer to a state where things are not perceived as they are. This type of happiness is generated by drowsiness, laziness and negligence. They confound us even as we experience the action.

Drowsiness brings down our ability to recognize things around us - this is easily evident in our lives.

Laziness is the lethargy seen in our limbs when it comes to doing something.

Lethargy in awareness will happen in a body with lethargic limbs.

Negligence is the lack of attention while doing our work. It fosters lethargy in awareness as well. In this way, lethargy and negligence confound us, along with drowsiness.

The happiness coming from this intoxication is said to be in [tamas](#tamas).

Hence, a person who desires [Moksha](#Moksha) must overcome [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas), placing himself in [sattva](#sattva) alone.

## 18-40

[

na tadasti pr'thivyAm vA divi dEvEShu vA puna: |

sattvam prakr'tijai: muktam yadEbhi: syAt tribhi: guNai: || 40 ||

]

[na tat asti] There is nothing [pr'thivyAm] on earth [vA divi] or in space [vA puna:] or even [dEvEShu] among the powerful [yat sattvam syAt] - be it any creature - [muktam] which is free [Ebhi: tribhi: guNai:] from these [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) [prakr'tijai:] of the material world.

No creature is free from the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) of nature - be it a human on this earth, be it any power, any entity in this universe right from Brahma, the principal engineer down to vegetables and other immobile objects.

This is the material world – it is full of the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects). Nurture [sattva](#sattva) and adore the Lord.

The scriptures explain the pursuit of freedom from the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas) - 'Achievement of freedom is about [letting go](#letting_go). It's not about work, family or wealth. The concept of [letting go](#letting_go) was described as the way to achieve freedom in the form of [Moksha](#Moksha). It's no different from renunciation.

It's about leaving of the misconception that we're the doers; leaving the illusion that we make things happen with our work. With this, we leave our attachment towards the outcome of our action. We also leave out possessiveness in our actions.

We let-go by placing the Lord as the doer and ourselves as the instrument. All of this happens by growing the [sattva](#sattva) within us.

By bringing in the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas_effects), The Lord reiterated that [sattva](#sattva) needs to be nurtured.

Next, The Lord describes that ‘working towards [liberty](#Moksha)’ matures in the form of ‘adoration towards The Lord’. To describe the work that leads to [Moksha](#Moksha), He describes our duties. These duties are to be done according to our profession in this world. Our eligibility is categorized by the [three qualities](#satva_rajas_tamas).

## 18-41

[

brAhmaNa kShatriya vishAm shUdrANAm cha parantapa |

karmANi pravibhaktAni svabhAva prabhavai: guNai: || 41 ||

]

[parantapa] Arjuna, [karmANi] the activities [brAhmaNa] of philosophers, [kShatriya] administrators, [vishAm] traders, [cha] and [shUdra] assistants [pravibhaktAni] are classified [guNai:] as per the qualities [svabhAva prabhavai:] that come from their inherent nature.

We have committed deeds since beginning-less time. These deeds have resulted in our birth in the current form. The influence of these deeds gives the essence of our body, in the form of three qualities - [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas).

Our inherent nature is 'inherited' from a combination of these qualities.

In this way, the inherent nature of philosophers, administrators and traders comes from the influence of the deeds they have committed since beginning-less time.

The inherent nature of a philosopher brings forth the quality of [sattva](#sattva) and subdues the qualities of [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas).

The inherent nature of an administrator overpowers the qualities of [tamas](#tamas) and [sattva](#sattva), bringing the quality of [rajas](#rajas) forward.

A trader's inherent nature subdues the qualities of [sattva](#sattva) and [rajas](#rajas), giving a slight upper-hand to the quality of [tamas](#tamas).

On the other hand, those who merely assist have an inherent nature that subdues the qualities of [rajas](#rajas) and [sattva](#sattva), leaving a dominant quality of [tamas](#tamas).

The activities in the scriptures are classified according to the qualities in our inherent nature. The scriptures illustrate the qualities present in philosophers, administrators, traders and assistants. They illustrate their activities and their professions as well.

## 18-42

[

shamO damastapa: shaucham kShAnti: Arjavam Eva cha |

jnAnam vijnAnam Astikyam brAhmam karma svabhAvajam || 42 ||

]

[shama:] Tranquility, [dama:] restraint, [tapa:] focus, [shaucham] cleanliness, [kShAnti:] composure, [Arjavam] being straight, [jnAnam] knowledge, [vijnAnam] wisdom [cha] and [Astikyam] conviction - [brAhmam karma] these are a philosopher's activities [svabhAvajam] born out of inherent nature

'Tranquility' is the quite-ness in our organs that deal with the environment.

'Restraint' is to control ourselves internally.

'Focus' is toil in the form of establishing control over our urge to enjoy, as established in the scriptures.

'Cleanliness' is the qualification to perform the work prescribed in the scriptures.

'Composure' is when our intentions aren't deformed, even when troubled by others.

'Being straight' is about reflecting our thoughts in our action and our outlook.

'Knowledge' is to know what's superior and what's not, in authenticity.

'Wisdom' is to know and distinguish what's superior in its uniqueness.

'Conviction' is the strong belief in everything we've learnt, unshakable by any means. The pinnacle of learning is to know The Lord as the supreme person, the One in whom everything resides, the One who resides in everything.

He is known as 'Para Brahma', devoid of any hint of defect. By nature, He is the aggregate of unbroken, unlimited amounts of knowledge, strength and an infinite number of favorable qualities.

He is the entity that has to be known by all knowledge. He alone is the single cause of the entire universe and the basis for its existence.

He is the one who makes everything happen. All forms of knowledge and activities are ways to adore and worship Him.

Conviction is to be certain about the truth - that the Lord, being adored by actions, gives the outcomes of righteousness, material wealth, desires and liberty.

It's said in the Gita itself:

Chap.15#15: 'I alone am to be known from all the Vedas'

Chap.10#8: 'People with this knowledge worship Me with the conviction that I am the origin of everything; Every entity gets stimulated with the initiative given by Me'

Chap.7#7: 'Just as beads are strung on a string, all of this is mounted in Me'

Chap.5#29: 'A person attains peace by knowing me, the enjoyer of worship and prayer, the Lord of all the worlds, a friend and ally of all beings'

Chap.7#7: 'there is absolutely nothing else that is superior to Me'

Chap.18#46: The Lord, by whom all this is pervaded, from whom all beings get their ability to commence action.

Chap.10#3: 'the person who is free from misconceptions knows Me without birth and without an origin, the Lord of the universe.

…This is conviction. A philosopher's inherent nature brings out all these activities.

## 18-43

[

shauryam tEjO dhr'ti: dAkShyam yuddhE chApi apalAyanam |

dAnam IshvarabhAva: cha kShAtram karma svabhAvajam || 43 ||

]

[shauryam] Valor, [tEja:] energy, [dhr'ti:] resolve, [dAkShyam] fitness [cha] and [apalAyanam] staying [yuddhE api] even during war; [dAnam] charity [cha] and [Ishvara bhAva:] the ability to dominate - [kShAtram karma] these are an administrator's activities [svabhAvajam] born out of inherent nature.

'Valor' is the ability to enter a battle without fear.

'Energy' is about being undefeated by anything.

'Resolve' is the ability to finish work that is begun, even in the face of obstacles.

'Fitness' is the capability to deliver any activity.

'Staying even during war' is to remain without running away, even when death is certain in war.

'Charity' is to give with the goal of making our wealth belong to others.

'The ability to dominate' is the ability to control everyone other than ourselves.

…An administrator's inherent nature brings out these activities.

## 18-44 first part

[

kr'Shi gOrakShya vANijyam vaishya karma svabhAvajam |

]

[kr'Shi] Agriculture, [gOrakShya] rearing cattle, [vANijyam] trade - [vaishya karma] these are a trader's activities [svabhAvajam] born out of inherent nature.

Agriculture invests in cultivation to yield returns. 'Rearing cattle' is to look after and sustain domestic animals. 'Trade' is to make money through buying and selling.

…A trader's inherent nature brings out these activities.

## 18-44 second part

[

paricharyAtmakam karma shUdrasyApi svabhAvajam || 44 ||

]

[paricharyAtmakam] Service to others [shUdrasyApi karma] is the activity of those who just assist. [svabhAvajam] Such activity is natural for them.

People were grouped into the three groups based on their external activities. Those who attend to the needs of these three groups are the ones who assist. Attending to the three groups and their activities is natural to them.

These four groups, their activities, their professions and duties are laid out in the scriptures. Their listing is merely illustrative.

Activities such as the worship of the Lord are common to all groups of people. Activities such as the practice of tranquility are common to those who desire [liberation](#Moksha).

The quality of [sattva](#sattva) is predominant in a philosopher. Due to this, the activities of tranquility and restraint happen naturally, with ease. These activities are said to come from innate character.

In administrators and traders, [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas) are predominant. For them, activities such as tranquility and restraint are tough to practice – these activities aren’t known to be in their innate character.

The occupation of a philosopher is to worship, and carry out worship on behalf of someone else; It is also to teach and accept offerings. The occupation of an administrator is to take care of society. That of a trader is to invest, as mentioned before. The duty and occupation of an assistant is to assist in the occupation of the other three.

## 18-45

[

svE svE karmaNi abhirata: saMsiddhim labhatE nara: |

svakarma nirata: siddhim yathA vindati tat shr'Nu || 45 ||

]

[nara:] Human beings [labhatE] attain [saMsiddhim] the ultimate goal [abhirata:] by being engaged [svE svE karmaNi] in their respective actions. [shr'Nu] Listen [yathA] to the way in which [svakarma nirata:] a person who is engaged is his work [vindati] attains [tat siddhim] that goal.

Humans attain the ultimate goal of [Moksha](#Moksha) by engaging in their respective actions, as described before. Listen to the way in which a person attains Moksha by being engaged in work.

## 18-46

[

yata: pravr'tti: bhUtAnAm yEna sarvam idam tatam |

svakarmaNA tam abhyarchya siddhim vindati mAnava: || 46 ||

]

[mAnava:] Any human being [vindati] attains [siddhim] the goal [abhyarchya] by worshipping [tam] Him [svakarmaNA] with his own work - [yEna] He, by whom [sarvam idam] all this [tatam] is pervaded, [yata:] from whom [bhUtAnAm] all beings get [pravr'tti:] their ability to commence action.

‘By whom all this is pervaded, from where all beings get their ability to commence action right from birth’ - He is The Lord.

He says 'I am the One who is situated in this way. I sit as the essence of every power. A human being worships Me in this manner, with his own work. Such a person pleases Me and attains the goal of achieving Me. As I said before, everything comes from Me and everything is pervaded by Me'.

As said in Chap.7#6 and Chap.7#7: I am the creator and the destroyer of the entire universe. There is absolutely nothing else that is superior to Me.

Chap.9#4: This whole world is pervaded by Me, while My form is not perceptible.

Chap.9#10: The material environment manifests as this world, with all its stationary and mobile beings according to My will. I am the supreme controller.

Chap.10#8: I am the origin of everything; Every entity gets stimulated with the initiative given by Me.

- In all these places in the Gita, The Lord has described Himself as the One who is to be worshipped by all actions.

## 18-47 first part

[

shrEyAn svadharmO viguNa: paradharmAt svanuShThitAt |

]

[svadharmO] Your own work, [viguNa:] perhaps lacking in perfection, [shrEyAn] is superior [paradharmAt] in comparison to work that's not yours, [su anuShThitAt] even when executed with excellence.

When you work as described before - [by leaving](#letting_go) possessiveness, outcomes and the misconception of making things happen - it takes the form of My worship. The phrase 'your own work' is the work that can be initiated by you, in your present space.

*'your own work' means* [*your initiative*](#intention_initiation) *- not what you or others think you should be doing; not anything that* [*happened*](#happenings)*, nor anything that’s going to*.

Work that's performed in this manner takes the form of [[karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)]. It is activity done using your organs and is achievable by all of us, though we are constantly constrained in our environment.

Thus, your own work done in this manner, called [[karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)], even perhaps lacking in perfection, is superior in comparison to [[jnAnayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn)], which is to be done by people who are experts in keeping their organs under control.

The practice of [jnAnayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) is about having control over all of our organs. It's loaded with the possibility of mistakes due to carelessness.

Hence, the practice of [activity without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), even when imperfect, is superior to the rare, onetime achievement of perfect control over all organs.

The Lord elaborates this '[activity without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn)' again –

## 18-47 second part

[

svabhAva niyatam karma kurvan nApnOti kilbiSham |

]

[kurvan] By doing [karma] work [svabhAva niyatam] according to his nature, [na Apnoti] a person doesn't obtain [kilbiSham] any guilt or fault.

A person inside this environment is constantly doing.

Work comes naturally to all of us, since our organs are always transacting with the environment - this is what they are meant for, by their very nature. By working, a person doesn't obtain any guilt or fault - he doesn't get tied down in this world. The work done has no flaws.

On the other hand, [the exclusive pursuit of knowledge](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) is achieved by controlling all our organs. Such control is difficult and prone to flaws. A person who dedicates himself to contemplation incurs guilt due to imperfect control. It ties him down in this world.

Hence, [activity without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn) is indeed superior. The Lord recalls His statements in the third chapter:

## 18-48

[

sahajam karma kauntEya sadOSham api na tyajEt |

sarvArambhA hi dOShENa dhUmEna agniriva Avr'tA: || 48 ||

]

[hi] Indeed, [sarva ArambhA:] all initiatives [Avr'tA:] are enveloped [dOShENa] by drawbacks, [iva] just as [agni:] fire [dhUmEna] is enveloped by smoke. [kauntEya] Arjuna, [sahajam karma] the natural state of activity [na tyajEt] must not be abandoned, [api] even though [sadOSham] it comes with its drawbacks.

Activity is innate. Activities are easily achievable and don't carry mistakes. They must not be abandoned, even though they may come with drawbacks in the form of sorrow and hardship.

Just as fire is enveloped by smoke, all initiatives are surrounded by drawbacks - be they initiatives to achieve actions or to achieve knowledge.

Even when a person is able to [contemplate on the Self exclusively](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn), he needs to [work without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn). The distinction made here is: [Working without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayoga) is easy and doesn't carry any mistakes. On the other hand, [the exclusive contemplation of the Self](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn), practiced by giving up worldly activity is the opposite - it is tough and prone to fault.

## 18-49

[

asakta buddhi: sarvatra jitAtmA vigataspr'ha: |

naiShkarmya siddhim paramAm saMnyAsEna adhigachChati || 49 ||

]

[jitAtmA] A person conquers the mind [asakta buddhi:] with intentions that are detached [sarvatra] from all outcomes. [vigataspr'ha:] Such a person has lost possessiveness. [adhigachChati] He attains [paramAm siddhim] the ultimate goal [naiShkarmya] of being free from action [saMnyAsEna] through renunciation.

A person conquers his own mind by being detached from all outcomes.

This person loses possessiveness and the illusion of making things happen, by having the conviction that the Lord is the One who makes things happen.

Endowed with renunciation and the conviction that it's all about [letting go](#letting_go), this person works and attains the ultimate goal of [being free](#Moksha) from the effects of action. This is identical to the outcome obtained through intense meditation and the exclusive contemplation of the Self.

By worshipping the Lord with our actions, we let go.

Calmness in the actions of our body comes through intense meditation, which will be described in the following Shlokas. The same calm is achieved by [karmayOga](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), the technique of working without attachment.

## 18-50

[

siddhim prAptO yathA brahma tathApnOti nibOdha me |

samAsEnaiva kauntEya niShThA jnAnasya yA parA || 50 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [tathA yathA] the way in which [siddhim prApta:] a person who has obtained this outcome [ApnOti] achieves [brahma] The Self, [yA parA niShThA] the ultimate culmination [jnAnasya] of knowledge - [nibOdha] know it [samAsEna] in a concise way [mE] from Me.

This outcome of intense meditation is accomplished by [working without attachment](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn). It deserves to be practiced everyday till we depart from this body.

The Lord says 'Know the way in which a person exists and attains the Self. I shall describe it now in a few words'. The specialty of the Self has been told in this Shloka as 'the ultimate culmination of knowledge'. The Self is the ultimate entity attained by knowledge and meditation.

## 18-51 to 18-53

[

budhyA vishuddhayA yuktO dhr'tyAtmAnam niyamya cha |

shabdAdIn viShayAn tyaktvA rAga dvEShau vyudasya cha || 51 ||

viviktasEvI laghvAshI yata vAk kAya mAnasa: |

dhyAnayOgaparO nityam vairAgyam samupAshrita: || 52 ||

ahaMkAram balam darpam kAmam krOdham parigraham |

vimuchya nirmama: shAntO brahmabhUyAya kalpatE || 53 ||

]

[yukta:] Endowed [vishuddhayA] with a clean [buddhyA] intellect, [niyamya] controlling [AtmAnam] the mind [dhr'tyA] with [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve), [tyaktvA] having let go of [viShayAn] stimuli [shabdAdIn] such as sounds, touch, sights, taste and smell, [vyudasya] abandoning [raga dvEShau] both desires and hatred,

[viviktasEvI] practicing solitude, [laghvAshI] eating within limits, [yata] having disciplined [vAk] his speech, [kAya] temperament [mAnasa:] and his mind, [dhyAnayOga para:] intent on concentration [nityam] always, [samupAshrita:] taking recourse to [vairagyam] shunning his desires,

[vimuchya] casting aside [ahaMkAram] the notion that the body is the Self, [balam] the force of past deeds that carry it along, [darpam] the arrogance that comes from such a notion, [kAmam] desire, [krOdham] anger, [parigraham] grabbing material items, [nirmama:] without possessiveness towards objects that don't belong to him, [shAnta:] being peaceful, [kalpatE] he is fit [brahmabhUyAya] to realize the Self in its true form.

With a clean intellect, the Self is seen in its true form - free from its environment.

A person with such intellect controls his mind with [resolve](#intellect_and_resolve) - he doesn't mind turning away from his preoccupation with the stimuli of this world. In this way, his mind is capable of focus. He lets go of stimuli - sound, touch, sights, taste and smell - by pushing them away.

He abandons the emotions of desire and hatred that are driven by such stimuli.

He practices solitude - he stays in a space that's free from all impediments to his focus.

He eats within limits, neither too much nor too little.

His speech, temperament and mind are disciplined by focus. Always intent on his focus, he keeps to the practice till he departs from his body. He takes recourse to shunning his desires by rejecting anything that's not his focus, enhancing his detachment with every opportunity.

Casting aside the notion that the body is the Self, he leaves behind the force of past deeds that cause such a notion. He leaves behind the arrogance that comes from such a notion, along with desire, anger and the tendency to grab material items.

He is without possessiveness towards objects that don't belong to him. He is peaceful, content in the experience of the Self alone.

In this way, performing with focus and concentration, he is fit to realize the Self. This person experiences the Self in its true form when he is free of all constraints.

## 18-54

[

brahmabhUta: prasannAtmA na shOchati na kAMkShati |

sama: sarvEShu bhUtEShu madbhaktim labhatE parAm || 54 ||

]

[brahmabhUta:] Having realized the Self, [prasannAtmA] with a serene mind, [Na shOchati] he doesn't get upset [na kAMkShati] and doesn't yearn. [sama:] Such a person has equanimity [sarvEShu bhUtEShu] among all beings. [labhatE] He attains [param madbhaktim] the ultimate devotion to Me.

'Realizing the Self' is about uncovering the true nature of the Self.

By its very nature, the Self is pure, limitless expanse of knowledge. It exists for the Lord's purpose - that is its sole characteristic. The Lord explained the fact that the Self belongs to Him in Chap.7#5: ‘Know My ultimate nature - the Self, which is distinct in the form of a conscious being’

Having realized the Self, a person is endowed with a serene mind.

The Lord describes a serene mind: ‘It is un-stained by anguish or activity. It isn’t bothered about anything other than Me. He doesn't yearn for anything - In fact, such a person is indifferent to all distinctions among beings other than Me.

That’s why such a person has an even outlook. He considers all materials in this world to be insignificant’.

With this worship, we gain limitless love for the Lord.

The Lord continues to describe His relationship: ‘Such a person achieves ultimate devotion to Me - This person sees Me as the Supreme Lord, running the activities of creation, sustenance and destruction as My sport.

I repel everything that's undesirable. I am the harmony of unbroken, unlimited, infinite number of fortunate qualities. He experiences ultimate devotion towards Me in the form of excessive adoration. I am his owner, the inexhaustible sea of beauty and attractiveness, having lotus eyes, always in the company of Lakshmi’.

Next, the Lord describes the outcome of such devotion -

## 18-55

[

bhaktyA mAm abhijAnAti yAvAn yashchAsmi tattvata: |

tatO mAm tattvatO jnAtvA vishatE tadanantaram || 55 ||

]

[mAm abhijAnAti] This person knows Me [bhaktyA] with devotion, [yAvAn cha] right up to [tattvata:] the essence [ya: asmi] of who I am. [tata:] From there, [jnAtvA] knowing [mAm] Me [tattvata:] in true form, [vishatE] he enters Me [tadanantaram] without delay.

With [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), this person knows Me in essence - who I am, along with My form, My characteristics, all My qualities and My powers. Knowing Me in this way through [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), he enters Me without delay.

In short – A person enters the Lord the moment he recognizes the Lord in His true form, with [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn).

Unbroken, unbounded [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) comes by knowing My essence along with My form and characteristics, seeing My qualities and My powers. With this [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), he achieves Me - that's what is meant here.

This Shloka re-stated that achieving the Lord comes through such [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). This was stated in Chap.11#54: 'Only by single-minded [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), it is possible to know Me as I am, to see Me and to be one with Me'.

In this way, [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) alone makes it possible to enter the Lord in His essence.

Up until now, the performance of routine and prescribed actions was emphasized. When we leave our attachment towards their outcomes, we leave possessiveness and the misconception that we make things happen.

When free of these misconceptions, our activity is a method to worship the Lord. These activities mature into [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) and we enter the Lord - that was also described.

Next, The Lord states that even when actions driven by desire are performed as described, they mature in the same way -

## 18-56

[

sarva karmANyapi sadA kurvANO madvyapAshraya: |

mat prasAdAt avApnOti shAshvatam padam avyayam || 56 ||

]

[kurvANa:] By doing [sarva karmANyapi] any work, [sadA] always [madvyapAshraya:] centered around Me, [avApnoti] a person attains [shAshvatam] the eternal, [avyayam] inexhaustible [padam] position [mat prasAdAt] with My grace.

Worship with activities that are natural to you - even your material desires and pursuits.

Not only routine and prescribed actions, even an activity initiated by desire can be centered on Me. Such activities are done while entrusting doer-ship, outcomes and possessiveness in Me.

A person who works this way achieves the eternal, inexhaustible position. He will never again fall back to agitation - he will attain Me.

Hence, The Lord instructs -

## 18-57

[

chEtasA sarva karmANi mayi saMnyasya matpara: |

buddhiyOgam upAshritya mat chitta: satatam bhava || 57 ||

]

[saMnyasya] Leaving [sarva karmANi] all actions [mayi] in Me [chEtasA] consciously, [matpara:] have Me as your ultimate goal. [upAshritya] In the sanctuary of [buddhiyOgam] this engaged intellect, [bhava] be [mat chitta:] with My consciousness [satatam] always.

Be conscious that the Self belongs to the Lord and that it is in His control.

With this intellect, do as the Lord said in Chap.3#30: Dedicate all activity in Me, The Supreme Lord. Keep our relationship in mind. Be uninterested in outcomes and don’t get stuck with the feeling of 'it is mine'.

Leave all activity in Me, along with its subjects and its accomplishments. Be with the conviction that achieving Me is the outcome of all those actions.

Engaging in this way, your intellect becomes the sanctuary in which you are with My consciousness always.

## 18-58

[

mat chitta: sarvadurgANi matprasAdAt tariShyasi |

atha chEt tvam ahaMkArAt na shrOShyasi vinaMkShyasi || 58 ||

]

[mat chitta:] Being with My consciousness, [tariShyasi] you shall cross over [sarva durgANi] all hardships [mat prasAdAt] with My grace. [atha] Moreover, [chEt] if [na shrOShyasi] you don't listen [ahaMkArAt] due to arrogance, [vinaMkShyasi] you will perish.

In this way, by working with My consciousness, you shall cross over all the hardships in this world - just by My grace.

On the other hand, you may not listen to Me, because you arrogantly believe that you know all - everything that must be done and not done. In that case, you will perish.

Indeed, I alone know and preside over the activities of all living beings. I alone preside over their [freedom from action](#free_from_action) as well.

## 18-59

[

yadi ahaMkAram Ashritya na yOtsyE iti manyasE |

mithyaiSha vyavasAya: tE prakr'ti: tvAm niyOkShyati || 59 ||

]

[Ashritya] Standing in [ahaMkAram] arrogance, [yadi] if [manyasE] you believe [na yOtsyE] that you will not fight, [ESha] this [vyavasAya:] strategy [tE] of yours [mithyA] would never be reality - [prakr'ti:] your environment [niyOkShyati] would then impel [tvAm] you.

'Arrogance' is the belief that you are independent in determining what's good for yourself and what's not.

If you stand in such arrogance, disregard my instruction and believe that you will not fight, then this independent strategy of yours would never be reality. That's because your environment would force you to fight.

That means - you would be knocked off My free will and unwittingly fall into the control of your environment.

If you aren’t working for the Lord, you are at the mercy of your environment.

The Lord explains further -

## 18-60

[

svabhAvajEna kauntEya nibaddha: svEna karmaNA |

kartum nEchChasi yanmOhAt kariShyasi avashO\_pi tat || 60 ||

]

[kauntEya] Arjuna, [nibaddha:] being tired down [svEna karmaNA] by your own actions [svabhAvajEna] born out of [inherent nature](#inherent_nature), [avasha: kariShyasi] you will unwittingly do [tat api] that very activity, [yat] which [nEchChasi] you don't wish [kartum] to do [mOhAt] due to ignorance.

Valiant confrontation is the activity that flows from the [inherent nature](#inherent_nature) of a warrior. You are bound by this valor, since it comes from your inherent nature.

You wouldn't be able to exercise your free will, being tied down by such bonds. When others rub it in, you wouldn't be able to tolerate their insult. In this way you will end up fighting the very war you wanted to avoid - due to the opinions you formed out of ignorance.

All species are governed by Me, the Supreme Lord, to comply with the environment according to their past deeds. Listen to this now -

## 18-61

[

Ishvara: sarva bhUtAnAm hr'ddEshE arjuna tiShThati |

bhrAmayan sarva bhUtAni yantrArUDhAni mAyayA || 61 ||

]

[arjuna] Arjuna, [Ishvara:] the Supreme Lord [tiShThati] sits [hr'ddEshE] at the heart [sarva bhUtAnAm] of every being, [bhrAmayan] spinning [sarva bhUtAni] all beings, [yantrArUDhAni] mounting them in the mechanism [mAyayA] of the environment.

The Supreme Lord controls everything by His very nature. He is Lord Krishna. He is at the heart of every being - Knowledge and consciousness arise at the place where He is situated, the source of activity and control.

In what way is He situated in there? What does He do there?

He sits there, spinning all beings by mounting them in the mechanism of the environment.

Meaning - The Lord Himself has established the mechanism of our body and its organs. All beings are mounted in such a mechanism, made from what we call the environment.

The Lord stays at the heart of all beings and keeps them going according to their qualities, using the experiences created by [sattva](#sattva), [rajas](#rajas) and [tamas](#tamas). These qualities are in the environment. This environment belongs to the Lord Himself.

As said before in Chap.15#15: 'I am at the heart of everything. Knowledge, memory and the ability to reason come from Me', in Chap.10#8: 'Every entity gets stimulated and initiates action by Me' and in scriptures such as [br’hadArAnyaka], 3.7.22: 'The One who is situated in the Self'.

Now, The Lord describes the means to achieve freedom from these experiences.

## 18-62

[

tamEva sharaNam gachCha sarva bhAvEna bhArata |

tat prasAdAt parAm shAntim sthAnam prApsyasi shAshvatam || 62 ||

]

[bhArata] Arjuna, [sharaNam gachCha] take refuge [tam Eva] in Him alone - [sarva bhAvEna] in every way, with all your heart. [prApsyasi] You shall attain [shAntim] contentment [shAshvatam sthAnam] and the position of eternity [tat prasAdAt] by His benevolence.

Things are the way they are, due to the Supreme Lord. Hence, approach Him alone.

The Supreme Lord controls everything and has tender affection towards those who have taken refuge in Him. Due to that affection, He takes on the role of the charioteer and instructs you.

Take refuge in Him with all your heart - follow Him wholeheartedly. Otherwise, you will remain ignorant of His reality and will remain driven by your experience of this environment, which is created by the Lord Himself.

Even then you will not be able to avoid activities such as this war. Acting in this manner would destroy you.

Hence, do your activities, including the activity of war, [as instructed](#dedicate_actions_to_Krishna) by the Lord. Working in this way, you shall achieve ultimate contentment by His benevolence. 'Ultimate contentment' is relief from all past deeds.

You will then attain the position of eternity, which has been described in many scriptures –

As in the [puruShasUkta]: 'Those who are with the Lord see the ultimate abode of Vishnu perpetually';

In [yajurveda], 4-7-13: 'Those who surrender to the Lord join those who are with Him in that flawless abode since beginning-less time';

In [narayana], 'The eternal position isn't achieved by wealth, by offspring or by deeds. It is achievable only by [letting go](#letting_go)';

[ChAndOgya], 3-12-7: 'The path to the ultimate abode is not known to all. Those who have surrendered to the Lord attain that abode';

[katha], 3-9: 'That abode is beyond everything in this world, a place of supreme brilliance. There is nothing superior to it'. 'Those who are guided by the knowledge of the Lord keep their minds under control and reach the ultimate abode'.

## 18-63

[

iti tE jnAnam AkhyAtam guhyAt guhyataram mayA |

vimr'shyaitat ashEShENa yathEchChasi tathA kuru || 63 ||

]

[iti] This [jnAnam] knowledge, [guhyAt guhyataram] which is more concealed than other secrets, [AkhyAtam] was made known [tE] to you [mayA] by Me. [vimr'shya Etat] Examining this [ashEShENa] in its entirety, [tathA kuru] do [yathA ichChasi] as you please.

In this way, the knowledge of [activity](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), [contemplation](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) and [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) was made known to you completely. People who desire [Moksha](#Moksha) must know it.

'Secrets' are facts that require effort to discover. This knowledge is more concealed than other secrets.

Review this entirety and do as you please, according to your eligibility - Choose to perform [with your activity](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), [by contemplation](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn) or [by devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), as you prefer.

## 18-64

[

sarva guhyatamam bhUya: shr'Nu mE paramam vacha: |

iShTO\_si mE dhr'Dham iti tatO vakShyAmi tE hitam || 64 ||

]

[shr'Nu] Listen [bhUya:] once more [paramam] to this supreme [vacha:] directive [mE] of mine, [guhyatamam] the most subtle [sarva] of all. [iti vakShyAmi] I state this [tE hitam] for your benefit, [tatO] since [dhr'Dham iShTO\_si] you are very dear [mE] to Me.

Among all these secrets, [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) is superior.

Even earlier, it was referred to as 'extremely concealed' in Chap.9#1: 'You are not jealous. I will tell you this knowledge, which is extremely concealed'.

Listen to that instruction once again from Me. It's My supreme and final directive. I state this for your benefit, since you are very dear to Me.

## 18-65

[

manmanA bhava madbhaktO madyAjI mAm namaskuru |

mAmEvaiShyasi satyam tE pratijAnE priyOsi mE || 65 ||

]

[madbhakta:] Be My devotee [manmana bhava] and keep Me in your mind. [madyAjI] Take initiative to worship Me. [mAm namaskuru] Adore and treasure Me as superior. [mAmEvaiShyasi] You shall certainly attain Me. [pratijAnE] I affirm [satyam] this fact [tE] to you. [priya: asi] You are dear [mE] to Me.

It is said in the [puruShasUkta] -

[vEdAham Etam puruSham mahAntam Aditya varNam tamasa: parastAt | tamEvam vidvAn amr'ta iha bhavati | na anya: panthA vidyatE ayanAya | ]

Meaning - I meditate on this supreme person, who is the color of the sun and is beyond the darkness of ignorance. Only by knowing Him, a person is free over here. There is no other path to The Goal.

Such scriptures describe the succession of the Lord's thoughts, using words such as '[knowing](#jnAnI)', 'meditation' and 'worship'. It is equivalent to seeing the Lord, is very pleasant and is expressed by the directive 'keep Me in your mind'.

'Be My devotee' - The Lord directs to adore Him without limit. This directive is to keep the train of His thoughts running by means of excessive adoration. Such a train of thought is pleasant beyond comparison.

'Take initiative to worship Me' - Adoring the Lord with reverence is very joyful. Enjoy the state of being eager to worship - to be completely occupied in service.

'Adore and treasure Me as superior' - Great devotion to Me is very pleasant. So is the recognition that I am superior. Practice such devotion.

The Lord warms up: Being in this way, you shall certainly achieve Me. I affirm this fact to you. I speak the truth. I'm not saying this merely to persuade you. That's because you are very dear to Me.

It was stated in Chap.7#17: 'I am dear to this [knowledgeable person](#jnAnI), in a way that is definitely beyond description. He is dear to Me as well' - I have huge adoration for the person who adores Me a lot. Being unable to tolerate any separation from him, I will ensure that he attains Me.

In this way, I declare that you shall achieve Me - this is a fact.

Surrender and let the Lord liberate you. Don’t worry.

## 18-66

[

sarva dharmAn parityajya mAm Ekam sharaNam vraja |

aham tvA sarva pApEbhya: mOkShayiShyAmi mA shucha: || 66 ||

]

*This Shloka can be seen in two views. The first view is -*

[parityajya] Let go of [sarva dharmAn] all uplifting achievements and [sharaNam vraja] make your surrender [mAm Eva] to Me alone. [aham] I [mOkShayiShyAmi] shall free [tvA] you [sarva pApEbhya:] from all misfortune. [mA shucha:] Don't worry.

*The second view is -*

[parityajya] Let go of [sarva dharmAn] every regret and reparation that stands in the way of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) [sharaNam vraja] and surrender [mAm Eva] to Me alone. [aham] I [mOkShayiShyAmi] shall free [tvA] you [sarva pApEbhya:] from all misfortune that comes in the way of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). [mA shucha:] Don't worry.

*Commentary on the first view:*

The duties of [activity](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\karmayoga.html#karmayOga_a_defn), [contemplat](file:///D:\OneDrive\HTMLapp\jnanayoga.html#jnAnayOga_a_defn)ion and [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) are methods to achieve the [ultimate goal](#Moksha). Do them with affection towards Me, with My worship as the purpose. Leave the outcomes, possessiveness towards the action and the misconception that you make things happen.

Have Me and only Me as the Performer, as the One who is worshipped, as the Goal, and as the Method to achieve the goal. This is what's meant by the phrase 'letting go of everything that is to be achieved', as mentioned in this Shloka and as described in the scriptures.

It was thoroughly described in this chapter, starting with Chap.18#4: 'Listen to My clarification of '[letting go](#letting_go)', which is done in three ways'. Then, Chap.18#9 talked about '[letting go](#letting_go)' of attachment and outcomes. This is regarded as being in the quality of [sattva](#sattva).

It concluded in Chap.18#11: 'Indeed, it's not possible for a person having a body to give up all activity without exception. On the other hand, a person who leaves the outcome of his action is the one who has let-go'.

I will free you from all misfortune. Misfortunes prevent you from being with Me. They come from missed duties and misdeeds, committed since beginning-less time. In this Shloka, The Lord says- You let-go in this way, and I shall free you from all misfortune.

Don't worry.

*Commentary on the second view*:

[Devotion to The Lord](#bhakti_a_defn) happens when we adore The Lord, free of all misfortune and its regrets.

However, our misfortunes are unending, having collected since beginning-less time. They will come in the way of our [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn).

In the limited time we have, it isn't possible to do everything towards redeeming an infinite amount of misfortune. Hence, Arjuna feels sad that he isn't qualified to begin [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn).

To remove Arjuna's sorrow, the Lord tells him - 'Let go of every regret and reparation that stands in the way of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). Surrender to Me alone'.

We have committed all kinds of deeds since beginning-less time. We accumulate misfortune when we commit misdeeds or when we miss our duties. In this way, all of us have accumulated a great variety of unlimited misfortune. All this comes in the way of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn).

We need to make a lot of amends and reparations to get rid of all our misfortune. Since we have a limited lifespan, it isn’t possible to make enough reparations.

That's why The Lord says - Let go of all these regrets that are impossible to repair, which stand in the way of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). Surrender to Me alone - I am ultimately compassionate, I don't consider anyone to be peculiar, I am the refuge of everyone without exception, I am an ocean of affection to those who take refuge in Me. I shall free you from every misfortune that comes in the way of practicing [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn), as I've stated.

Don't worry.

## 18-67

[

idam tE nAtapaskAya nAbhaktAya kadAchana |

na chAshushrUShavE vAchyam na cha mam yO\_bhyasUyati || 67 ||

]

[idam tE] This awareness is for you. [nAtapaskAya] It's not for a person who doesn't take the effort to think; [na kadAchana abhaktAya] never for someone who isn't devoted; [na vAchyam ashushrUShavE] not to be told to someone who isn't interested in listening; [cha na yO abhyasUyati mam] and it's not for a person who finds fault in My virtues.

This awareness is very subtle. It was told by Me for your sake.

Do not narrate it to someone who doesn't take the effort to think.

It must never be told to someone who isn't devoted to Me and doesn't appreciate you, as the carrier of awareness. Meaning - even if a person has taken efforts to think and meditate, this knowledge isn't for him, when he isn't devoted to Me and to you.

Even if a person is devoted, this isn't for him when he doesn't have the intention to listen.

Finally, it's not for the individual who finds fault whenever My virtues, My characteristics, and My possessions are described.

The emphasis on the individual at the end signifies that such a person must be avoided exclusively, while conveying this awareness.

## 18-68

[

ya idam paramam guhyam madbhaktEShu abhidhAsyati |

bhaktim mayi parAm kr'tvA mAmEvaiShyati asaMshaya: || 68 ||

]

[ya:] The person who [abhidhAsyati] explains [idam paramam guhyam] this supreme secret [madbhaktEShu] to My devotees [kr'tvA] performs [parAm bhaktim] unsurpassed [bhaktim] [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) [mayi] in Me [mAm EvaiShyati] and achieves Me [asaMshaya:] without doubt.

Share it with others who adore the Lord.

A person who explains this concealed awareness to My devotees shall achieve Me, by performing unsurpassed [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn). Let there be no doubt in this matter.

## 18-69

[

na cha tasmAt manuShyEShu kashchin mE priyakr'ttama: |

bhavitA na cha mE tasmAt anya: priyatarO bhuvi || 69 ||

]

[cha] Moreover, [na kashchit] there is nobody [manuShyEShu] among humans [priyakr'ttama:] who has done something more likeable [mE] for Me [tasmAt] than such a person. [cha] Further, [na bhavitA] there isn't going to be [tasmAt anya:] anyone else [priyatarO] who is dearer [mE] to Me [bhuvi] on earth.

Up until now, there hasn't been any other human who has done something dearer for My sake. There isn't going to be anyone else who is dearer to Me either.

Those who are unfit to receive this knowledge were described before describing those who deserve it. Revealing this to the unfit is less welcome than missing its revelation to a deserving person.

*In the scriptures, usually the deserving characteristics are mentioned. It's implied that those who don’t have such characteristics don't deserve it. However, here the undeserving case is listed first, indicating that the instruction to avoid narrating the knowledge to them takes precedence.*

## 18-70

[

adhyEShyatE cha ya imam dharmyam saMvAdam AvayO: |

jnAna yajnEna tEnAham iShTa: syAm iti mE mati: || 70 ||

]

[mE mati:] I consider [aham iShTa: syAm iti] Myself to be cherished [jnana yajNEna] by the pursuit of knowledge, [tEna] performed by the person [ya:] who [adhyEShyatE] studies [imam] this [dharmyam] uplifting [saMvAdam] conversation [AvayO:] of ours.

*The word [dharmyam] is translated to 'uplifting' over here. Dharma is the conduct that takes us from our current state-of-being to a superior state.*

A person pursues knowledge by studying this uplifting conversation of ours. I am cherished by this pursuit - that's my conviction.

This pursuit of knowledge was described as [jnAnayajna] in Chap.9#15: 'they worship Me by studying the scriptures and understanding the meaning contained in them'. I am adored and worshipped by such study.

## 18-71

[

shraddhAvAn anasUyu: cha shr'NuyAt api yO nara: |

sO\_pi mukta: shubhAn lOkAn prApnuyAt puNyakarmaNAm || 71 ||

]

[api] Even [yO nara:] a person who [shr'NuyAt] listens [shraddhAvAn] with conviction [cha anasUyu:] and without mistrust, which comes from jealousy - [sa: api] even that person will get rid of flaws that come in the way of devotion [prApnuyAt] and shall attain [shubhAn lOkAn] the auspicious places [puNyakarmaNAm] of the virtuous.

Listen to someone who shares.

A person could simply listen with conviction, free from mistrust that comes out of jealousy.

Just by listening in this manner, he shall be free of flaws that come in the way of [devotion](#bhakti_a_defn) and shall join the abode of My virtuous devotees - he will be among them.

## 18-72

[

kachchit Etat shrutam pArtha tvayaikAgrENa chEtasA |

kachchit ajnAna saMmOha: pranaShTastE dhananjaya || 72 ||

]

[pArtha] Arjuna, [kachchit Etat shrutam] was this listened [tvayA] by you [EkAgrENa chEtasA] with undivided attention? [kachchit tE] Have your [ajnAna saMmOha:] ignorance and delusion [pranaShTa:] left you, [dhananjaya] O conqueror of wealth?

Did you listen to all that I told here with an attentive mind? Your delusion came from ignorance. Has it left you? Being overcome by such ignorance, you had stated that you will not fight.

## 18-73

[

arjuna uvAcha -

naShTO mOha: smr'tirlabdhA tvat prasAdAt mayAchyuta |

sthitO\_smi gatasaMdEha: kariShyE vachanam tava || 73 ||

]

[arjuna uvAcha] Arjuna said - [achyuta] Krishna, [tvat prasAdAt] by Your grace, [smr'ti:] this awareness [labdhA] has been grasped [mayA] by me. [mOha:] My delusion [naShTa:] is gone. [asmi] I am [sthita:] standing [gata saMdEha:] free of doubt. [kariShyE] I will do [tava vachanam] as you say.

'Delusion' is the belief that goes against reality. 'Awareness' is the knowledge of things as they are. Arjuna tells Krishna - 'By Your grace, my delusion is gone. By Your grace itself, this awareness has been grasped by me'.

Delusion is to believe that I am my body, without recognizing the Self.

Awareness is to know and recognize that everything - be it conscious or non-conscious - exists as the Lord's body - He is the Self in everything.

Delusion is to consider existence, without having the Lord as the Self in everything.

Awareness is to recognize that our routine activities and prescribed duties are the Lord's worship. We achieve the Lord by performing those activities and duties. Believing them to be binding in nature is delusion. Such delusion is gone now.

The Self is distinct from the environment and doesn't carry any characteristic of the environment. Its only characteristic is the ability to know. It exists for the purpose of the Lord alone. Being governed by the Lord is its natural state of being.

The Lord has the creation, sustenance and the destruction of the entire universe as His sport.

He repels all flaws without exception. His form is purely gratifying.

By His very nature, He is a great ocean of unbroken, unlimited knowledge, strength, wealth, valor, power, luster and other such favorable characteristics.

He is known as [parabrahma] - the supreme expanse. 'Awareness' is such knowledge of The Lord in His true form.

Arjuna says - 'I have attained knowledge in this form - I now know the true characteristics of the Supreme Being. I know the distinction between this Supreme Being and the rest.

I will end up adoring the Lord by practicing my routine and prescribed activities, having Him as my only purpose - even in the resolution of guilt. Then, with equanimity and self-control, I experience bliss in the characteristics of the Self. This gains the form of devotion.

The Supreme Lord, who is the subject of all the Vedanta, can only be attained by the worship of the Supreme Lord.

I know that You, the son of Vasudeva, are the Supreme Lord.

Moreover, I'm free of the exhaustion, which was caused by delusion. That delusion was fueled by feelings of pity and affection towards relatives. I now stand fit. I will do as you say right now, in war and in all other ways. I shall fight'.

Next, Sanjaya answers Dhrtarashtra, who had asked what his sons and the Pandava were doing in battle.

## 18-74

[

sanjaya uvAcha -

ityaham vAsudEvasya pArthasya cha mahAtmana: |

saMvAdam imam ashrUSham adbhutam rOmaharShaNam || 74 ||

]

[sanjaya uvAcha] Sanjaya said - [iti] Thus, [aham ashrUSham] I listened to [imam saMvAdam] this conversation [vAsudEvasya] between Krishna [cha] and [mahAtmana:] the great man [arjuna] Arjuna. [adbhutam] It is marvelous [rOmaharShaNam] and fabulously stimulating.

This was the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. We know Krishna as the son of Vasudeva, and his Arjuna as his cousin, a great man with a great intellect, who has taken refuge in the feet of the Lord.

I listened as it was spoken. It's a conversation that's marvelous and fabulously stimulating.

## 18-75

[

vyAsa prasAdAt shrutavAn Etat guhyam aham param |

yOgam yOgEshvarAt kr'shNAt sAkShAt kathayata: svayam || 75 ||

]

[vyAsa prasAdAt] By the grace of Vyasa, [aham shrutavAn] I've listened to [Etat guhyam] this subtle, [param yOgam] superior practice of the Lord [kathayata:] described [kr'ShNAt] by Krishna, [yOgEshvarAt] the Lord of the practice [svayam] Himself, [sAkShAt] as though I was present there myself.

*The word [yOga] here has been translated to the word 'practice'. It is the practice of recognizing things as they are. It is the practice of recognizing the Lord's infinite powers and activities. This has been explained as a ‘state of being’ in Chap.6#20-23 and as the Lord’s discipline and action in Chap.10#7.*

Sanjaya continues - By the grace of Vyasa, I obtained divine sight and divine listening. With that, I listened to this subtle, superior practice called yoga - from the Lord of yoga Himself.

Yoga is the practice of recognizing The Lord, who is a treasure trove of knowledge, strength, wealth, valor, power and luster. I listened as if I was there and Krishna Himself narrated it to me.

## 18-76

[

rAjan saMsmr'tya saMsmr'tya saMvAdam imam adbhutam |

kEshavArjunayO: puNyam hr'ShyAmi cha muhurmuhu: || 76 ||

]

[rAjan] My king, [imam] this [adbhutam] marvelous [saMvAdam] conversation [kEshavArjunayO:] between Krishna and Arjuna [puNyam] is universally favorable. [hr'ShyAmi] I take delight [muhurmuhu:] again and again, [saMsmr'tya saMsmr'tya] recalling it repeatedly.

I listened to this marvelous conversation between Krishna and Arjuna as though I was there. Merely listening is universally favorable and I take delight in recalling it again and again.

## 18-77

[

tachcha saMsmr'tya saMsmr'tya rUpam atyadbhutam harE: |

vismayO mE mahAn rAjan hr'ShyAmi cha puna: puna: || 77 ||

]

[rAjan] My king, [saMsmr'tya saMsmr'tya] repeatedly recalling [tat atyadbhutam] that extraordinarily marvelous [rUpam] form [harE:] of Lord Krishna, [mahAn vismayO mE] I am awed with wonder. [hr'ShyAmi] I take delight in it [puna: puna:] again and again.

Lord Krishna revealed His extraordinarily marvelous form to Arjuna. That form was seen by me. I am awed with wonder and delight while recalling it. I take delight in it again and again.

Enough said -

## 18-78

[

yatra yOgEshvara: kr'ShNO yatra pArthO dhanurdhara: |

tatra shrIrvijayO bhUti: dhruvA nIti: matirmama || 78 ||

]

[yatra] Where there is [kr'ShNa:] Krishna, [yOgEshvara:] the Lord of being; [yatra] where there is [pArtha:] Arjuna [dhanurdhara:] with his bow - [tatra] that is where [shrI:] prosperity, [vijaya:] victory, [bhUti:] wealth [nIti:] and ethics [dhruvA] stand firm. [mama mati:] This is my conviction.

Krishna is in each of us and He is our best friend. Everything we need will come to us.

Krishna is the Lord of being - everything that exists as superior, inferior, conscious or non-conscious has a nature, and a state-of-being that Lord Krishna owns. His will determines the form, state and continued existence of everything else.

Wherever there's Lord Krishna, the son of Vasudeva and his cousin Arjuna, who has taken refuge in the Lord's feet alone - that's where prosperity, victory, wealth and ethics stand firm. Sanjaya concludes - 'This is my conviction'.

# The Beginning of Joy

ओम् सर्वम् श्री कृश्णार्पणम् अस्तु

Everything belongs to Krishna